

Immigration Procedures

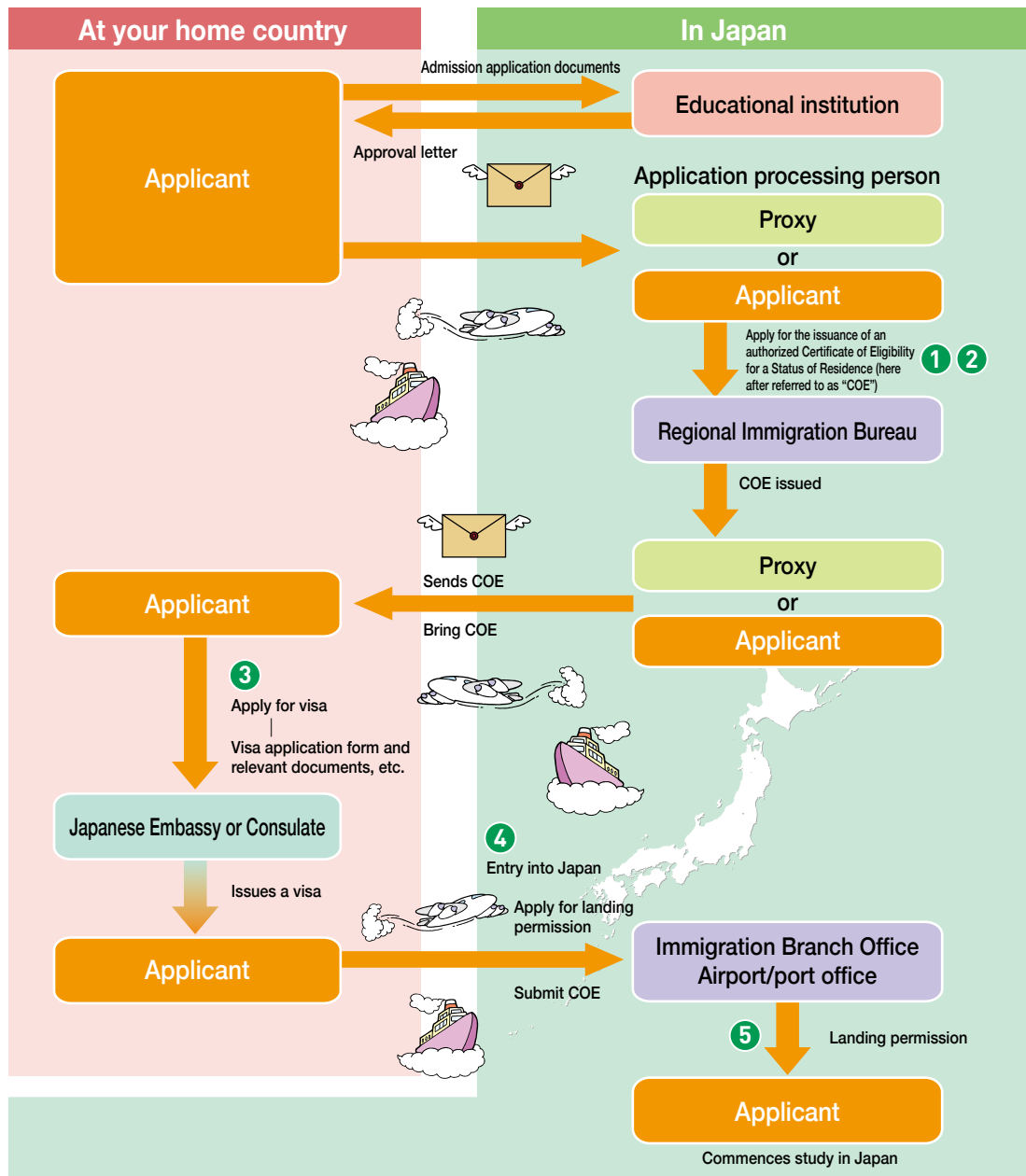
Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice <http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/index.html>

Visa and status of residence

People wishing to study in Japan must apply for a visa first. There are several types of visa, and the person's status of residence is determined according to his/her reason for coming to Japan, status and position. The one applicable to international students for study at a university, a junior college, a college of technology, a professional training college, or a Japanese language institute etc., in Japan is "Student." Periods of stay are as follows: 4 years and 3 months, 4 years, 3 years and 3 months, 3 years, 2 years and 3 months, 2 years, 1 year and 3 months, 1 year, 6 months or 3 months. There are two ways to apply for a visa: Either by showing a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or without showing it. Showing a COE is the quicker of the two.

! Most applications for scholarships or accommodation for international students are available only to those holding the "Student" status of residence.

Immigration procedures based on the issue of Certificate of Eligibility for a Status of Residence (COE)



1 Application for Certificate of Eligibility for a Status of Residence (COE)

An international student wishing to study in Japan or his/her proxy (e.g., a family member of the student or an employee of the school accepting the student) will first apply for an authorized COE at a regional immigration bureau in Japan. Although an applicant may personally apply for the COE, most of the time it is delegated to their proxy (institution, etc.). Please check with your school on documentation requirements when applying, as each school may have its own requirements.

2 Evidence showing the applicant's ability to pay all expenses during his/her stay in Japan

When applying for a COE or visa, you may be asked for proof that you are able to cover your expenses while studying in Japan.

A savings balance certificate, income certificate covering the past several years or taxation certificate of the person wishing to study in Japan (or his/her guarantor) is usually required as proof of the applicant's ability to cover expenses. If an applicant cannot cover the expenses related to entering, staying and studying in Japan, his/her parents or guardian may qualify to serve as a guarantor who provides the financial means to cover those expenses.

3 Visa application documents

Once the COE is issued, the visa application form can be submitted to the Japanese embassy or consulate in your home country.

