Applying for Your Student Visa: Japan

What is a visa?
A visa is an official authorization allowing you to enter a country to travel, work, live, or study there for a specific period of time. Generally, a visa is an elaborate stamp that is sealed onto one of the pages of your passport. Visas are issued to American citizens by a foreign country's Embassy or Consulate located in the United States. Every country has its own regulations governing the issuance of visas.

Do I need a visa to go to Japan?
A visa is required for persons other than temporary visitors in Japan, so you (and your dependents, if applicable) will need to obtain a visa for your period of study in Japan. A short-term visa is required for study periods up to 90 days and long-stay visa is required for study periods longer than 90 days. Entry into the country must take place within 3 months of obtaining the visa, or else the visa is invalidated.

What do I need to apply for a visa?
► Attention: Visa requirements change constantly! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate: http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/consulate-guide.html.

You will need the documents listed below to apply for your visa; make a photocopy of each item below (unless asked to submit 2 originals) to include with your application and a photocopy for your own records.

- **A valid passport**: original document in addition to a copy.
  ♦ Please see page 1 in the Study Abroad Handbook for information on how to apply for a passport.
  ♦ Apply early for your passport! It may take 6-8 weeks to process your application.

- **Certificate of admission**, a photocopy from the institution where you will study.
  ♦ Depending upon the school you will be attending, you can expect this document to arrive to UM's Office of International Programs one month before your departure.

- **Original Certificate of Eligibility** and one copy, which is issued by the Ministry of Justice of the Japanese Government and obtained by the host institution on your behalf. The application for the Certificate of Eligibility must be completed as part of your host university application prior to your visa application.
  ♦ This document will be sent to your home address by UM's Office of International Programs or by your host institution. (For students beginning study in the Fall, it will arrive in July or August)

  **Note:** Student must enter Japan no later than three months after the issuing date of the Certificate of Eligibility, otherwise the certificate will be invalid.

- **Completed visa application form.** Consult the website of the Consulate that has jurisdiction over the state of your residence to download the appropriate application.

- **One passport-sized photo.** Must be 45mm x 45 mm, taken within 6 months of applying.

- **A pre-paid, self-addressed Certified or Express Mail envelope.** The consulate will only send you back your documents if you include this. Make sure that this envelope has a tracking number and keep this number for your own record.

- **Visa fee** of ¥3,000 for a single entry visa, and ¥6,000 for a multiple entry visa. Depending on your nationality, and the purpose of your stay in Japan, fees may not be required or may be a different amount.

► You will also find answers to many of your visa-related questions through the Consulate-General that has jurisdiction over the state of your residence. Consult this website to find the appropriate Consulate-General for your state: http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/consulate-guide.html.

April 2013
How do I obtain a visa?

A. In person
- Take the above documents to the Japanese consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residence.
- Call the consulate before you visit to verify hours of operation and location.
- The Japanese Consulate in Seattle (for students who have their permanent address in Montana) suggests that it takes approximately five working days to process a visa application when you apply in person. However, you should avoid waiting until the last minute, as omitting one document or failing to complete a form completely may delay the processing of your visa for weeks.

B. Via Proxy or Travel Agent
You must contact the Consulate-General that has jurisdiction over your permanent address to obtain permission to submit your visa application in either of these manners. If you choose to obtain permission to receive your visa via proxy or travel agent rather than in person, you should:
- Write a letter of proxy and get a proxy to go to the Consulate General for you, use an accredited travel agent approved by the Japanese Consulate General, or submit your visa application via mail.
- If there is a fee for your visa, send a money order—consulates will not accept personal checks.
- Be sure all documents are in order. Missing documents may cause delays in the processing of your application.
- Make sure to enclose a postage paid FedEx/US Overnight Mail envelope addressed to yourself.
- Consult the consulate about the time it will take to process your application. Apply early, as any errors may delay the processing of your visa for weeks.
- Do not leave the country until you have received your passport and visa.
- It usually takes five working days for the consulate to process your visa application.

General tips for applying for a visa:
Foreign embassies and consulates in the US receive hundreds of inquiries every day so contacting them can be a trying experience. Have patience. Some consulates only receive visitors or calls during certain hours of the day or on certain days of the week; visit their website to learn their hours or call back at different times of the day. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!

Japanese Consulates in the US: