

Changing Your Status of Residence

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Application for Change of Status of Residence

Changing from "College Student" to a visa allowing you to work

In order to work in Japan, international students are required to change their status of residence from "College Student" to a status of residence that allows them to work.

■ Major residence statuses for work

Those which allow work with restrictions regarding job type, industry, and work content

Highly Skilled Professional, Business Manager, Legal/Accounting Services, Medical Services, Researcher, Instructor, Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services, Nursing Care, Specified Skilled Worker, etc.

- The Highly Skilled Professional residence status is for those who have at least a certain number of points calculated based on academic background, professional career, annual salary, etc.
- The Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services status accounted for approximately 90% of the residence statuses held by international students that changed their residence status for the purpose of working in Japan in Heisei 30(2018).

■ Points to note when applying for a change of status of residence

① Prepare the required documentation as early as possible.

There are certain documents that must be prepared by recruiting companies, and it is recommended that these are gathered together as early as possible.

② The screening process takes between one and three months from the point of application, so applications must be sent in as early as possible.

Application acceptance begins in January as a basic principle (for Specified Skilled Worker, December at all bureau locations; for other statuses of residence, usually December at the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau and the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau) so that new graduates can begin work in April. Applications must be submitted again if any documents are insufficient, which raises the possibility of the process not being completed in time for starting work, so they must be prepared as early as possible.

③ Applications must be submitted by the person in question as a basic principle.

If the applicant is not able to apply in person, it is possible for an intermediary who has given a notification of intermediary to the head of the Regional Immigration Bureau to submit the application.

④ It is possible to reapply as a basic principle in the event of an application being rejected.

An appropriate amount of the valid period of stay must remain. Reapplications will not be authorized unless the reason for the application being rejected is improved.



Websites containing the procedures necessary for changing the status of residence

Immigration Services Agency <http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/>
Tokyo Employment Service Center for Foreigners
<https://jsite.mhlw.go.jp/tokyo-foreigner/>

Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services

■ Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services	
Activities	Activities to engage in services, which require skills or knowledge pertinent to physical science, engineering or other natural science fields, or to engage in services, which require knowledge pertinent to jurisprudence, economics, sociology or other human science fields, or to engage in services which require specific ways of thought or sensitivity based on experience with foreign culture, based on a contract with a public or private organization in Japan.
Main jobs and job types	Management, finance, general affairs, legal affairs, planning, product development, design, marketing, advertising, public relations, interpretation, translation, language instruction, production technology, research and development, engineering, programming, architectural design, system administration, etc.
Requirements and criteria	<p>① Major in the subject of the industry you want to pursue to get the necessary knowledge and graduate from university, or receive at least equivalent education. Or, complete special training at a vocational school (only in cases coming under the necessary completion requirements as set out by the Minister of Justice). Or, acquire a decent knowledge of the industry you want to enter based on 10 years or more of business experience (includes time spent majoring in subjects related to the aforementioned knowledge at a technical college, high school, second half of secondary school, or specialty course at a vocational school). In cases in which the applicant is to engage in work related to information processing in which skills and knowledge are required, the applicant is not required to satisfy the requirements as set out by the Minister of Justice as long as he/she has passed the specified examination on information processing skills or has obtained certification as set out by the Minister of Justice for information processing skills.</p> <p>② In cases in which the applicant is to engage in work that requires specific ways of thinking or sensitivity grounded in a foreign culture, the applicant must have at least three years of experience for work in translation, interpretation, language instruction, public relations, advertising, overseas transactions, clothing or interior design, product development, etc. In cases in which the applicant is to engage in work such as translation, interpretation, or language instruction, no work experience is required if the applicant has graduated from a university.</p> <p>③ The applicant must receive no less compensation than a Japanese national would receive for comparable work.</p>
Period of Stay	Five years, three years, one year, or three months (may be extended)

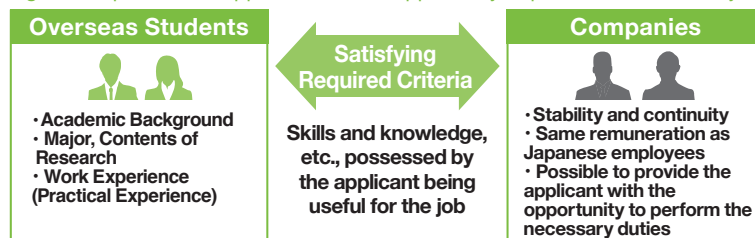
Inquiries will be made concerning whether or not subjects majored in at university or vocational school are related to knowledge and skills required for the work you intend to engage in. (The relationship, however, is not considered as less strictly for university.)

