

## 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. 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?

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;** send the 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,** which is issued by the Ministry of Justice of the Japanese Government and obtained by the host institution on your behalf.
    - ◆ This document will be sent to your home address by UM's 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**
- **Two official visa application forms.** Contact the consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residence to obtain the application form or you can download it from the appropriate consular website.
  - **Two passport-sized photos.** 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.
  - **Financial documents** that provide proof that you can defray all expenses incurred during your stay in Japan, or alternately if someone else will be paying your costs, documents certifying the income of that person(s) and a statement from them explaining why they will be paying your costs.
  - **Visa fee** of 3,000 yen for a single entry visa, and 6,000 yen for a multiple entry visa
  - ▶ **Attention:** This list may not be all-inclusive! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate.
  - ▶ You will also find answers to many of your visa-related questions at:  
[http://www.mofa.go.jp/j\\_info/visit/visa/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html)

### 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 suggests that it takes 48 hours 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 mail**

If you choose to obtain permission to receive your visa via mail rather than in person, you should:

- Send all documents, including your passport, in a FedEx, US Overnight Mail, or other express mail service that provides a tracking number for your parcel, to the consulate. *Keep a photocopy of all documents, including your passport, for yourself.*
- 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 work 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. You may find that you are placed on hold or that your call is never forwarded to the appropriate person. Don't be discouraged: be persistent, but polite. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!

## **Japanese Consulates in the US:**

If the appropriate consulate is not listed below, visit <http://www.embjapan.org/> for a listing of other Japanese Consulates.

### **Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle**

**Area Served:** Washington, Northern Idaho, Montana, Alaska

**Address:** 601 Union Street, Suite #500

Seattle, WA 98 101

**Phone:** (206) 682-9107 **FAX:** (206) 624-9097

**Website:** <http://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/index.htm>

### **Consulate-General of Japan in Portland**

**Area Served:** Oregon, Southern Idaho

**Address:** Wells Fargo Center

1300 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 2700 Portland, OR 97201

**Phone:** (503) 221-1811 **FAX:** (503) 224-8936

**Website:** <http://www.portland.us.emb-japan.go.jp/index-e.html>

If you reside outside these states, please go to

[http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/travel\\_and\\_visa/visa/index.htm](http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/travel_and_visa/visa/index.htm) and click visa info and then click here for the appropriate consulate/visa office.