

Japan Alumni Global Network Newsletter

February 2023 issue

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Looking Back at Hot Topics of 2022 in Japan

Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics had highest number of medals won, at 18

The number of medals won at the Winter Olympics held in Beijing in February 2022 surpassed the 13 won at the previous PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The next winter Games will take place in 2026 in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Milani, Italy.



Launch of Nishi Kyushu Shinkansen excites nation



The Nishi Kyushu Shinkansen began operations on September 23, 2022. The new bullet train connects Takeo Onsen in Saga Prefecture with Nagasaki Station over 66 kilometers. This offers the shortest travel time between Hakata and Nagasaki stations at 1 hour and 20 minutes. Local government authorities participated in a commemoration ceremony on opening day.

Move to revitalize inbound travel with acceptance of independent tourists

The acceptance of independent foreign visitors to Japan was reinstated on October 11, 2022. More tourists can be seen in city streets since the removal of immigration restrictions. To revitalize inbound consumption hampered by COVID, the government intends to increase efforts looking ahead to the Expo 2025 to be held in Osaka, Japan.



Check out what current international students are doing!

Stay informed about research that current international students are doing at universities!



■ Profile

- Name: Dr. Tazbir Ahmed
- Degree:
PhD candidate, Department of Ophthalmology,
Graduate School of Medicine,
The University of Tokyo.
- Nationality: Bangladeshi

About the research that you are doing in Japan

Retinal inflammatory disease (or uveitis) is an eye condition that causes dysfunction of the retina and, in the most severe cases, substantial vision loss. Through my research, I would like to develop novel therapeutics for uveitis and other autoimmune disorders, with higher safety and equivalent or higher efficacy than existing treatments.

A short introduction of what you are researching

The main purpose of my study was to characterize lipid signalling in case of retinal damage in animal model and to identify the role of a potent bioactive lipid receptor in treating retinal inflammation.

Discovering novel drug formulations is significantly influenced by this understanding of our translational research. The function of the targeted receptor in endothelial damage reactions raises the possibility that it could be used as a therapeutic target for the treatment of vascular inflammation and retinal degenerative diseases.

Some details about your research and working environment

I gained a great deal of practical expertise in managing animal models and bench work while learning the basic research methodologies and microsurgical procedures that were crucial for innovative vision research. The excellent working atmosphere in our lab of the University of Tokyo is important for fostering creative thinking and problem-solving skills. I appreciate the cordial support from my professor and colleagues.

During my graduate program, I have attended several international conferences to talk about eye research which boosted my confidence in scientific communication. Meeting and speaking with Nobel laureate Elizabeth Helen Blackburn (in Physiology or Medicine, 2009) was one of my most unforgettable academic experiences.

Learn from the mistakes of your superiors! What should you be careful about when job hunting in Japan?

Current and former international students may find Japan's unique job hunting process rather difficult. We asked some of those who have been through the process to share some mistakes they made. Let their wisdom guide you through your own job hunting activities!

Check the activities of those who have returned to their countries using the following resources!



■ Profile

- Name: Emmanuel Bonavita
- Degree:
Master's in Political Science - Hosei University
Graduate School of Political Science
(However, I did my job hunting as of 2005
during a one-year study abroad program at
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.)
- Enrollment period: 2007-2009
- Nationality: French

As for the background of my job search, the timing is divided. First, after receiving my bachelor's degree, I was in a one-year program called the Japanese Language and Culture Study Abroad Program, and I began my job search at that time. After I got a job, I looked for a new job, but eventually went back to my home country and found a new job there. After spending about 6 years abroad, I returned to Japan and became a sole proprietor of my own company.

Do you have any stories of failure in your job hunting activities in Japan?

At the time, Japanese students tended to start job hunting earlier than now, but I started it during my second study abroad program from 2004 to 2005.

I came to Japan in October 2004, started job hunting in March 2005, and was scheduled to finish my study abroad in August 2005. However, it took a long time from the written exam to the job offer, and I realized that I started too late.

