

White Rose University Consortium: College of Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities Research Culture in Japan

Academia

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Norms of Behaviour

Modes of address

Generally speaking, people are expected to address others in a formal, polite way. They usually address people with surname + *さん* (*san*), suffix showing politeness, or *先生* (*sensei*), a word used for teachers and professors. Addressing somebody with their first name can sound rude or over familiar to people who are not so familiar with Western culture.

In class there is a clear power difference between teachers and students in Japanese schools. Students have to use polite form to their teachers at all times. They normally address their teachers with surname + *sensei* (teacher/professor), e.g. *Smith-sensei*. First names can be combined with *sensei*, e.g. *Adam-sensei*, but it is rare unless there are two teachers with the same surname in the same place. Note that *san*, Japanese suffix showing politeness, is not used when addressing teachers who teach or supervise you. Teaching Assistants (TAs) are not usually considered as teachers, so they are addressed with *san*, not *sensei*.

Teachers can speak to their students in a casual way, but it is also common that they speak in polite form. They address their young male students with surname + *君* -*kun* and female students, and sometimes male mature students, with surname + *さん* -*san*. Calling them by their first name is unusual when you speak in Japanese, although students tend to accept it when teachers speak in a language other than Japanese.

In e-mails: Students are expected to write in a formal and polite way in e-mails, too. At the beginning of an e-mail people usually write down their addressee's name with full name/surname + *-san*, *sensei* or *様 / さま* -*sama*, a very polite form of address. For example, from casual to formal:

Smith-san スミスさん

(Adam) Smith-sensei スミス先生

(Adam) Smith-sama スミス様 / スミスさま

Dress

People tend to wear formal clothes, especially suits, in Japanese academic settings. If you are not sure what to wear, choosing something formal, such as shirt and trousers or dress in a discreet colour, is always a safe option. Dyeing hair, especially in colours which do not exist in nature such as green or pink, and body piercing are not favoured (ear piercings are acceptable, as long as they are not excessive in number). Tattoos are not favoured either as tattoos can be associated with gangs (*yakuza*) in Japanese culture. It might also be harder to be accepted as a teacher if you have very conspicuous tattoos.

In class formal clothes such as suits are slightly favoured, although teachers can alternatively wear modest and appropriate casual clothes. Students may wear what they choose, as long as they do not wear clothing with obscene images or phrases. As in the UK, students often wear hoodies and jeans.

In oral exams both students and teachers tend to wear formal clothes such as grey, black or navy suits. People also tend to wear formal clothes when presenting in conferences as jeans and other casual clothes are not favoured. For vivas, students tend to wear dark-coloured suits while teachers wear whatever they like.

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Applications

Place to study

[Japan Study Support](#) (JPSS) contains a search function for university programmes. In the search function, one can specify topic, type of university, type of programme of study, and if courses are held in English. It provides extensive information on each programme, including dates of entrance examinations, fees, prerequisites for admission, and availability of prior examination papers. The link above is for graduate programmes.

Essential documents

What students need depends on universities, but in most cases students are required to submit the following documents. You may need to prepare several copies of some documents, such as your master's thesis. Item with * in the list below should be original, not photocopy, in many cases.

1. *Application form (願書, *gansho*) provided by the university faculty (some universities have different forms for foreign applicants)
2. Master's thesis and its abstract (applicants need to complete their Master's degree or equivalent before enrolling a PhD course in Japan - before 31st March of the year of enrolment)

3. Research proposal (研究計画書 *kenkyū keikakusho*)
4. List of publications (研究業績一覧 *kenkyū gyōseki ichiran*) (if you have any)
5. *Assessment of student records or transcripts (成績表 *seisekihyō*) (some universities ask PhD applicants to hand in their assessment at undergraduate level as well as postgraduate level)
6. *Graduation certificate (卒業証明書 *sotsugyō shōmeisho*) (you may need to hand in the one for your undergraduate study)
7. Certificate of Japanese language skills such as JLPT or provided by your language teacher
8. Certificate of English language skills, i.e. IELTS or TOEFL (if your native language is not English)
9. Photos for IDs (5 cm x 4 cm)
10. Return envelopes with stamps and address labels
11. Photocopies of your passport
12. Examination fee (around 30,000 yen)

Most universities ask applicants to send these documents by post, often using registered express mail. Online applications are quite rare among Japanese universities.

