

# *Finding work in Japan*

Presented by Edmund Wong  
ed@arealms.net, <http://www.arealms.net>

---

---

# *Part 1: Work Visas*

- To be able to work in Japan, you must be eligible for a work visa.
  - This may be a harder endeavor for some people than others!
  - Without a work visa, you cannot legally work in Japan
  - *The most common way to become eligible for a work visa is to hold a 4-year university degree*
- 
-

# *Types of work visas*

- There are several ways we can differentiate between different types of work visas
- From a perspective of finding work, there are two main types of visas you need to worry about:
  - Company-sponsored
    - Requires the company that is hiring you to “sponsor” you.  
Need to meet eligibility requirements
  - Self-sponsored
    - You get the visa before you start looking for a job

# *Types of work visas*

- Another way we can differentiate them is by the amount of work you can do
  - Visas which allow unrestricted full-time work (“working visa”)
    - e.g. Standard work visa, working holiday visa, internship visa,
  - Visas which only allow part-time work (“general visa”
    - usually up to 28 hours/week)
    - e.g. Student visa, cultural visa, dependent visa



# *Working visa*

- Requires company sponsorship
  - Allows full-time work
  - Most visa categories require a relevant 4-year university (NOT college!) degree
  - A certain amount of documented relevant work experience (e.g. 10 years for engineer visa, 3 years for specialist in humanities) may be accepted in lieu of a university degree
  - You can only perform work for the visa category you hold under this visa
- 
-

# *General visa*

- Your official purpose of being in Japan is something other than work – however, in certain cases part-time work (up to 28 hours/week usually) may be allowed with the proper permission
  - Common types of general visas:
    - Student visa (student at university or language institution)
    - Cultural visa (apprentice studying art, pottery, martial arts, etc.)
    - Dependent (spouse of holder of work visa)
- 
-

# *Other types of visas permitting work*

- Spouse of Japanese national visa
    - Permits you to do unlimited hours of work and in any profession you choose. Does not require company sponsorship.
  - Internship visa
    - Full-time student at an accredited post-secondary institution going overseas for an international internship
    - Permits full-time hours, but requires documentation and authorization from your university
    - Requires you to have one or more remaining semesters before you graduate
- 
-

# *Other types of visas permitting work*

- Working Holiday visa
    - Bi-lateral cultural agreement between many countries which permit a citizen between the age of 18 and 30 (25 for some countries) to obtain a 1-year work visa which has few restrictions on the type of work you can do
    - Advantages
      - you already have the visa, so anybody who wants to hire you can do so without any work on their end
    - Disadvantages
      - only good for one year, non-renewable
      - you can only get it once in a lifetime!
- 
-

# *Other types of visas permitting work*

- Working Holiday visa
    - Participating countries: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Korea, UK, Ireland
    - The United States is NOT a participant of the working holiday program!
    - You need to be a citizen of one of the above countries between the ages of 18 and 30 (25 for UK/Ireland) and apply at your local Japanese consulate
    - Almost guaranteed approval if you meet the conditions – Canada issues over 12,000 Japanese citizens WHVs every year, and only around 300 Canadians apply for one in Japan
- 
-

# *What if I don't have a degree?*

- Many of you may be interested in spending some time in Japan but do not have a University degree. The most popular options for such people include:
  - Go under a general visa and work part-time
  - Get married to a Japanese national
  - Use the Working Holiday Visa
  - Be transferred by your company as an internal transferee (work there for at least one year, need to be a branch of the same company)

## *Part 2: Professions*

- The second thing you need to figure out is what type of work you can do in Japan. This is of course limited by.
- We will go over some of the major professions foreign nationals are employed in, and the requirements for them, and some starting points on how to apply to them

# *English teacher*

- One of the largest professions of foreign nationals
  - There are four major types of English teachers:
    - ALT (Assistant Language Teacher at a school)
    - Eikaiwa (private English conversation teacher)
    - University lecturer
    - Private instructor / tutor
- 
-

# *Assistant Language Teacher*

- JET
    - Program run by the Japanese government
    - Apply through your local Japanese consulate before the deadline, one major intake every year
    - Requires a University degree
    - Pays 3,600,000 yen a year, but usually out in the middle of nowhere
  - Private dispatch (Interac et al)
    - Many prefectures are gradually moving away from the JET program and hiring private instructors from dispatch companies such as Interac
    - You do the same job as a JET ALT, but are usually paid less
- 
-

# *Eikaiwa*

- Private language institutions where students pay to have classroom time (1-to-1 or small groups)
  - Examples: ~~NOVA~~, Berlitz, AEON, GEOS, GABA, ECC, and many smaller ones
  - Most of these companies have recruiting offices in Toronto!
  - Accepts applications on a rolling basis
  - Smaller schools recruit directly from inside the country
- 
-

# *University Lecturer*

- Instructor at a post-secondary institution in Japan
  - In most cases, possesses post-graduate (Masters or Ph.D) degree
  - Very few positions available – you would apply the same way you would apply to teach at a university anywhere else
- 
-