Required documents:

- 1) **Passport**
- 2) **Visa application form**
- 3) **Photographs**
- 4) **COE**
- 5) **Documents other than the above may also be required.**

4 Entry to Japan

When entering Japan, the following documents are required.

Required documents:

- 1) **Passport**
- 2) **Visa from Japanese embassy or consulate in your home country**
- 3) **COE (If already issued)**

5 Residence card

A residence card (*zairyu card*) will be issued for a foreign national residing in Japan for more than three months. It is important that this residence card is carried at all times.

Issue of residence card:

When entering Japan via New Chitose, Narita, Haneda, Chubu Centrair, Kansai, Hiroshima or Fukuoka Airport

During the immigration process, a Landing Permission stamp will be affixed in your passport and a residence card will be issued. After you determine where you will live in Japan, please bring your residence card to the municipal office administering your address within 14 days to register as a resident.

When entering Japan via airports other than those mentioned above:

During the immigration process, a Landing Permission stamp will be affixed in your passport, with a seal indicating the later issuance of a residence card. After you determine where you will live in Japan, please go to the municipal office administering your address within 14 days to register as a resident. Be sure to bring your passport bearing the seal mentioned above. Your residence card will be mailed to your registered address at a later date.



Residence card

6 Social security and tax number (“My Number”)

In Japan, an individual 12-digit social security and tax number (also called “My Number” or “individual number”) is given to all residents, including nationals of other countries. Some time after completion of resident registration at the municipal office of your address, you will be sent card notifying you of your individual number. Please keep this notification card or individual number card (issued upon application) in a safe place, as your individual number is required in some situations, such as when completing important procedures at the municipal office. Please also note that this number is different from the 12-digit number written on your residence card.



Notification card

The following are examples of when your individual number is required:

- When completing procedures at the municipal office
- When starting part-time work

7 Immigration procedures for entrance exam purposes

If a foreign national travels to Japan to take an examination, he/she must obtain a “Temporary Visitor” visa at the Japanese embassy or consulate in his/her country by presenting the examination voucher of his/her school of choice. With a “Temporary Visitor” visa, you may be able to stay in Japan for 15, 30, or 90 days. If a foreign national is a national of a country under the Visa Exemption Arrangements, he/she will not need to apply for a visa.

8 Permission to engage in activities other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted

The “Student” status of residence is granted for the sole purpose of studying in Japan and as such does not permit work. However, if you file an application at a regional immigration bureau or other such official organization and are granted permission to engage in activities other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted, you can work part-time. Persons with the “Student” status of residence who are entering Japan for the first time and will be living in the country for over three months may apply for permission to engage in activities other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted at an airport, etc. when landing permission was issued (see page 34, “Part-time Work”). If applying after arrival, please do so at a regional immigration bureau. However, please be aware that some schools may not grant students permission to engage in a part-time job so that they focus on their studies. Check whether the school you are interested in allows part-time jobs.

9 Procedures for temporary exit from Japan

An international student studying in Japan who will be returning to his/her home country temporarily or visiting another country for a short period must apply for a re-entry permit at a regional immigration bureau (regional immigration bureaus are also located at major airports).

If he/she fails to do so, he/she will be required to apply for a visa afresh at the Japanese embassy or consulate in his/her home country. Foreign nationals residing legally in Japan for mid- to long term in possession of a valid passport and residence card who will be re-entering Japan within one year of their departure (or before expiration of the period of stay if the period of stay expires within one year after the departure) will, in principle, not be required to apply for a re-entry permit if they indicate their intention to re-enter the country (by ticking the column on an ED Card for the Special Re-entry Permit) to the immigration officer when departing Japan.



When you leave Japan, be sure to present your residence card and tick the column on an ED Card for Special Re-entry Permit.



ED Card for Special Re-entry Permit

10 Extension of period of stay

If a foreign national wishes to stay in Japan beyond the period of authorized stay granted to him/her at the time of entry into Japan, he/she must file for an extension of stay with a regional immigration bureau, etc. in Japan before his/her original period of authorized stay expires. (Usually, a foreign national can file for an extension of stay three months before the expiration of his/her original period of authorized stay in Japan.) Staying past the period of authorized stay in Japan without doing so can incur serious penalties or deportation.

! Forgetting to extend your period of stay and residing illegally in Japan can result in your expulsion from the country and the loss of any scholarships you receive.

11 Changing of the status of residence

Status of residence must be changed to a different type when the activity (student) initially applied for is discontinued to engage in other activities (employment, etc.). The application must be filed at a regional immigration bureau.

! Engaging in income-generating businesses or activities without proper approval will result in punishment and deportation.

12 Revocation of the status of residence

Status of residence can be revoked in cases where a foreign national has reported falsely on his/her activities, personal history or submitted false documents.

! Status of residence will be revoked if activities specified in the status of residence have not been performed for three months or more (e.g., a person with the “Student” status of residence working every day without going to college) unless with valid reasons.

13 Bringing dependents to Japan

Dependent spouses and children of international students who study under the status of residence of “Student” in universities can reside in Japan under the status of residence of “Dependent” based on the period of stay of the international student supporting them.

It is recommended that international students bring their dependents once they are familiar with life in Japan and are economically stable.

! Take note that it will be difficult for dependents to obtain the “Dependent” status of residence in Japan if the initial entry was as a “Temporary Visitor” (commonly referred to as the tourist visa).

14 Notification to the immigration bureau and the municipal office

Any change in the name, date of birth, sex, nationality/region or the organization the foreign national belongs to (such as a change of school) is required to be notified to a regional immigration bureau within 14 days after the change is made. If your place of residence in Japan changes, you have to file notifications of moving in and out at the municipal office.