- University graduates can engage in translation from or into their native language, interpretation, and/or language instruction regardless of university major.
- In regards to computer technology related work, persons who pass an information processing skills examination as set out by the Minister of Justice or has obtained certification in the field can engage in such work regardless of what their major was at university or vocational school or whether they graduated.

Requirements for changing the status of residence

Four points pertaining to the screening process for changing the status of residence are as follows:

- ① Applicant's academic background (major, contents of research, etc.) and other background information indicating the possession of the required skills and knowledge, etc.
- ② Skills and knowledge, etc., possessed by the applicant being useful for the job sought.
- ③ Treatment of the applicant (remuneration) being applicable.
- ④ The scale and business results of the recruiting company indicating stability and continuity, and being able to provide the applicant with the opportunity to perform the necessary duties.



See the Guidelines for Authorization to Change to the "Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services" Status of Residence of Overseas Students for further details.
http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00091.html

■ Preparing Required Documents

Since the documentation required is different depending on the institution at which you are to be employed, check which category applies.

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ① Company listed on any of Japan's stock exchanges ② Mutual company involved in the insurance industry ③ National or regional organization run by Japan or an overseas nation ④ Independent administrative institution ⑤ Special corporation or licensed corporation ⑥ Public service corporation authorized by a national or regional public organization in Japan ⑦ Public corporation listed in Appendix #1 of the Corporation Tax Act ⑧ Small-to-mid-sized companies that meet certain requirements * 	Organizations or individuals for which the withheld income tax sum listed on the total withholding record of employment income included in statements of earnings or other statutory tax reports for the previous year is 15 million yen or more.	Organizations or individuals (excluding those listed in category 2) that have submitted statements of earnings in withholding tax records or other statutory tax reports for employees for the previous year	Organizations or individuals not covered by Categories 1 to 3

*Those recognized by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare as a 'Youth Yell Company' under the 'Youth Yell Recognition Program' instituted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. (As of October 2019)

Category	Documentation required									
	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
Category1	●	●	●	●						
Category2	●	●	●	●						
Category3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Category4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

- ① Application for change of status of residence (with photograph of 4cm tall and 3cm wide)
- ② Passport or Resident Card (including Alien Registration Cards, which are considered to be Resident Cards)
- ③ Documentation providing evidence of the company's eligibility for any of the above-mentioned categories

Category 1: Copy of a quarterly report or documentation providing evidence of the company being listed on any of Japan's stock exchanges (copy)

Documentation providing evidence that the establishment of the company was authorized by a competent authority (copy)

Category 2 and Category 3: Statements of earnings in withholding tax records or other statutory tax reports for employees for the previous year (copy affixed with seal of receipt)

- ④ Documentation providing evidence of the titles of diplomas or advanced diplomas received (vocational school students only)
- ⑤ Documentation providing evidence of the applicant's activities, etc.

Documentation clarifying the labor conditions given to the worker based on Article 15, Paragraph 1 of the Labor Standards Act and Article 5 of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Act in the event of a labor contract having been concluded

- ⑥ Documentation providing evidence of the applicant's activities, etc.

Documentation providing evidence of the applicant's academic background, work experience, and other relevant experiences, etc.