This is because I did not have enough time to devote to its preparation although the paper test including the aptitude test "SPI".

During my job search, I received some advice from Japanese people that it is good to study enough to prepare for the SPI to some extent, but not to neglect the interview.

Also, they told me that while I should answer seriously at interviews, it was important to prepare a few words that would have an impact on the interviewer at the end of the interview. Specifically, they could be something a little witty or funny. But above all, it is necessary to research the background and business of the company you are interviewed for.

In addition, depending on the company and the nature of the job, it may be helpful to acquire qualifications.

How did you cope with your failure?

SPI is not something that you learn after a year or two of stay in Japan, but something acquires some kind of sense that those who have had Japanese education for a long time. Therefore, I researched companies that administered the SPI with only a written test or interview and few unique questions, and found a job there.

While working, I continued to study for qualifications as part of my job search.

A word to those who are preparing to find a job in Japan

Although there is no one right answer for job hunting, I feel that nowadays, compared to the past, companies look for people with immediate ability to work. For this reason, I recommend that you obtain a qualification that has a strong practical application while you are studying in Japan.

In addition, there has long been a system called "alumni visit," in which you can consult with alumni of the same university who are working for the same company where you have been employed. Since consultations with alumni are now increasingly online due to the pandemic, it is now possible to consult with them even if you are not there. This is very meaningful as it gives me a little insight into the inner workings of a company and the field.

Introducing the International Student Association

Here are some of the organizations that are active as returnee student associations in each region.

Check the activities of those who have returned to their countries using the following resources!

■ Brunei Association of Japan Alumni (Brunei)

Brunei Association of Japan Alumni, or BAJA is an association that gathers former Bruneian students who had studied in Japan. BAJA members are citizens of Brunei Darussalam who have studied in Japan for at least 6 months. As of 2022, BAJA has 50 members made of individuals from various background and career paths.

The objectives of BAJA are to unite the former Brunei students who studied in Japan; to promote the ambitions and dedications of its members by participating in the development of the nation to exchange culture between the nations of Brunei Darussalam and Japan; as well as to contribute to the transfer of knowledge in all fields, therefore ensuring the success of development in education and technology.

Web site



Instagram



Our activities tend to be categorised as the following:

[1] Members' involvement either as the working committee or audience and supporters of any cultural activities and functions held by the Japanese Embassy in Brunei such as Japanese Speech Contest whereby BAJA's President was appointed as the head judge and other members competed, or Japanese Language Culture Week and Japanese Culture Festival.

[2] Assist new students who are going to study in Japan by giving some background information on study life, Japanese culture and social adjustments, shared by BAJA members from their own personal experiences. BAJA has also sent their members to attend seminars and conferences around the region such as the ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA) and symposiums organised by Asia Japan Alumni (ASJA).

[3] Organise activities related to Japanese public holidays such as Origami Demonstration to commemorate Children’s Day in Japan with full support from the Embassy of Japan.

In 2022, we have organised a few activities such as:

[1] Ohayou Minna and Bring your Asa Gohan; where our members and associates can enjoy morning exercise together and bring their 'themed' breakfast to eat after.

[2] The Talk: Sharing session with BAJA members on selected topics to encourage open and friendly discussion. This is done through Face to face and Online (Hybrid).

[3] BAJA is also planning a few other activities and look forward towards them in 2023.



■ **Freunde des Studienwerk für Deutsch-Japanischen Kulturaustausch in NRW e.V. (Germany)**

The Friends of the “Studienwerk für Deutsch-Japanischen Kulturaustausch in NRW” is a network organised by the alumni of the Studienwerk’s fellowship program called “Experience Japan!”. “Experience Japan!” provides German students and young professionals in various fields with a unique opportunity to experience Japan up-close and learn more about its culture and people. It is a four-week educational travel program that includes an in-depth study tour of several notable locations as well as 2 weeks of practical experience in a Japanese workplace commensurate with the participants’ academic or professional background.