## *Private instructor / tutor*

- Fly under the tax radar and get your own students which pay you cash for 1-on-1 lessons. Prepare all your own materials and lesson plans and do your own marketing.
  - You are responsible for everything and lining up your own students, but for some people this may be less stress than working for a company or school
  - Other people do this on the side to supplement their income
  - Tip: Get students off departing friends!
- 
-

# *Engineer*

- Professional working in Information Technology, Electrical/Mechanical Engineering, etc.
  - Requires the same qualifications as one would back home
  - Internships available at many companies
  - Level of Japanese ability required depends on the company you work at, but never hurts
  - Many grad opportunities exist at the Boston Career Forum
- 
-

# Law

- While foreigners generally do not practice or are licensed to practice criminal or civil law in Japan, many foreign corporate and patent lawyers operate in Tokyo to serve both foreign firms and local firms who operate internationally
  - Also positions open for law clerks as well
  - The easiest way to get hired is through a summer internship
  - Check your law school's career or exchange office for possible summer associate internship positions, or find the firms directly (Google) and apply directly
- 
-

# Finance

- Many foreign-owned investment banks operate in Tokyo, and many of them have a fairly large foreign staff as English ability is highly important
  - Level of Japanese ability required generally depends on division:
    - Japanese ability not required to do the job, but increases your chances:
      - Technology, Principal Investments, Trading, Operations
    - Native level Japanese required
      - Investment Banking Division, Sales, Private Wealth Management
- 
-

## *Other professions*

- Freelance journalist
  - Models / TV personalities
  - Translators / Interpreters
  - Import / Export (salaried and entrepreneurs) – esp. boats, cars, motorcycles
  - Ski resort worker / instructor
  - American military servicemen
  - Part-time worker (“Freeter”)
- 
-

## *Part 3: Increasing your chances*

- In the end, getting yourself hired by a company in Japan is not easy, and takes strategy
    - It's never too early to prepare! Get a head start!
    - The more (documentable) Japanese ability you have, the better. Take the  JLPT  up to the highest level and consider the  JETRO BJT  test too
    - Japanese companies also want to see that you can function well in a Japanese-only environment. Try volunteering at the  Japan Foundation  or the  JCCC
    - Do your research! Google for interview tips
    - Have the work visa already – no need to sponsor
- 
-

# *Internships*

- Many companies offer internships to university students from Canadian universities
  - An internship is an excellent way to get industry experience, network, and even get a job
  - Also, the expected level of Japanese ability for interns is often lower than for mid-career professionals or fresh grads
  - Some firms may even offer you to come back full-time after you graduate if you perform well
  - Large support network exists
- 
-

# *Finding an internship*

- Many international internship support organizations exist
    - The Canada-Japan Co-op Program
    - AIESEC (different streams available)
    - JHIP (Japan Hospitality Internship Program)
    - IAESTE (Technical), and more... (Google!)
  - Do your research early – it may take time to meet the requirements to join these programs
  - Also, check your school's co-op or exchange office
    - jobs exclusive to your school may exist
- 
-

## *Entry-level positions*

- Because grad recruiting in Japan is very structured and difficult to take part in from overseas, the most effective place for finding grad opportunities (and also internships!) is at the **Boston Career Forum** (careerforum.net)
  - The BCF happens every year and is a place for recruiting Japanese-English bilinguals
  - You interview at the event and getting offered a position before the event ends is possible!
  - **Everybody is entitled to an interview!**
  - JIEC at the U of T runs an annual BCF seminar
- 
-

## *Mid-career professionals*

- With the exception of English teachers, a high level of Japanese ability is usually key
  - Unless if you are being transferred by your company, you will usually need to be in the country to interview
  - Network, network, network!
  - Use recruiters – meet and make a good impression
  - Sites: [gaijinpot.com](http://gaijinpot.com) [careercross.com](http://careercross.com), [jobsinjapan.com](http://jobsinjapan.com), [careerforum.net](http://careerforum.net), [daijob.com](http://daijob.com)
- 
-

# *How much can I expect to get paid?*

- JET pays a salary of 300,000 yen/mo
  - Eikaiwa and dispatch usually pays between 220,000 to 280,000/mo
  - Local Japanese companies grads pay between 200,000 to 230,000/mo, but due to the bonus system you will get paid 14-18 times that a year
  - Foreign companies pay more – usually between 250,000 to 330,000/mo. Investment banks pay up to 540,000/mo, but competition is fierce
  - Mid-career hires will depend on experience
- 
-

# Questions?

- This presentation will be posted up on my website at <http://www.arealms.net>, along with direct links to the websites of all the organizations mentioned in this presentation. I will update it with more information as time goes on so do keep checking back
  - Feel free to find me after the presentation or e-mail me if you have further questions at [ed@arealms.net](mailto:ed@arealms.net)
- 
-