

## **2. Before You Begin Job Hunting**

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## 2-1 Why Japanese Corporations Employ International Students

These are several main things that Japanese employers are expecting of international students.

### Expected Roles

#### ① “Borderless Professionals”

First of all, employers hire international students to secure excellent human resources without regard to their nationality.

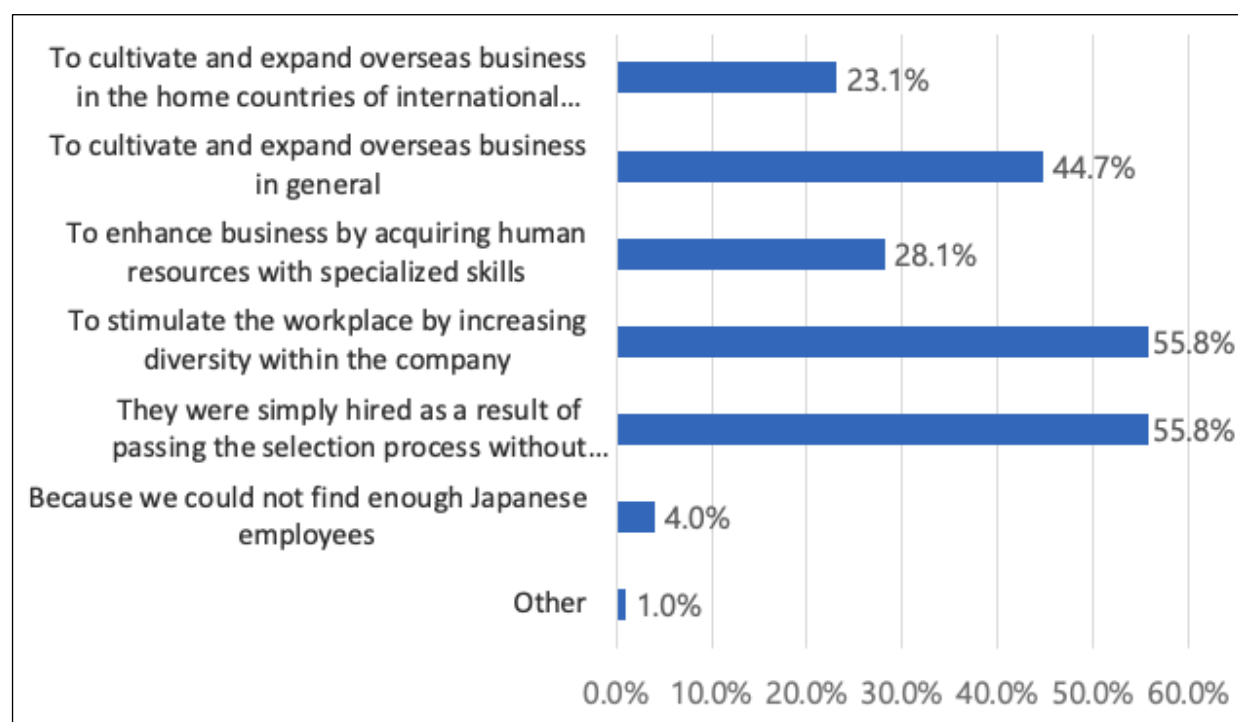
#### ② “Bridge” between Japan and Foreign Markets

Japanese companies opt to hire international students when they are considering taking or expanding their operations overseas. They see the need for the help of coordinators who work as liaisons between their headquarters and local subsidiaries. Foreign students, who are equipped with not just language skills (Japanese and their mother tongue) but also cultural competence in both Japan and the target country, are expected to provide support to facilitate smooth business development. Both employment in Japanese headquarters and direct employment in local subsidiary (national staff) are available. For national staff, local rules and regulations will apply.

#### ③ Corporate Revitalization from Within

It is also a major expectation from an employer that securing human resources with different cultural backgrounds will stimulate their organization by having international talents. Foreigners are encouraged to provide an international perspective (e.g. expressing ideas, work-life balance, paternity leave) to the workplace. Employers also hope that the presence of foreign staff will energize the working environment, thus improving efficiency.