- 1) A resume clarifying the institution, and details and period of work requiring skills and knowledge in which the applicant was engaged with regard to the application
- 2) Any of the following documents providing evidence of academic background and work experience, etc.
 - a. Graduation certification issued by a university, etc., or other documentation providing evidence of having received education that is found equivalent or superior thereto Applicants in possession of qualifications from the DOEACC system in India need to submit DOEACC qualification certificates (limited to level A, B or C).
 - b. Documentation providing evidence of the periods during which the applicant was engaged in the work listed in employment certificates (including certificates issued by universities, colleges and high schools, etc., or vocational schools listing the periods that the applicant majored in specialist subjects pertaining to the relevant skills and knowledge).
 - c. For IT engineers, proof of passing the specified examination or having obtained certification for information processing skills as set out by the Minister of Justice in a special provision public notice

*Documentation providing evidence of at least three years' experience in relevant work in the event of the applicant performing duties that require an understanding of or sensitivity toward the basic concepts of overseas cultures (excluding when applicants who graduated from university are involved in translation, interpretation, or language teaching activities).

- ⑦ Certificate of the Registered Matters

- ⑧ Either of the following documents that clarify the contents of the duties performed

(1) Overview of the employing company listing details of the history, officers, organization, and business affairs (including main clients and business results) of the company

(2) All other documentation produced by the employing company that conform to (1) listed above

- ⑨ Certificate of the Registered Matters

- ⑩ Either of the following documents that clarify the contents of the duties performed

The information above is only a summary. For more details, please refer to the page of the Ministry of Justice below.
http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00093.html

Specified Skilled Worker

With the objective of accepting foreign workers for industrial fields with a serious shortage of labor, the Act for Partial Amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act for Establishment of the Ministry of Justice was promulgated on December 14, 2018 and the new status of residence Specified Skilled Worker created for April 1, 2019.

■ Specified Skilled Worker (i)

This is a system for accepting foreign nationals with a specified level of specialty and skills who are already capable in order to deal with the serious shortage of labor. It is a status of residence for foreign nationals engaging in work requiring skills which need considerable knowledge or experience belonging to specified industrial fields.

■ Specified industrial fields

The 14 fields of nursing care; building cleaning management; forges and foundries; machine parts & tooling industries; electric, electronics and information industries; construction industry; shipbuilding/ship machinery industry; automobile maintenance; aviation industry; accommodation industry; agriculture; fishery & aquaculture; manufacture of food and beverages; and food service industry.
Note: There are two types of the status of residence Specified Skilled Worker: Specified Skilled Worker (i) and Specified Skilled Worker (ii). Specified Skilled Worker (ii) is a status of residence for foreign nationals engaging in work requiring proficient skills belonging to specified industrial fields, and the fields are currently limited to two: construction industry and shipbuilding/ship machinery industry.

■ Major requirements for Specified Skilled Worker

Specified Skilled Worker (i)	
Activities	Activities engaging in work requiring a considerable degree of knowledge or experience as specified by an Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice that is in a specified industrial field (a field of industry designated by an Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice as one requiring foreign nationals to secure the workers that are insufficient in number due to the difficulty in securing workers) and belongs to a field designated by the Minister of Justice based on a contract for employment with a public or private organization in Japan as designated by the Minister of Justice
Major job types	Duties to be engaged in specific industrial fields are determined. Examples: Accommodation industry • Providing accommodation services such as working at the front desk, planning / public relations, hospitality, and restaurant services Food service industry • General restaurant work (food preparation, customer service, restaurant management) Please see the document below for other specified fields. http://www.moj.go.jp/files/000459527.pdf
Requirements and criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is 18 years of age or older • Has passed a skill test and a Japanese language test (persons who have successfully completed Technical Intern Training (ii) are exempt from the testing requirement) • Has not resided in Japan under the status of Specified Skilled Worker (i) for a total of 5 years or more • Is not being made to pay a security deposit and has not entered into a contract stipulating a payment of penalties • If there are expenses to be borne by the candidate, fully understands the details • Will be given remuneration equivalent or superior to if a Japanese national were to be engaged and others
Period of stay	Updates every 1 year, 6 months, 4 months (Up to 5 years in total)

Please see the document below for details of the system.

http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri01_00127.html

Designated Activities (Public Notice No. 46: Graduates of a university in Japan)

To promote the retention of capable foreign workers who have graduated from or completed universities or graduate schools in Japan, a Ministry of Justice Public Notice was revised in May 2019 to expand opportunities for employment of international students who are foreign nationals and are expected to contribute to the revitalization of the economy in Japan.

