

Living in Japan

2-1 Various procedures related to personal identification for international students

According to the laws of Japan, foreigners who wish to live in Japan must complete various procedures related to residence at the Immigration Bureau and at their local municipal office service counter. For more information on these procedures, please check the Immigration Bureau's website below.

http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_1/

(Definition of the “International Student”)

The definition of the “international students” is the foreign students enrolled in Japanese universities under the resident status of “student” as defined by the Immigration Control Act.

Foreign nationals with another status, such as “dependent”, “spouse or child of Japanese national” or “long-term resident” may enroll and study at a Japanese university within the limits of activities permitted under the Immigration Control Act, but such persons are not designated as “international students.” They are also excluded from scholarships designated for the students who have “students” resident status.

1 Residence management system

● Residence card

Foreign residents living in Japan for more than three months (mid- or long-term stay) are issued residence cards, while special permanent residents are issued special permanent resident certificates. You will be issued a residence card if there are any changes in your landing permit or visa status, or when you renew your visa. If there is any change in the information written on your residence card—such as (1) your name, date of birth, sex, nationality/region; and (2) renewal of the period of validity—or if your card is stolen or lost, please complete the designated procedures at the Immigration Bureau within 14 days. However, procedures related to a change of address or to your special permanent resident certificate should be completed at the municipal office. Please note that your residence card is valid until the expiration date of your visa.

● Residence records

Residence records list and certify such information as your address, the constitution of your household (not only the people who live together, but all those the household supports financially) and the head of your household (the person who represents the household, or the person who financially supports the household).

Records are kept for foreign residents (such as special permanent residents and those issued residence cards) as well. If your address or the constitution of your household changes, you or a representative of the household should complete the designated notification procedures. If you need a copy of your residence record or a certificate of items registered in that record, please bring some form of personal identification—such as your residence card or special permanent resident certificate—and file a request at your local municipal office.

2 Visa renewal

The visa period of stay and renewal period for international student visas depend on the years of your course of training, as follows: Four years and three months; four years; three years and three months, three years; two years and three months; two years; one year and three months; one year; six months; and three months. This visa period can be extended upon completing the designated procedures. Please complete these procedures sometime between three months before the expiration date and the expiration date at the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau (see Appendix E). After completing the renewal procedures, please bring your residence card and passport together with copies to the International Students Section. Chart 2.1 shows the documents you need to renew your visa.

Chart 2.1: Documents Required When Renewing Your Visa

Applicant	Status	(a)	(b)+(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Student	Undergraduate or graduate student	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Research student	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

(a) Passport and residence card

(b) Application for extension of period of stay (for applicant, parts 1-2-3)

The form can be downloaded from the Immigration Bureau website, at <http://www.moj.go.jp/ONLINE/IMMIGRATION/16-3-1.html>

(c) Application for extension of period of stay (for an organization, parts 1-2): Please apply in advance at the International Students Section.

(d) Student registration certificate

(e) Grade transcript

(f) Certificate documenting research activities

(g) Revenue stamp (administrative fee)

Note: In any of the above-mentioned cases, if it becomes clear that further screening is necessary for reasons such as poor study results or practices, additional documents certifying financial support, a resume, or certification of final academic background may be required.

3 Leaving Japan temporarily and re-entry permits

International students who leave Japan temporarily—such as for a summer vacation, to return to their home country, travel to neighboring countries, or participate in a study tour or conference overseas—must submit a notification of return to home country and travel abroad signed by academic supervisor to the International Students Section. Notification of return to home country and travel abroad forms are available at the International Students Section. You can also download the form from the website.

As a rule, as long as you have a valid passport and residence card, a re-entry permit is not required if you return to Japan within one year after leaving (or within two years in the case of special permanent residents). However, if your visa expires in less than one year after leaving Japan, please return to Japan before the expiration date.

If you will be returning to Japan more than a year after leaving but within your visa period of stay, you must apply for a re-entry permit before you leave Japan. The maximum valid period for a re-entry permit is five years within the valid period of your visa period of stay (or six years in the case of special permanent residents).

4 Changing your type of visa (status of residence)

If you wish to engage in different activities from those stated in the visa you are currently holding, you must apply for Change of Status of Residence at the Immigration Bureau. Please confirm with the Immigration Bureau about the procedure.

5 Visa implications of a leave of absence

According to Article 22-4 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, if a foreign citizen residing in Japan with a specified status of residence (in this case, a College Student status) has failed to continue to engage in the activities described in the status of residence for three months or more (excluding cases where the person has justifiable reason for not engaging in the activities while residing in Japan), the status of residence is subject to being revoked.

International students who take a leave of absence must return to their home country or acquire a different type of visa during their leave of absence. For international students with a College Student visa, a leave of absence for financial reasons is not a justifiable reason (in other words, international students taking a leave of absence for financial reasons are not allowed to stay in Japan to engage in part-time work or other non-academic activities). If you plan to take a leave of absence, please contact the International Students Section immediately.