### Reasons for Hiring International Students



Source: Survey on Career and Retention for International Students (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2015)

## Expected Skills

### ① Language Proficiency (JLPT N1, N2)

Most Japanese companies require foreign employees to have adequate Japanese as a very fundamental and essential skill for engaging in their daily business operations as well as communication among/beyond the organization. To prevent miscommunication in the daily work, applicants are strongly encouraged to learn and speak the language well. Business-level proficiency is generally required of regular full-time employees working in Japan. In addition to one's mother tongue and Japanese (at least, JLPT N2 Level. N1 is highly preferred), English is also widely expected. Employees assigned to work at local subsidiaries must also be able to communicate proficiently in Japanese to fulfill their responsibilities as intermediaries.

### ② Adaptability to Corporate Culture/Sense of Teamwork

Employers are also concerned as to whether international students have the capability to understand the business culture in Japan, their corporate culture, and the workstyles or ways of thinking of Japanese people as represented by “sense of teamwork.”

### ③ Specialized Knowledge & Practical Major

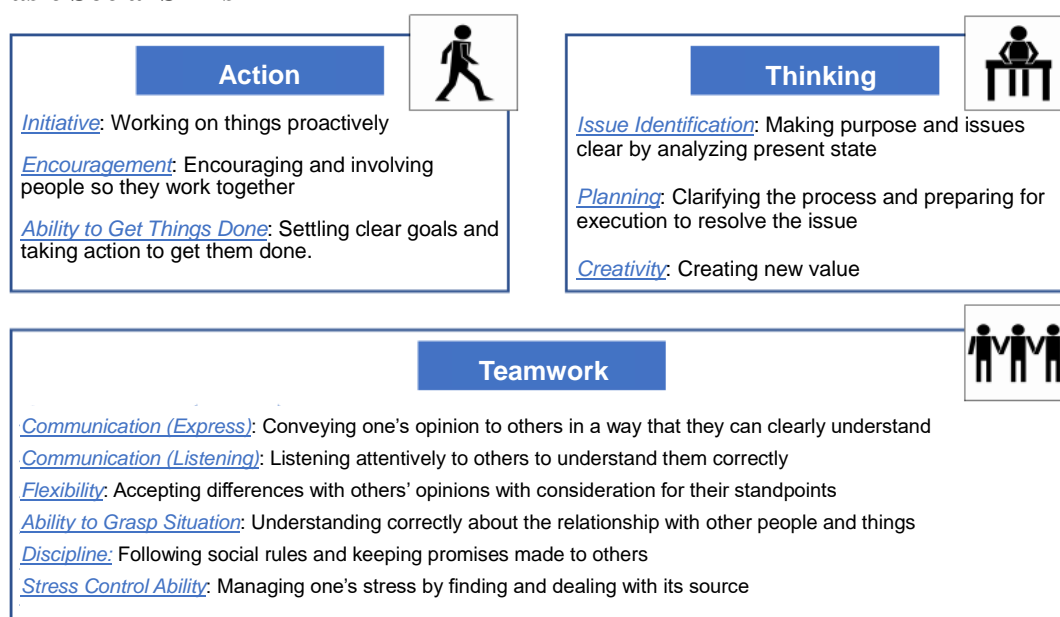
Particular industries or jobs such as manufacturing, chemical/biotechnology, R&D, marketing, and finance, require not only international students but also domestic students to possess specific expertise or an academic degree in a practical major.