Time scale

The most crucial difference between the Japanese time scale and that of Europe is that the Japanese academic year starts in April and ends in March. Not many universities allow students to enrol in October. Most universities have two semesters (spring and autumn), but a few universities have a three-semester system (spring, autumn and winter). Japanese universities have three vacations: summer (August - September), winter (late December – early January) and spring (mid-February – early April).

Applications for Japanese universities are open for a short period of time, usually less than a month, and in extreme cases less than a week. Many universities open applications for PhD students in October, for enrolment in April, but some universities have earlier deadlines for overseas applicants, so check the individual university website as soon as you start thinking about applying. Some universities have enrolment in September or October. In this case the application period falls between February and April. Universities notify applicants of the results of screening a few weeks after they close the application. In some cases you may receive the results in March, i.e. within one month before you start your academic year.

Some universities allow students to submit their completed MA thesis in January, after the time of application (usually in November). This is because Japanese MA students finish writing their thesis in December or January.

Who to contact

Applicants are supposed to contact prospective supervisors before applying. This step can be crucial at some universities, but not necessarily so in all universities. But, if you want a specific

person as your supervisor, it is highly recommended that you contact them to know if they can be so.

The [ReaD & Researchmap](#) website allows users to search for scholars and researchers across the country. Searches can be made in English or Japanese. The results provide information on the researcher's academic background, current employment, publications, and research interests. If one is searching for a host in Japan, this is a good place to start locating researchers with research topics similar to your own.

A recent Japanese government initiative has focused on attracting foreign students by developing full undergraduate and graduate level university courses taught entirely in English at top Japanese universities. This webpage from the [Japanese Embassy](#) provides links to these programmes.

Language requirements

Usually, PhD students are admitted based on their application documents and an interview, but not paper examinations (applicants for master course do have paper examinations, though). Interviews are held at the university campus, so you would have to visit Japan before enrolment. If the university does require an entrance examination, they sometimes sell or distribute past exams. Such information can be found on their webpage about entrance examinations.

Some universities ask applicants whose mother tongue is not English to submit scores of an English proficiency exam, i.e. TOEFL or IELTS. IELTS is not as popular as TOEFL in Japan, so it is better to check if universities accept IELTS or not.

Application process

Applying to Japanese universities can be troublesome because online applications are not common and Japanese universities tend to use the postal service. Applicants have to send documents by post. If they have entrance examinations and/or interviews, an admission ticket for the entrance examination (受験票, *jukenhyō*) is sent to applicants by post. Several universities inform applicants of the results only by post or at their campus, not through e-mail or telephone.

Another difficulty is that the application period is short and applicants have to submit all of the documents needed at once.

In many universities you cannot apply for more than one course in the same department (this is partly because faculties hold their entrance examinations for all courses on the same day), but in many cases you can apply for more than one course in different departments in the same university.

You have to pay the examination fee every time you apply for a university (around 30,000 yen), so it would not be wise to apply to dozens of Japanese universities.

Study visa / residency permit

Usually student visas are issued after students obtain permission to enrol at a Japanese university. Immigration procedures are shown in the following web pages:

[Immigration Procedures](#) (Gateway to Study in Japan)

[Visa](#) (Embassy of Japan in the UK)

[Visa for entering Japan](#) (JPSS)

The [‘Immigration Procedures’ section of the ‘Study in Japan’](#) site provides detailed, comprehensive information for foreign students about entering Japan.