The purpose of the alumni network is to keep the spark alive even after the participants return to Germany. We continue to foster the cultural exchange by supporting the activities of the Studienwerk, co-organising local Japan related events and keeping our members up to date with regard to various opportunities to experience Japan in Germany.

Web site



Instagram



■ **German JSPS Alumni Association (JSPS-Club) (Germany)**

Currently, JSPS-Club has about 500 researchers in various fields, of which about 60 are engaged in research in Japan. Members can join not only JSPS but also researchers who have stayed in Japan using the JASSO scholarship system. JSPS-Club holds annual symposiums for those who are interested in German-Japanese academic exchanges and regular meetings for members in Japan and German-speaking countries. In addition, a junior forum is held in Germany jointly with the JSPS Bonn Research Liaison Center to provide an opportunity to present research results.

The club supports members in applications for the JSPS-BRIDGE fellowships, open only for members of the clubs, who happened to be former JSPS fellows, but also has a fund for applications to invite Japanese scientists to their cooperation partners in the German-speaking area. It also co-funds scientific symposia of its members and donates an annual prize, the Alumni Club Award that includes a free roundtrip ticket to either Japan or the German-speaking countries and additional funds for a stay in these countries.

■ **The Association of Japanese Government (MEXT) Alumni - ABMON**

The Association of Japanese Government (MEXT) Alumni - ABMON gathers MEXT alumni mostly from the jurisdiction of the Consulate-General of Japan in São Paulo, located in Brazil. ABMON was established in 1994 and it is represented currently by more than a thousand Brazilian associates who have been sent to Japan since 1956.

The main objective of ABMON is to spread the scholarship experience of MEXT alumni, as well as the societal impact of their later professional and academic careers in Brazil, Japan, and overseas. ABMON also aims to foster a communication channel and active collaborations among Brazilian MEXT alumni, besides being a bridge towards other Alumni Associations in Brazil and around the world.

e-mail: secretaria.abmon@gmail.com

Web site



Web site



Linked in



Instagram



■ **Jordan Japan Academic Society (Jordan)**

Introducing Japanese cultures to Jordanian, connecting academics in Japan with those in Jordan and vice versa, promoting the MEXT scholarship in Jordan among Jordanian academic institutes, use the local press media to participate in any event in Japan such as natural disasters, political issues (the new era of Japan, prime ministers visits, though, Arab-Japanese through dialogue, culture events,..etc) holding lectures between Japan and Jordan in specific topics such as climate change, robot, remote sensing, animation, festivals in Jordan to introduce Japanese cultures, participate with Japan Embassy in their activities and promote it such as Japan film weeks in Jordan, selecting and screening students apply to MEXT scholarship, hold an annual gathering for JJAS members with the support of Embassy under the patronage of H.E the Ambassador and culture section, arrangement for holding a regular meeting with Ambassador with different universities presidents in Jordan with those has any academic members of JJAS employed in those institute. Holding regular lectures for the Japanese volunteers (JICA) to introduce Arab Culture.

Recently we have about 70 graduated members of JJAS in Jordan
 For any further information please contact.
 e-mail: matouq3@yahoo.com

Facebook



For other international student associations in each region,
 please see below.

<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/network/list/>



Introducing useful information on Facebook Page "日本留学ネット・Japan Alumni Global Network"!

JASSO launched a Japan Alumni Global Network Facebook page in July 2021. We want it to be a place where current / former international students can mingle and acquire useful information.

Those who are reading this post now! Would you like to introduce your memories in Japan or/and topics you want to share with fellow students on the Japan Alumni Global Network? Please write your name and email address and contact us via Facebook direct message or email "alumni-newsletter@jasso.go.jp".