## Basic Social Skills for University Students

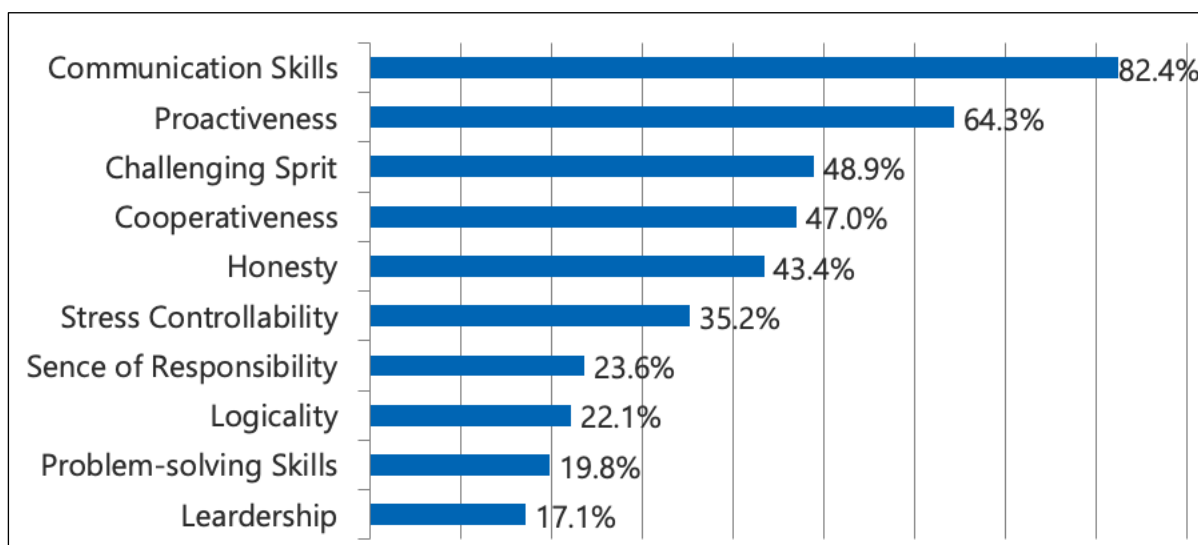
Basic social skills are fundamental prerequisites for all university students to work in the real world by collaborating with people both in the workplace and in society, as has been expressed by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry based on an investigation of Japanese industries on their needs and requirements for future talents.

Japanese employers examine whether their candidates possess these basic skills through various steps and methods during their selection process.

### Basic Social Skills



### TOP 10 Evaluation Points by Employers



Source: Japan Business Federation November 22, 2018

## 2-2 Characteristics of Job Hunting in Japan

What is important for international students who are interested in seeking employment in Japan is to understand what job hunting in Japan is all about and the importance of acting independently.

### ① Mass Recruitment of New Graduates for Entry in April

The term “recruitment of new graduates (*shin-sotsu saiyo*)” refers to the employment of people who graduated recently from university and who are seeking employment for the first time. It is the most unique part of employment in Japan that employers all hire a group of new graduates simultaneously on April 1st on an annually basis, and all run their selection procedures within almost the same timeline. Based on that, job-hunting activities are usually started earlier in Japan than overseas, so students need to be well aware of timelines and prepare for them whilst maintain a balance with academic life.

Please refer to “3 Job-Hunting Schedule (☞P. 17)” for the general timeline.

### ② Various Selection Methods, Multiple Stages

Employers require applicants to undergo various selection processes, not simply job interviews but also written examinations, online tests, aptitude tests, Japanese essays, group interviews and role-play tests or “group discussions.” Students may experience a relatively long period of selection procedures due to the need to go through such multiple stages of examinations, and of course to prepare for them.

Please refer to “4 Work to Be Done (☞P. 23)” for more information about how to prepare for each selection stage.

### ③ “Potentiality-based Recruitment,” Experience Matters Less

In principle, new graduates are employed for a lifelong career. Japanese companies will provide them with training and an opportunity to try out different types of work so that they will become future leaders. Based on that premise, companies hire new graduates based upon predictions of their long-term potential. This is known as “Potentiality-based Recruitment (*Potential-saiyo* in Japanese). Please note that Japanese recruitment differs from that of Europe and the United States, where one is employed to fulfill a specific position or role. Based on that, especially large employers in Japan, usually do not offer a particular position during the recruitment process.

#### Quick Comparison on Major Differences between Job Hunting in Japan and Overseas:

Japan	Overseas
<b><u>Membership-based Employment</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass Recruitment of New Graduates</li> <li>• April Admission</li> <li>• Unique Selection Schedule (Fixed Schedule)</li> <li>• Multiple Stages</li> <li>• Experience Matters Less</li> </ul>	<b><u>Job-based Employment</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment All-Year Round</li> <li>• Annual Admission / Vacancy Open</li> <li>• Flexible Selection Schedule</li> <li>• Simple Steps at Shorter Time Periods</li> <li>• Experience Does Matter (including internships)</li> </ul>

#### ■ Membership-based Employment

This style of employment does not limit duties, place of work or working hours. People are usually evaluated according to their ability to perform all duties as generalists.

