

# Studying in Japan

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A guide for international students & families — how Japanese higher education works, the Certificate of Eligibility and student visa, affordable national tuition, English programs, and work.

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## **WORLD-CLASS, SAFE, AND (AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES) AFFORDABLE**

Japan hosts **300,000+ international students** with a compelling mix: **world-class, globally respected universities; affordable national-university tuition; cutting-edge research; and a safe, well-organized society.** The visa runs on a distinctive two-step system built around the **Certificate of Eligibility (COE)**, which your university obtains for you. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

**General guidance, not legal or immigration advice.** Japanese immigration rules, tuition, and the funds requirement change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with Study in Japan ([studyinjapan.go.jp](https://studyinjapan.go.jp)), the Immigration Services Agency, and your university.**

# Understand Why Students Choose Japan

## WHAT TO KNOW

Japan offers **globally respected universities, affordable national-university tuition, world-leading research and technology, a safe and orderly society, and a growing set of English-taught degree programs** — plus generous government scholarships.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### World-class

+ affordable (national)

### Research & tech

world-leading

### English programs

and growing

## HOW TO HELP

Weigh Japan's **quality, affordability (at national universities), and safety** against the language and the structured COE process — for research and technology especially, it's outstanding.

## GOOD TO KNOW

National-university tuition (~¥535,800/year) is **very affordable for the quality** — private universities cost more.

# Understand the System

## WHAT TO KNOW

Japan has **national universities** (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Tohoku, Tokyo Tech and others — prestigious and affordable), **public** universities, and **private** universities (Waseda, Keio and many more). A growing number offer **full degree programs in English**. Degrees run bachelor's/master's/doctorate.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### National

Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka

### Private

Waseda, Keio

### English degrees

growing

## HOW TO HELP

Choose among **national, public, and private universities**, and check whether your program is taught in **Japanese or English** — both routes exist.

## GOOD TO KNOW

Prestigious national universities are also the **most affordable** — but admission is competitive.

## Get the Certificate of Eligibility (COE)

### WHAT TO KNOW

This is the heart of the process: after admission, your **university applies to immigration for a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) on your behalf** (it takes about **1–3 months**). The COE confirms you meet the requirements for the “Student” status of residence.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### COE

university applies for you

#### 1–3 months

processing

#### “Student” status

the residence type

### HOW TO HELP

Work with your **university, which applies for your COE** after admission — provide the documents it needs promptly, and allow 1–3 months for issuance.

### WATCH OUT

The **COE is issued by immigration, not the embassy**, and your university handles it — start early, as it takes 1–3 months.

# Get Your Student Visa

## WHAT TO KNOW

Once the COE is issued, you apply for the **student visa at a Japanese embassy or consulate** in your home country (processing **~5–10 business days**). Bring the COE, your acceptance letter, passport, and documents; some applicants have a short interview.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**Student visa**

at the embassy

**~5–10 days**

after COE

**Bring the COE**

+ documents

## HOW TO HELP

After your **COE is issued**, apply for the **student visa at the Japanese embassy** with the COE and documents — it's a quick step (5–10 days) once the COE is in hand.

## GOOD TO KNOW

The visa step is **fast (5–10 days)** but **requires the COE first** — so the timeline is driven by the COE.

## Apply to Universities (EJU & English routes)

### WHAT TO KNOW

For many **national/public undergraduate** programs you take the **EJU (Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students)**. **English-taught** programs (e.g., Global 30 / top global universities) use **TOEFL/IELTS** instead. Japanese-taught programs require **JLPT (often N2/N1)**.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### EJU

national/public undergrad

#### English programs

TOEFL/IELTS

#### Japanese programs

JLPT N2/N1

### HOW TO HELP

Check your program's route — **EJU** for many national/public undergrad, **TOEFL/IELTS** for English programs, or **JLPT** for Japanese-taught — and prepare accordingly.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Many national/public undergrad programs require the **EJU** — plan for it if you're applying to those in Japanese.

## Plan for Tuition & Scholarships

### WHAT TO KNOW

National universities charge a standard **~¥535,800/year** (plus a ~¥282,000 admission fee); private universities cost more (~¥1,000,000–1,500,000/year). Scholarships include the prestigious **MEXT (Japanese government)** — which can fully fund tuition and living — plus JASSO and university awards.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### National

~¥535,800/year

#### Private

~¥1–1.5M/year

#### MEXT

full funding

### HOW TO HELP

Budget national-university tuition (~¥535,800) or a private university's higher fees plus living costs, and pursue **MEXT** (embassy or university route), JASSO, and university scholarships.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The **MEXT scholarship** fully funds tuition and living — the strongest funding (and the strongest visa financial proof).