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Costs

Tuition fees

Tuition fees vary depending on the university. 私立大学 (*shiritsu-daigaku*, private universities) are usually thought to be considerably more expensive than 国立大学 (*kokuritsu-daigaku*, national universities) or 公立大学 (*kōritsu-daigaku*, public universities). In reality, while there is a gap in price, it is not always as extreme as it is often thought to be. First year students should prepare for a very large 入金 (*nyūkin*, matriculation fee) on top of the tuition costs, which ranges from approximately ¥150,000-500,000 (~£1,000-3,300), but is usually in the ¥200,000-300,000 (~£1,300-2,000) range. One can expect to pay approximately ¥500,000-600,000 (~£3,300-4,000) per year for a 公立大学, and about ¥600,000-1,000,000 (~£4,000-6,600) for a 私立大学. Tuition is currently standardised for 国立大学 at ¥535,800 tuition (~£3,500) and a ¥282,000 入金 (~£1,900). One can check the fees for individual universities on the [Daigaku Juken Pass Navi](#) website.

Living costs

Japan is a very expensive place to live, particularly in urban areas. In 2013, [Tokyo and Osaka](#) were rated the top two most expensive cities in the world. It is important to note that what is expensive can vary quite a bit. Clothing costs, for example, tend to be more expensive than the UK, while everyday household items (such as small appliances, tableware, and cleaning items) are generally cheaper. *Uniqlo*, 100 yen stores such as *Daiso*, and *Don Kihōte* are the staples for cheap clothes, food, and other necessities. DVDs are significantly more expensive, while books are significantly cheaper (especially if one goes to second-hand shops such as Book Off). Fresh fruits and vegetables, along with foods that are not traditionally Japanese such as bread and cheese, can amount to multiple times what they would cost in the UK.

Mobile phones are necessary for most social interaction and sometimes for academic work, and can cost much more than in the UK (pay-as-you-go phones are uncommon, although they can be purchased from mobile company Softbank).

Be wary of domestic transportation costs – while Japan has far-reaching and reliable public transport systems, they do not come cheaply (although unlike in the UK, one does not need to worry about landing cheap tickets by booking weeks in advance – tickets always remain the same price, whether bought months in advance or half an hour before the train departs). Due to the privatisation of the train systems, one can have to go through several train lines to reach a not-so-

distant location in a city such as Tokyo, buying separate tickets for each; this can become very expensive, and in practice, means that it is often cheaper and easier to stay on a single line for longer rather than transfer. This also makes it very complicated; websites such as [Jorudan](#) and [Yahoo](#) can help plan your journey.

The host of additional fees and deposits required when first renting a flat can come as a surprise. Flats are likely to be small and of a 'studio' style. Another thing to consider when calculating living costs is the ease of buying and preparing food in the flat you live in; if your flat has no or only minimal kitchen facilities, very little space for storing food, and/or is not in close proximity to a reasonably-priced supermarket (all of which are common in urban flats), you may have to rely on pre-made food, which can be extremely expensive (and none too healthy).

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Funding

Scholarships

[JASSO](#) releases a brochure about scholarships for international students every year in PDF format and in print. While the brochure lists a large number of scholarships, note that many of them only apply to those from certain countries, or those enrolling in certain schools.

As deadlines for applying for funding vary greatly it is generally a good idea to begin thinking about funding as soon as one knows that funding will be necessary. If one is hoping to contact a host professor in Japan, it is particularly important to make contact as soon as possible, as it can take several months to solidify arrangements. Especially if you are applying for a MEXT scholarship, it is a good idea (if possible for you) to inform a trusted professor who is knowledgeable about Japan and fluent in Japanese of your intentions early on, with the hopes that they can work with you and help you through the application process.