#### ■ Job-based Employment

This style of employment limits duties and place of work, and the job description is clearly defined and appropriate capabilities are evaluated in accordance with skill levels as specialists.

## 2-3 Career Advancement in Japanese Companies

In addition to understanding the major characteristics of the job-hunting system in Japan and expectations of international students from employers, it is also important to think about your career and life plan so as to make your decision on your first employment as meaningful for your future as possible. Since there are various ways for companies to utilize international human resources in their business, it is recommended that you research how international human resources are advancing their careers in the company/industry in which you are interested.

The following are very typical career examples of foreign employees in Japanese companies.

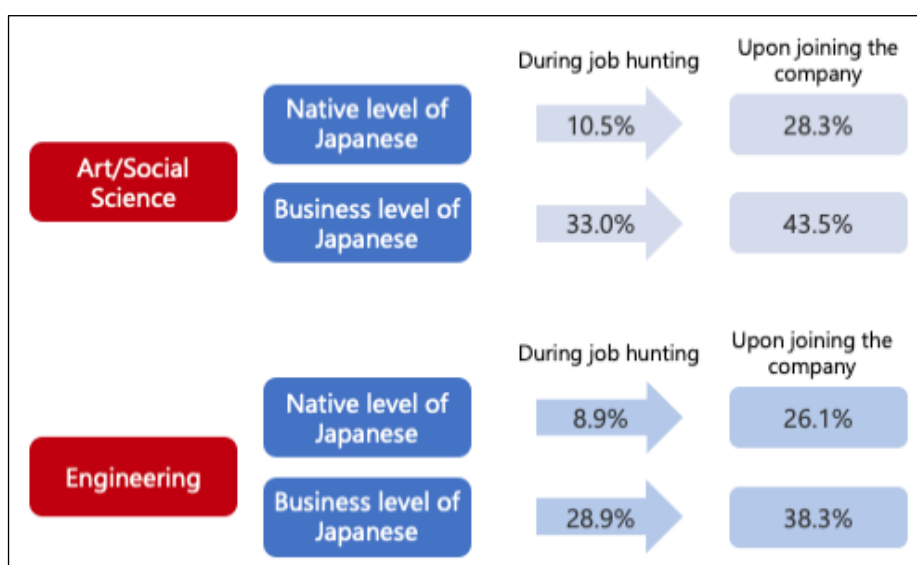
	Same Assignment as Japanese Employees	Employed by Overseas Subsidiary	“Expats” from Japan HQ to Overseas Subsidiary
<b>Career and Assignment</b>	Basically the same career path as Japanese employees under the standardized personnel system. Not always assigned to overseas operation.	As directly hired by an overseas subsidiary, work under the same condition and system as other local staff members. Can be assigned to the role as bridge between the local staff and Japan HQ.	To be sent to an overseas subsidiary as an “expat” after some general job experience in Japan, with remaining employment at Japan HQ. Might be expected to be a management member of the subsidiary based on experiences gained in Japan.
<b>Compensation and Benefits System</b>	The same system and salary level as Japanese employees.	The same system and salary level as local employee in each country.	The same system and salary level as Japanese employees, but may be given additional compensation and benefits as an “expat.”
<b>Points to Note</b>	You can pursue the equivalent career as a Japanese, and be treated equally under the same conditions. You cannot always expect to be assigned to work abroad or in your home country.	May be favorable for one who wants to go to their home country as early in their career as possible. Sometimes total earnings will become lower than that in Japan based on the average salary level in each country.	You can gain more competencies from the work both in Japan and overseas. Can be a career path to a director position in the future. Usually an “expat” is on temporary assignment and will return to Japan after a period.

## 2-4 The Importance of Japanese Language Skill

### Japanese Language Proficiency Required by Companies

International students require a high level of reading, listening, writing and speaking ability in Japanese. Especially—with the exception of blue-collar positions—companies are looking for a business-level of Japanese ability sufficient for frequent back-and-forth communication with clients as well as colleagues.

In fact, companies' expectations of Japanese language proficiency at the timing of joining the company are much higher than that during job hunting.