# Meet the Financial Requirement

## WHAT TO KNOW

For the COE you must prove funds — typically about **¥2,000,000/year** (more in Tokyo) for tuition and living. **Stability matters**: funds should have been in the account for months, and a large last-minute deposit is a red flag. You'll also enrol in **National Health Insurance** (¥1,500–2,000/month).

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Funds

~¥2,000,000/year

### Stability

seasoned funds

### Health insurance

NHI (student rate)

## HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** (~¥2,000,000/year, seasoned for months — avoid last-minute transfers), and plan to enrol in **National Health Insurance** after arrival.

## WATCH OUT

Immigration scrutinizes **financial stability** — a large deposit made just before applying can trigger extra checks or rejection.

# Meet Language Requirements

## WHAT TO KNOW

For **Japanese-taught** programs you prove Japanese (**JLPT N2/N1** and/or **EJU**); for the many **English-taught** programs you prove English (**TOEFL iBT ~80+ or IELTS ~6.0+**). Even in English programs, learning Japanese greatly helps daily life and work.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Japanese

JLPT N2/N1

### English

TOEFL 80+/IELTS 6.0+

### Some Japanese

helps a lot

## HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language**, and learn some Japanese regardless — it strongly helps daily life, part-time work, and job-hunting.

## GOOD TO KNOW

You can complete a full degree **in English**, but Japanese **markedly improves** daily life and job prospects.

## Prepare for the Move

### WHAT TO KNOW

On arrival you receive a **residence card**, register your address at the local city office, and enrol in **National Health Insurance** and (often) a pension. Set up banking and a phone. University or private housing is available; Tokyo is pricier than regional cities.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### Residence card

on arrival

#### Register + NHI

at the city office

#### Housing

university or private

### HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **residence card**, **address registration**, **National Health Insurance**, **banking** — and arrange housing (regional cities are cheaper than Tokyo).

### GOOD TO KNOW

Enrolling in **National Health Insurance** is required and cheap at the student rate — do it soon after arrival.

# Understand Work Rules

## WHAT TO KNOW

With “**Permission to Engage in Activity Other Than That Permitted**” (applied for on arrival), students may work **up to 28 hours per week during term** (and full-time during official vacations) — but not in certain industries.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Work

28 hrs/week in term

### Permission needed

apply on arrival

### Full-time

in vacations

## HOW TO HELP

Get **work permission** (applied for at the airport or immigration) to work **up to 28 hours/week** during term and full-time in vacations — within the permitted industries.

## WATCH OUT

You **must have the work-permission endorsement** before working — working without it violates your status.

# Thrive & Work After Study

## WHAT TO KNOW

After graduating, you can switch to a **job-hunting status (Designated Activities)** to look for work, then to a **work visa** once employed — a clear pathway, with Japan actively seeking international talent and offering routes toward long-term residence.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Job-hunting

Designated Activities

### Work visa

once employed

### Long-term

residence routes

## HOW TO HELP

Plan for the **post-graduation job-hunting status** and the switch to a **work visa**, build networks and Japanese skills during study, and target Japan's in-demand sectors.

## GOOD TO KNOW

Japan's **post-study job-hunting and work-visa pathway** is a strong route to staying — and it's actively recruiting international graduates.

# Studying in Japan: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with Study in Japan, the Immigration Services Agency, and your university.

## The system

National universities (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka — prestigious and affordable), public, and private universities (Waseda, Keio); a growing number of full degree programs in English.

## COE & visa

Two-step: your university applies for a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from immigration (1–3 months), then you apply for the “Student” visa at a Japanese embassy (5–10 days).

## Admissions & language

EJU for many national/public undergrad; TOEFL/IELTS for English-taught programs; JLPT (N2/N1) for Japanese-taught; 12 years of prior education.

## Money

National tuition ~¥535,800/year (private ~¥1–1.5M); prove ~¥2,000,000/year in seasoned funds; enrol in National Health Insurance; MEXT, JASSO, and university scholarships.

## Work & after

Work up to 28 hrs/week with permission (full-time in vacations); after graduating, a job-hunting status (Designated Activities) leads to a work visa and long-term residence.

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