For most Japanese funding bodies (and university applications), there will be an 'application period' in which applications are accepted. The application period usually lasts for one month, beginning with the release of the application form and instructions, and ending with the application deadline. The application period is advertised ahead of time, but application forms are not available until the period begins. It is worth researching the application process and downloading previous forms to get a head start on applications, and to make sure that it will be possible to complete the application within the set period.

Student loans

National student loans are available from JASSO, and most Japanese students are eligible to receive them. There are two varieties of JASSO 奨学金 (*shōgakukin*, which is usually translated as scholarship, but is actually a loan, as it has to be repaid). The first variety is interest-free, and is given to high-performing students enrolled in top universities (those from wealthy backgrounds are not eligible). The second has a maximum interest rate of 3%, and encompasses most other students. Unlike in the UK, students are expected to continue repayment monthly regardless of

their current financial situation. International students are not usually eligible to receive Japanese student loans. Further information about [shōgakukin](#) and [graduate school loans](#) can be found on JASSO's website.

Employment

Foreign students need **the Permission to Engage in Activities other than that Permitted under the Status of Residence Previously Granted** (資格外活動許可, *shikakugai katsudō kyoka*) from the nearest Regional Immigration Bureau. The website of the [Immigration Bureau of Japan](#) (入国管理局 *nyūkoku kanrikyoku*) says as follows:

Q6. I am a student with the status of residence of "Student." and want to do a part-time job after school. However, do I need any permit?

A6. A foreign national who is granted a status of residence must receive permission to engage in an activity other than those permitted by the status of residence previously granted if he/she wishes to become engaged in such activities for which he/she receives remuneration as doing part-time job, which are not included in those activities under his/her category of status of residence.

Students are allowed to work **up to 28 hours** per week with the Permission.

Students can apply for the Permission immediately after they are granted disembarkation permission at a Japanese sea port or an airport. Alternatively, they can get permission from local immigration offices in their area of domicile. They need their passport, Resident Card (if they have one) and an application form for Permission to Engage in Activity Other than that Permitted by the Status of Residence Previously Granted. The application form of the Permission can be obtained from a local immigration office or from the Immigration Bureau of Japan website.

Application procedures for obtaining the Permission are shown in this page by [Study in Japan Comprehensive Guide](#).

It is common to have a part-time job while studying in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A JASSO survey revealed that eight out of ten foreign students had a part-time job in 2009. The most common job type is working at a restaurant/bar (51.8% in the JASSO survey). You can work up to 28 hours a week with a student visa and the Permission to Engage in Activities other than that Permitted under the Status of Residence Previously Granted. You need to have a command of Japanese for most part-time jobs, Level 2 in JLPT. The salary is usually between 800 – 1200 yen per hour. The 'Student Guide to Japan' website by JASSO shows the following conditions for part-time working:

- 1) The part-time work does not affect your studies.
- 2) The earned income is meant to supplement your academic cost and necessary expenses and not for saving or for remittance overseas.
- 3) The part-time work engaged in is not in adult entertainment businesses.
- 4) Within 28 hours a week (up to 8 hours a day during long school holidays).

- 5) The part-time work is done while you retain student status in an educational institution.

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PhD

Structure of a doctoral programme

The PhD programme is technically meant to take three years to complete, but most students do not finish in that time. The PhD programme is often preceded by a two-year Master's degree at the same institution, resulting in a total of five or more years of graduate school education.

Most funding only lasts for three years, and thus many doctoral students try to finish their degree in that time. However, many do take longer. There is no reduced fee for one's continuation year; the same fee has to be paid for every year of registration. Consequently, some PhD students take a leave of absence during their writing-up period.

Conditions that need to be met for a PhD to be awarded vary depending on the specific programme. As the conditions can vary not only by university, but also by department within a university, it is worth asking your potential supervisor about the requirements personally. Many programmes require a certain number of years of enrolment before a degree will be awarded. Some programmes require coursework, an exam, or publication one or more journals, but some only require that one produces a doctoral thesis. For example, Waseda University's [PhD programme in International Studies](#) requires only a dissertation, whereas Kobe University's Graduate School of [International Cooperation Studies](#) requires a dissertation along with an exam and coursework.