Official Facebook Page
"Japan Alumni Global Network"

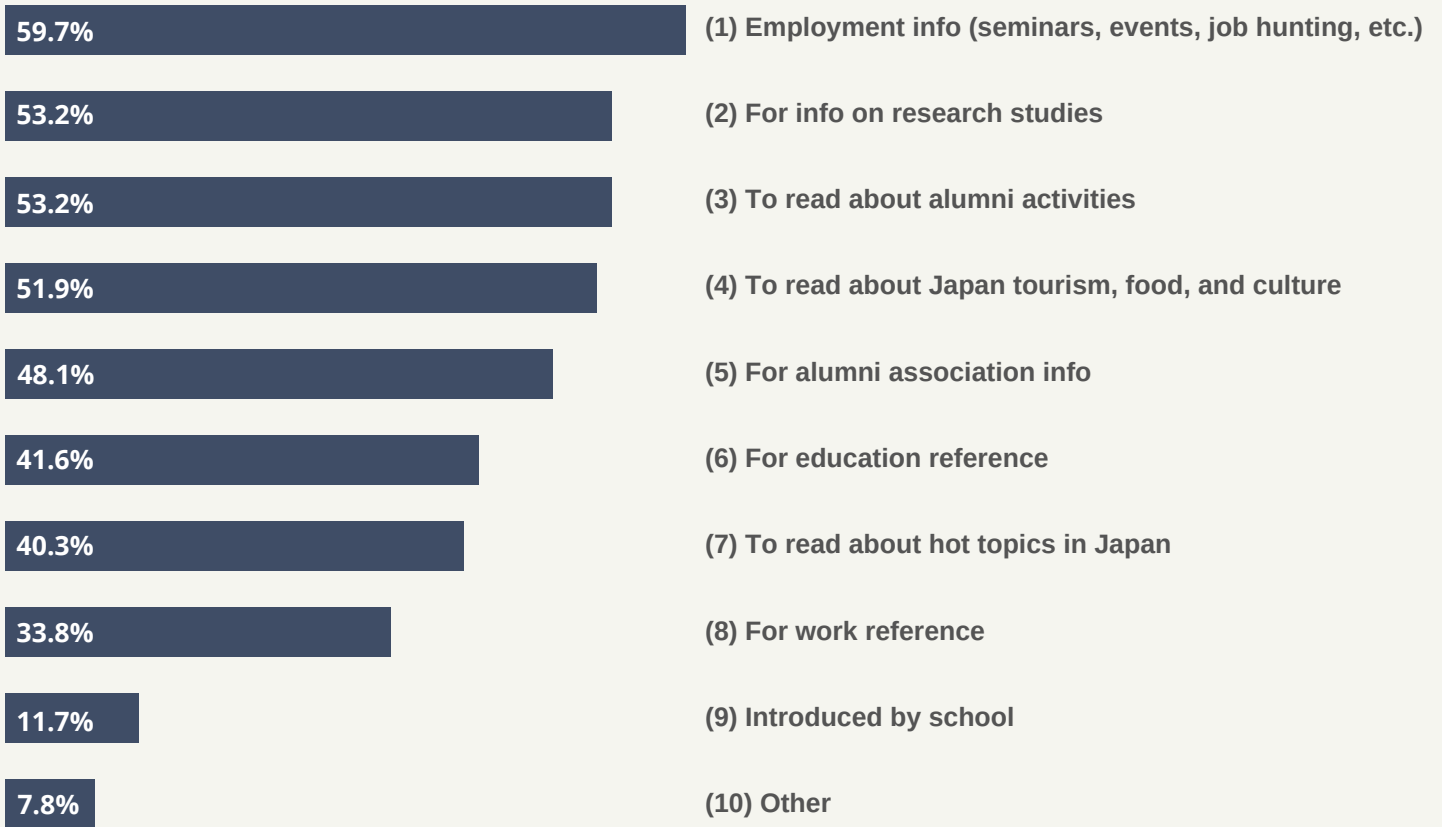


Take our Facebook page survey

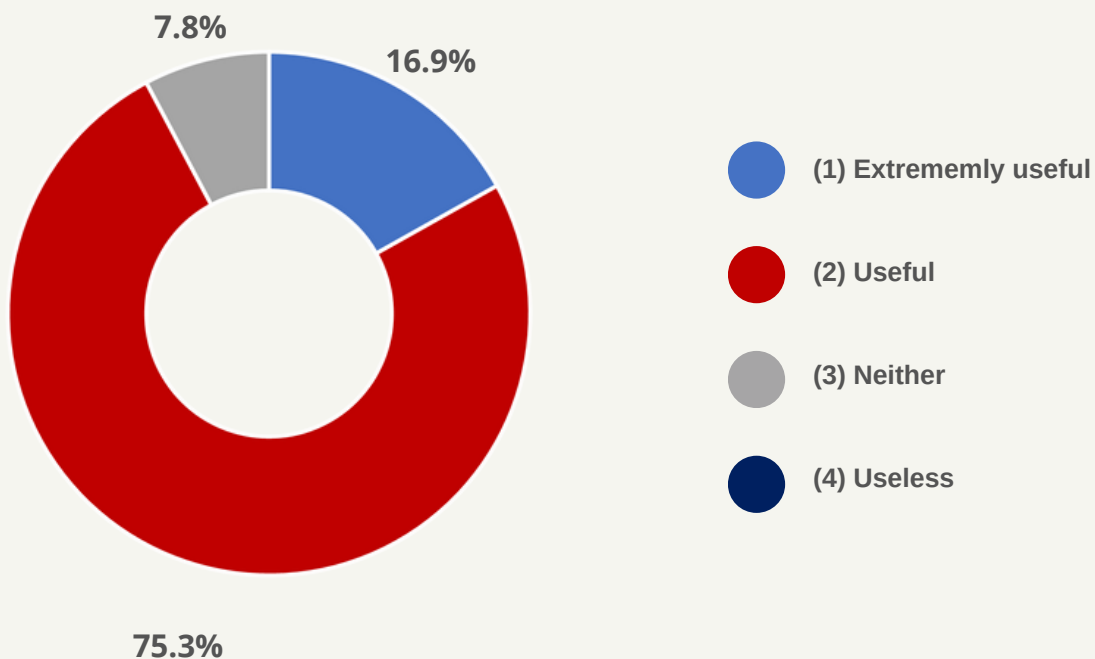
We are conducting a survey about the Japan Alumni Global Network Facebook page we launched in July 2022. We appreciate those of you who have submitted responses.

Based on everyone's insight, we hope to use the Japan Alumni Global Network Facebook page to provide as much helpful information as possible.