■ The revision of a Ministry of Justice Public Notice to support the employment of international students

This system permits graduates of universities in Japan to engage in a wide range of work at a public or private organization in Japan with the requirement that they utilize the broad knowledge and applied competence acquired at universities and the like in Japan and the high level of Japanese language gained through experience as an international student. General hospitality or manufacturing work are not permitted as the major activity under the status of residence Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services, but this system permits such activities if the requirements above are met. However, work that are legally stipulated to be performed by a licensed person (requiring an occupational license) or work related to adult entertainment are not permitted.

■ Major requirements for Designated Activities

Designated Activities(Public Notice No. 46: Graduates of a university in Japan)	
Activities	Activities engaging in work based on a contract with a public or private organization in Japan as designated by the Minister of Justice for work of the aforementioned organization as a full-time employee of the aforementioned organization (including engaging in work requiring smooth communication using the Japanese language and excluding engaging in work in the adult entertainment business or work legally stipulated to be performed by a licensed person).
Requirements and criteria	<p>Persons who have graduated from a university or have completed a program at a graduate school in Japan, have been awarded a degree, and have a high level of skill in the Japanese language are eligible.</p> <p>① Academic history Limited to graduation from a 4-year university or completion of a graduate school in Japan. Graduation from a junior college or a specialized training, or graduation from a university or completion of a graduate school in a foreign country are not eligible.</p> <p>② Japanese language skill a) Persons scoring N1 on the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) or 480 or greater on the BJT Business Japanese Proficiency Test are eligible. b) In addition, persons who have graduated from a university having selected the Japanese language as their major in university or graduate school are deemed to have fulfilled (a). Persons who had selected the Japanese language as their major in university or graduate school in a foreign country are also deemed to have fulfilled (a), however, in such cases, the person also must have graduated from a university or have completed a graduate school in Japan.</p> <p>③ Wages A person must be paid a wage equivalent or superior to if a Japanese national were to be engaged. Whether the amount is equivalent or superior to Japanese nationals is not determined uniformly based on a set remuneration amount, but on whether the amount is equivalent or superior to Japanese nationals engaging in similar work based on the wage constitution of the region and the individual company, referencing the wages of persons engaging in similar work at other companies.</p>
Period of stay	Five years, three years, one year, six months, or three months (may be extended)

<Points of note>

- Limited to work as a full-time employee. Part-time work, such as short hours, or contracts for a limited period are not eligible.
- Only activities engaging in work during the contract period are eligible. Labor activities at another company as a dispatched staff member are not permitted.

This is a system in which points are allocated in accordance with the academic background, work experience and annual salary, etc., of foreign nationals with status of residence that permit employment, and applicants who score 70 or more points receive preferential treatment with regard to the easing of requirements for permanent residence, permission for spouses to work, and preferential processing of entry and residence procedures, etc.

1 Outline and Objectives of the System

The Points-Based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals was enacted on May 7, 2012, for the purpose of promoting the entry of highly-skilled foreign professionals into the country.

The objective of this system is to promote the entry of highly-skilled foreign professionals into Japan by dividing their activities into the three categories of [Advanced Academic Research Activities], [Advanced Specialized Technical Activities] and [Advanced Business Management Activities], and awarding points in accordance with their [Academic Background], [Work Experience], [Annual Salary], and other criteria depending on the characteristics thereof, and granting preferential immigration treatment to those who achieve a predetermined total of points (70 points).