Some doctoral programmes require students to take compulsory courses, but some do not.

PhD support

The number of supervisions per term depends on supervisors and students and there are no rules for it. On average, students meet with their supervisors once a month during term time, but, if students wish to see their supervisors more often, they can do so. Some supervisors see their students even during vacation time (especially just before the submission), but you have to ask them to do so beforehand.

PhD students have meetings with their supervisor. During meetings, supervisors give students comments on their thesis-related writing, schedule, articles, conference presentations, etc. When you want advice on what you write (e.g. article drafts), it is highly recommended that you send your writing beforehand, say one day before the meeting to give your supervisor time to read it.

Generally speaking, one PhD student has one supervisor. Students can have second supervisors if they want to, but it is not officially determined. Supervisors are allocated by the department just after enrolment, based on the documents you submitted for the entrance examination and interview(s). If you really want a specific person to be your supervisor, it is highly recommended

that you contact them beforehand to make sure they are willing to be your supervisor. It is not always the case that your supervisor is a specialist of what you are doing, but most supervisors have experience in supervising such students, and they can give advice how to write and plan your PhD thesis. To take my example, I specialise in 18c English while my supervisor in Tokyo was a specialist in medieval English, but he could show me how to do research in my area and how to get materials useful to my PhD study.

Universities generally do not have training modules for research students. Students learn how to write a thesis through supervision and their peers' and older students' support. The relationships between older students (先輩 *senpai*) and younger students (後輩 *kōhai*) are much closer in Japan, and older students look after younger students, especially those who share the same supervisor. Some universities provide a tutor (PhD student) to overseas students to help them accommodate to life in Japan. Japanese PhD students normally have no tutors.

Some universities have a half-day or one-day introductory session for new students at the beginning of the year (in April). Information on such events is often included in documents about enrolling at the university, which you will get after you are accepted.

Universities have a module called 論文指導 *ronbun shidō* (tutorial for thesis/dissertation) and they give credit for the module to students, but it is not a seminar in the timetable. What it refers to is that students have meetings with their supervisor about their thesis, so it does not have specific time slot, number of classes/meetings or what students and supervisors should do about the module. In other words, students can get the credit for this module by meeting their supervisors.

The progress of PhD students is monitored by their supervisors, but there are no fixed forms on which progress is reported. It depends heavily on their supervisors. If your supervisor is very busy, it may be quite difficult to have regular and sufficient meetings with them. Also, as in the UK, some supervisors try to drive their students to something related to their research, not to what students want to do. It is possible to change your supervisor, but it is quite rare, so be careful when you choose a supervisor.

PhD thesis

The length of the thesis varies depending on the institution and department. At [Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies](#), the guidelines say that while lengths vary, the length of the PhD 'will normally be between 60,000 and 80,000 words (English) or 120,000 and 160,000 characters (Japanese), exclusive of tables, charts, bibliographies, and appendices, but inclusive of footnotes'. [Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies](#) specifies that 'the thesis should be between approximately 200,000 and 600,000 characters in Japanese, or between 70,000 and 200,000 words in English'.

As in the UK, departments have individual rules about thesis presentation. It is common that departments will specify the paper layout, printing style, and binding style for doctoral theses. It is best to check with your department.

Usually the thesis is made available electronically on the university's repository.

Viva

Students decide who will be their examiner through discussion with their supervisor. Students, or their supervisors, ask scholars to be an examiner, generally through e-mail. Viva is done several months after submitting a PhD thesis.