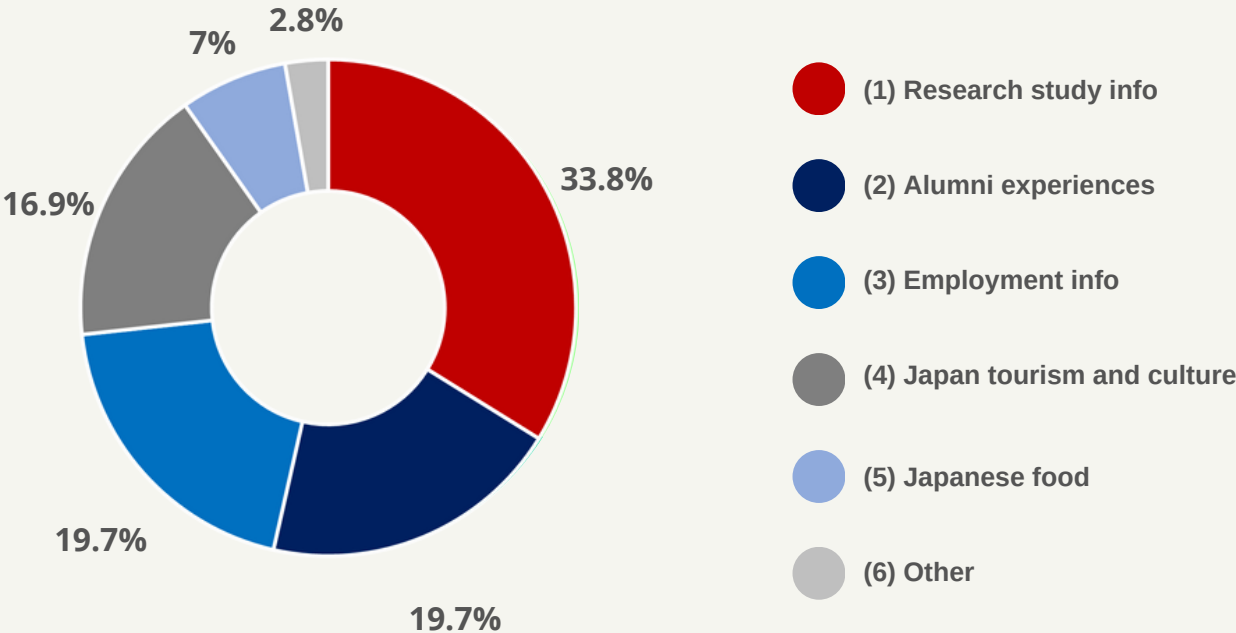
**-Answers from those who follow our Facebook page-
For which of the following reasons did you choose to follow the page?
(multiple answers OK)**



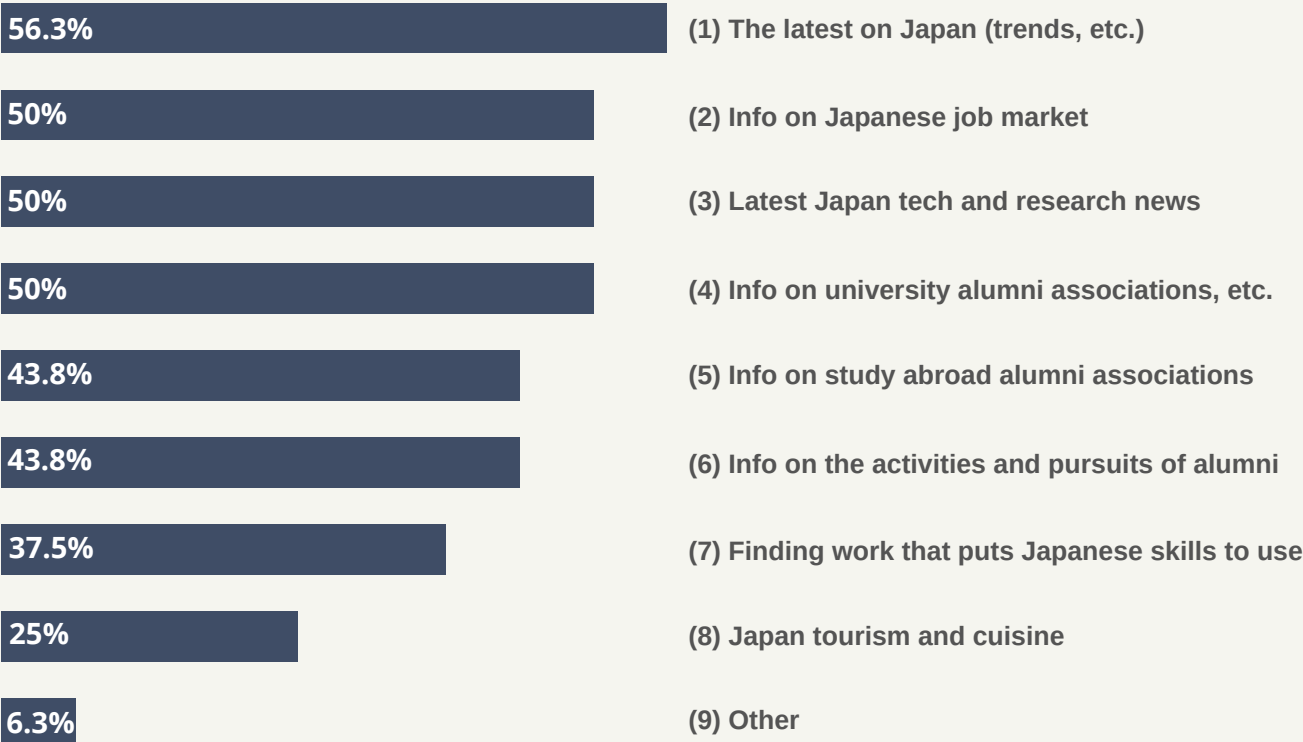
For which of the following reasons did you choose to follow the page?