2 Preferential Immigration Treatment

Three Categories of Activities of Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals
<p>Advanced Academic Research Activities [Highly-Skilled Professional (i) (a)] Activities of engaging in research, research guidance, or education based on a contract entered into with a public or private organization in Japan</p>
<p>Advanced Specialized Technical Activities [Highly-Skilled Professional (i) (b)] Activities of engaging in work requiring specialized knowledge or skills in the field of natural sciences or humanities based on a contract entered into with a public or private organization in Japan</p>
<p>Advanced Business Management Activities [Highly-Skilled Professional (i) (c)] Activities of engaging in the operation or management of a public or private organization in Japan</p>
<p>Points-Based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_3/</p>

- [Highly-Skilled Professional (i)]
- (1) Permission for multiple purposes of activities in Japan
 - (2) Grant of a five-year period of stay
 - (3) Easing of requirements for permanent residence with regard to the period of stay
 - (4) Permission for the spouse of the highly-skilled foreign professional to work
 - (5) Permission to accompany the parent(s) to Japan under certain conditions
 - (6) Permission to accompany a domestic worker to Japan under certain conditions
 - (7) Preferential processing of entry and residence procedures

- [Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)]
- a. In conjunction with the activities of "Highly-Skilled Professional (i)", permitted to engage in almost all of the activities under the authorization for employment
 - b. Granted an indefinite period of stay
 - c. Eligible for the preferential treatment of the above-mentioned (3) to (6)
- **Highly-Skilled Professional (ii) " is for foreign nationals who have engaged in activities of "Highly-Skilled Professional (i)" for three years or more.

Open for Professionals

In collaboration with related institutions, this site provides easy-to-understand information for foreign nationals on Japanese language learning, child education, employment, housing, medical care, and other details pertaining to life in Japan, as well as information for highly-skilled foreign professionals who live in Japan or who are considering living in Japan, such as preferential treatment for immigration, etc.
http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/external_economy/professionals/

Job Hunting Activities after Graduating

Procedures for changing your status of residence to continue job hunting

In the event that you cannot find employment by the time you graduate, you may apply to change your visa from "College Student" to "Designated Activities (to continue seeking employment)" to continue job hunting activities for a year after graduating.

(This visa is valid for six months and may be renewed only one time for another six months.(namely, 1 year in total)) From December 2016, it is possible to continue job hunting activities for an additional year if the following conditions are satisfied during the second year after graduation.

People who are part of job hunting support programs implemented by regional public organizations (programs that conform to the requirements established by the Ministry of Justice, Immigration Bureau) and who have received a certificate providing evidence that they are part of a program operated by regional public organizations and have no trouble residing in Japan may change their status of residence for their participation in job hunting activities as part of these programs (residence of six months for specific activities) and be authorized to extend their period of residence one more time if they wish to continue their job hunting activities, including cases in which they take part in internships while participating in the program for a second year after graduation.

Eligible individuals

- Those who have graduated from a university (including two-year colleges) or a regular course at a graduate school
- Those who have graduated from a professional training college and got a diploma

Documents required for application

- (1) Application form for changing status of residence
- (2) Passport and resident card (the former alien registration card), to show
- (3) Certification showing the ability to pay all expenses to be incurred during the stay in Japan
- (4) Bring your most recent university or college graduation certificate. If you studied at a technical or vocational school, you should also bring your transcript of results, your specialist degree certificate, and documents that outline the specialist training you have undertaken.
- (5) Recommendation letter from the university enrolled in just before application
- (6) Documents verifying you have continued job hunting (job hunt records, screening result document, etc.)

If you secure a job while on a "Designated Activities" visa, you will be required to change your residence status to "Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services."

Notes

- You will have limited opportunities to find a job since many Japanese companies primarily target new graduates when planning their acquisition of human resources, and additionally, the period between April and September, in which you will continue job hunting, is when recruitment for the following year is underway.
- You may be asked to wait to join the company until April of the following year even if you are offered a position.
- It will be difficult to gather information because you will be required to conduct job hunting activities under a schedule that differs from the one for regular "new graduate hiring." In addition, it will be difficult to communicate your eagerness to apply for a job because of the delay in timing.

In the case you have been offered a position that starts in April of the following year, you may stay in Japan until you start work by changing your visa to "Designated Activities (for persons with job offers)." However, you must apply to change your status of residence because the content of your activities differs from job hunting activities.