Before submitting a PhD thesis and have a viva, students need to pass 論文執筆資格審査 *ronbun shippitsu shikaku shinsa* (screening of the qualification of writing a thesis). In this process, students need to submit forms designated by their university. Generally speaking, the documents included in this process are (1) the title of PhD thesis, (2) the list of previous studies and references for PhD thesis (you don't need to read all of them before the screening) (3) table of contents of your PhD thesis. You can change the title and/or theme of your PhD thesis even after this screening. There is no interview for this screening. Students are also asked to submit 博士論文題目届 *hakushi ronbun daimoku todoke* (registration form of the title of PhD thesis). After submitting this form, students are not allowed to change the title of their PhD thesis.

Some universities have requirements to submit a PhD thesis, such as publishing three articles (including MA thesis) before submitting a PhD thesis.

Students can have a mock viva with their supervisor(s) if they want to. The length of the viva is from one hour to two hours. It varies from university to university. There are four or five examiners in a viva. Three of them are from the home institution, including first and second supervisors. The first supervisor is typically called 主査 *shusa* (main examiner) and the other examiners are called 副査 *fukusa* (secondary examiners). At least one examiner must be from an external institution. The final viva is open to other postgraduate students, but they are not allowed to make questions during a viva.

Visiting other institutions, exchange programmes and placements

Is it common and/or encouraged to spend periods of time at other institutions (national or international): Undertaking international visiting professorships and research abroad is regarded highly in most Japanese universities. There are many programmes in place to help facilitate research and lecturing in other institutions, and many universities have official ties with universities abroad.

Procedures for arranging placements: The first place to look when arranging placements is your own university; seeing what universities they have established ties with, and what fellowships they may already have in place, should be your first step. If that does not work out, large funding bodies such as [JSPS](#) and [Japan Foundation](#) may be helpful.

Employment

Universities hire their postgraduate students as TAs. Take heed that 'TAs' in Japan are different from those in UK. Japanese TAs are genuinely 'assistants' of teachers; they merely assist teachers in and/or outside classes, and so never teach students by themselves. What TAs do varies

depending on the class. Common activities range from distributing handouts and monitoring students in examinations to tutoring undergraduates outside of class. The salary is generally around 1,000 yen per hour, but the salary is based on each university's salary system.

A PhD student who teaches by themselves is employed as 'a part-time lecturer' (非常勤講師 *hijōkin kōshi*). They have full responsibility for their teaching, including marking and designing their classes. It is rare for foreign PhD students to work as a teacher/lecturer in Japan. Job information is provided by the [Japan Research Centre Information Network](#) (JREC-IN). Teaching is not mandatory for PhD students and opportunities are rare so some of them might finish their PhD with no experience in teaching or being a TA.

Some universities employ PhD students as RAs (research assistants). RAs are paid to work for other people's (generally their supervisor's) research, not for their own research.

The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS, 日本学術振興会 *nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai*) offers a 'Research Fellowship for Young Scientists' (特別研究員 *tokubetsu kenkyūin*) for both home and international PhD students. Students are 'employed' by JSPS and receive a salary (200,000 yen per month in 2013), plus an additional research fund (up to 1,500,000 yen per year), to conduct their own research. They have two divisions: DC1 for first-year PhDs and DC2 for second-year onwards. The deadline is at the beginning of June (i.e. two months after you start your academic year). See [JSPS's website](#) for the details (Japanese only). The competition is quite high and only 1 out of 10 applicants receive the fellowship.

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Beyond the PhD

Jobs

An extensive report of statistics about life as an academic in Japan is available from the article 'The changing academic profession in an era of university reform in Japan' by Tsukasa Daizen and Atsunori Yamanoi, pages 293-325 in the Report of the International Conference on the Changing Academic Profession Project, [The Changing Academic Profession in International Comparative and Quantitative Perspectives](#) (Research Institute for Higher Education at Hiroshima University, 2008). The report contains a wealth of information, including how the university system is structured, how Japanese academics spend their time, professors' attitudes towards the academic profession, the number of articles an average professor has published, and more.