Which information do you find useful?



-Answers from those who do not follow our Facebook page- What type of content would make you want to follow the page? (multiple answers OK)



Introducing "Job Hunting Guide for International Students"

JASSO publishes "Job Hunting Guide for International Students" every year. When international students start job hunting in Japan, they may be confused by the activities and recruitment schedule unique to Japan. The number of employment of international students is increasing, but you may wonder when to start preparation? What is the required Japanese level? How do you prepare for the interview? There would be various questions.

Understanding the current situation of job hunting for international students, and above all, knowing the needs of Japanese companies for hiring international students is indispensable for job hunting. This guide book provides detailed and easy-to-understand explanations of the challenges faced by international students.

For example, when and what to do, research in industry / company and applying for a position, preparation for employment examination, changing status of residence, stories of others' experiences, etc., you can cover information related to job hunting with this one book.

Main contents of "Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2024"

- Before Starting to Job Hunt in Japan
- Preparation for Job Hunting Activities
- Applications
- From Screening Tests and Job Offers to Joining a Company
- Changing Your Status of Residence
- Job Hunting Reports

You can download the PDF version of "Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2024 (Japanese Version)" at the following URL (the booklet version will be sent from the end of February 2023).

https://www.jasso.go.jp/ryugaku/after_study_j/job/guide.html

In addition, the PDF file of the 2024 English version can be downloaded from the same URL from around the end of February. So please take advantage of it.

https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/after_study_j/job/guide.html

"Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2024 (English version)"



If you are looking for a job in Japan, first consult with the career center or the international exchange center of your university (school).

Introducing support programs for international students and former international students.

JASSO also supports international students who have returned to their countries. This time, we would like to introduce the "Follow-up Research Fellowship" . The recruitment for 2023 has been closed, but reports of former participants might be helpful.

■ Follow-up Research Fellowship

This is for students who have completed study in Japan and are active in the fields of education, academic research, or administration as they return to their home country. By subsidizing travel expenses and stay expenses to Japan, this program allows you to come back to Japan and conduct short-term research at a Japanese university with your former faculty members.

- Number of members in 2022: 25
- Number of members in 2023: App. 24 (projected)

[Here for the report of the Follow-up Research Fellowship]
https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/after_study_j/tanken/report/index.html



Note from the editor

Thank you for reading the February 2023 issue of the Japan Alumni Global Network Newsletter.

JASSO publishes a newsletter once a year as part of our Facebook postings to provide useful information to current / former international students.

In this newsletter, we introduced news about Japan in 2022, information about finding a job and career in Japan, and activities and accomplishments of our former international students. Did they remind you of your study in Japan?

On the Japan Alumni Global Network Facebook page, we post the latest news about Japan, activities of former international students, and information about finding a job in Japan, in order to expand the network of former international students who studied in Japan and to maintain a long-lasting connection with Japan. We post the latest information on Japan, the activities of former international students, and information on finding a job in Japan. Comments from readers are also shown on posts, and we hope that they will help you remember your study abroad days and provide an opportunity to reconnect with your former university and old friends again. Please take a look at our Facebook posts as well!



Publisher

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 Student Exchange Department

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