The [Japan Research Career Information Network](#) (JREC-IN) advertises most academic jobs available in Japan. It provides a comprehensive job search engine, with the possibility to search by subject, region, type of institution, and more. Most of the listings are only in Japanese, although some postings are in English (namely those that require teaching exclusively in English). Job-seekers can set up an [e-mail alert](#).

Some Japanese jobs are advertised on English-language job sites, such as [jobs.ac.uk](#) or [H-net](#). These are mostly jobs involving English-language teaching only, and often very competitive. If one

is working within a particular discipline, it is worth finding and checking the websites of major academic associations for that discipline; these associations often post relevant jobs.

Jobs in Japanese universities are highly competitive. It is extremely unlikely that one will find a job without previous teaching experience and several high-quality publications; even teaching English language courses now usually requires one to have at least two TEFL-related publications (see more information on this on jobs.ac.uk). Be aware of deadlines; while some universities will accept applications by email, many require applications to be sent by post, meaning that if one is applying from the UK, the application must be sent off well ahead of time to ensure that it reaches Japan by the deadline. It is also worth noting that for many academic jobs in Japan, applicants invited for an interview will be expected to bear all transportation costs personally – if you are a recent graduate living in the UK, the cost of going to Japan for an interview can be prohibitive, so make sure you find out what the interview arrangements would be before spending a lot of time applying to a position. Academic job searches often occur many months, and sometimes even multiple years, before the job begins.

Career progression

Most universities have career advice services, which are largely the same as those in the UK. For example, they will look over your CV and help you prepare for interviews. [Keio University](#) provides a detailed explanation in English of the services they offer, and more general advice about 就職活動 ('shūshoku-katsudō', job hunting, usually abbreviated to 就活 'shūkatsu') in Japan as a foreign student. The exact services offered will depend on the institution at which you are studying; information should be available from the university website or in person at the university. It is worth keeping in mind that job hunting in Japan usually begins in the third year of one's undergraduate degree, and undergraduates are generally expected to have found a job (and often attended various orientations) before graduation.

It is not common for Japanese universities to offer workshops or summer schools about career development for PhD students. Some are held for undergraduate students. Ask your university's career service for details.

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Glossary

Academic titles

大学院生 (*Daigakuinsei*, Graduate student) - A master's or doctoral student. Often abbreviated to 院生 (*insei*).

修士課程 / 修士号 (*Shūshikatei / shūshigō*, Master's degree) - These two terms refer to all forms of master's degrees. 課程 (*katei*) is used for the degree programme, and 号 (*gō*) for the degree itself. It is colloquially abbreviated as 修士 (*shūshi*, which can be confused with the title for one who has been awarded a master's degree [see below]). As master's programmes are sometimes attached to doctoral programmes, they are occasionally referred to as 博士前期課程 (*hakushi-*

zenki-katei, literally the first part of a doctoral course). マスター (*masutā*, taken from the English master) is also used.

修士 (*Shūshi*, Master of ...) - One who has been awarded a master's degree.

博士課程 / 博士号 (*Hakasekatei / hakushikatei / hakasegō / hakushigō*, Doctoral degree) - See note on 課程 and 号 with regard to master's degree above. The phrase 'to receive a doctoral degree' is usually expressed as 博士号を取る (*hakasegō wo toru*) or 博士号を取得する (*hakasegō wo shutoku suru*). It is colloquially abbreviated to 博士 (*hakase*, which, as with 修士, can be confused with the degree itself). The pronunciation *hakase* is used more frequently, but *hakushi* is more formal. The phrase ドクター (*dokutā*, taken from the English doctor) is also used.

博士 (*Hakase / hakushi*, PhD / Doctor) - One who has been awarded a doctoral degree.

学士 (*Gakushi*, Bachelor of ...) - One who has been awarded a bachelor's degree.

博士研究員 (*Hakushi kenkyūin*, Postdoctoral researcher) - The abbreviation ポスドク (*posudoku*), taken from the English postdoc is also used.

Teaching titles

助教授 (*Jokyōju*, Assistant professor) - The terms used for teaching positions changed in 2007. 助教授 and 助手 are the terms used before 2007; while they are not officially used now, some people still use them. 助教授 is similar to 准教授 today.

助手 (*Joshu*, Teacher's assistant) - This term was used pre-2007 as roughly equivalent to 助教 today.

教授 (*Kyōju*, Professor) - Term currently used for highest level of academic teaching positions; this title is given to those with particularly outstanding teaching, research, and supervision experience and abilities.

准教授 (*Junkyōju*, Associate professor) - Term currently used for the rank immediately below 教授. The position is not notably different from that of 教授. Similar to senior lecturer positions in UK universities.

講師 (*Kōshi*, Lecturer) - Lecturer working under 教授 or 准教授. 講師 will not usually supervise students, although they may. 講師 may be full-time (常勤, *jōkin*) and work as a member of the university, or be 非常勤 (*hijōkin*, part-time). Those who are 非常勤 do not receive job benefits, even if they teach many hours.

助教 (*Jokyō*, Assistant professor) - Lowest level of academic ranking; usually a non-tenured position involving assisting 教授 and 准教授 with teaching and undertaking research.

ティーチングアシスタント / リサーチアシスタント (*Tichingu ashisutanto / risāchi ashisutanto*, Teaching assistant / research assistant) - These English loanwords are used for purely

assistant roles; for example, teaching assistants (also called TA) help teaching faculty mark papers or prepare materials, and do not teach themselves.

名誉教授 (*Meiyo kyōju*, Emeritus professor)

先生 (*Sensei*, Teacher) - Title used for all teaching faculty, from elementary school onwards.

A glossary of key academic terms

指導教官 (*Shidō kyōkan*, Supervisor)

論文指導 (*Ronbun shidō*, Thesis tutorial) - A meeting with one's supervisor about one's thesis.

~限 (*Gen*, ~th class of the day) - For example, one's third class of the day would be referred to as 3 限 (*san-gen*).

博士論文 (*Hakaseronbun / hakushironbun*, Doctoral thesis) - Abbreviated to 博論 (*hakuron*).

修士論文 (*Shūshironbun*, Master's dissertation)

研究 (*Kenkyū*, Research)

研究費 (*Kenkyūhi*, Research expense budget) - Most academic departments provide funds for research activities

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Web Links

Applications

[Japan Study Support](#) (JPSS) contains a search function for university programmes.

The [ReaD & Researchmap](#) website allows users to search for scholars and researchers across the country.

The [Japanese Embassy](#) provides links to full undergraduate and graduate level university courses taught entirely in English at top Japanese universities.

[Immigration Procedures](#) (Gateway to Study in Japan)

[Visa](#) (Embassy of Japan in the UK)

[Visa for entering Japan](#) (JPSS)

The '[Immigration Procedures](#)' section of the '[Study in Japan](#)' site provides detailed, comprehensive information for foreign students about entering Japan.

Costs

Fees for individual universities in Japan are available on the [University Entrance Exam](#) website.

Funding

[JASSO](#) releases a brochure about scholarships for international students every year in PDF format and in print.

Information about [shōgakukin](#) and [graduate school loans](#) can be found on JASSO's website.

Information about foreign students obtaining permission to work in Japan from the [Immigration Bureau of Japan](#).

Application procedures for obtaining the Permission are shown in this page by [Study in Japan Comprehensive Guide](#).

Employment

The [Japan Research Career Information Network](#) (JREC-IN) advertises most academic jobs available in Japan. It provides a comprehensive job search engine, with the possibility to search by subject, region, type of institution, and more.

Some Japanese jobs are advertised on English-language job sites, such as [jobs.ac.uk](#) or [H-net](#). These are mostly jobs involving English-language teaching only, and often very competitive.

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