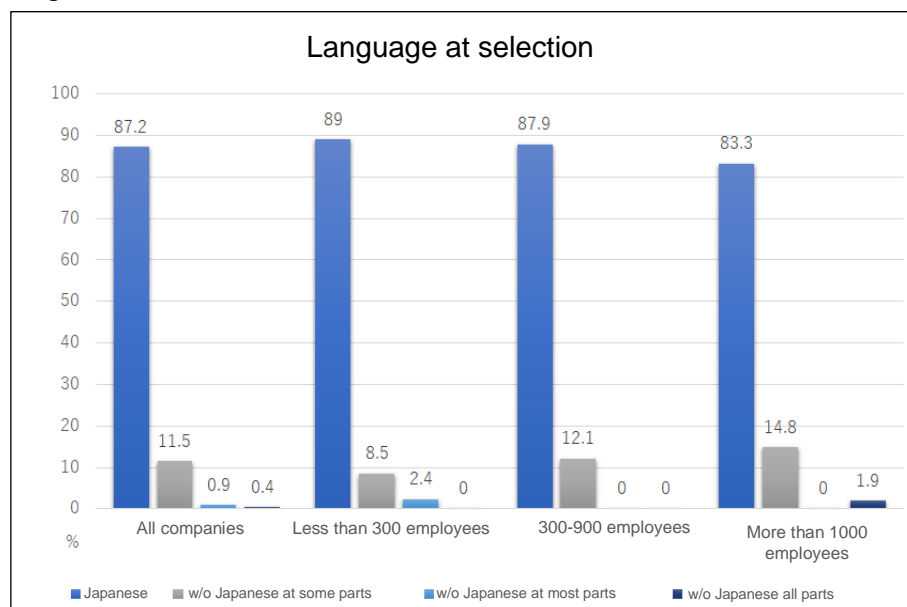


Source: DISCO Career Research December 2019

<https://www.disc.co.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019kigyuu-global-report.pdf>

### Japanese Language at Selection

About 90% of companies use the Japanese language in selecting international students, especially during interviews.



Source: DISCO Career Research December 2019

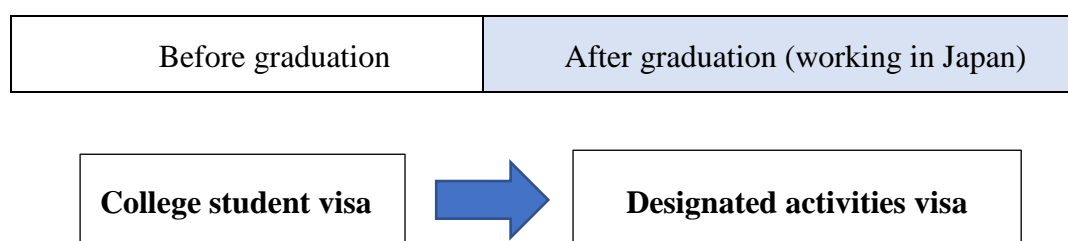
<https://www.disc.co.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019kigyuu-global-report.pdf>

## 2-5 Visa Matters

### Continuing Job-Hunting Activities after Graduation

#### ■ Degree Seeking Students

International students who have graduated and are planning to continue job hunting in Japan need to change their status of residence to “Designated Activities Visa” (to remain in Japan for job hunting). To change the visa status, you need to submit a recommendation letter from the University, and other necessary documents to the Immigration Bureau. A Designated Activities Visa is valid for six months and can be renewed only once for another six months (maximum of one year after graduation).



The Career Center will issue a recommendation letter to Waseda University graduates who have fulfilled the following requirements. **Make sure to apply BEFORE you graduate.**

#### **Requirements before Applying for a Recommendation Letter**

1. Completion of Post-Graduation Plans (📄 P. 67)
2. Keep records of your activities (such as schedule) and retain written correspondence such as announcements and e-mails from companies to attach to the report
3. Submission of designated application form verifying your job-seeking activities to the Career Center

#### **Caution**

Applicable only to job-seeking undergraduate/graduate students who have graduated or earned a degree from Waseda University (正規生). Non-degree students, such as students studying at Waseda University for learning Japanese, exchange students, and research students, are not eligible.

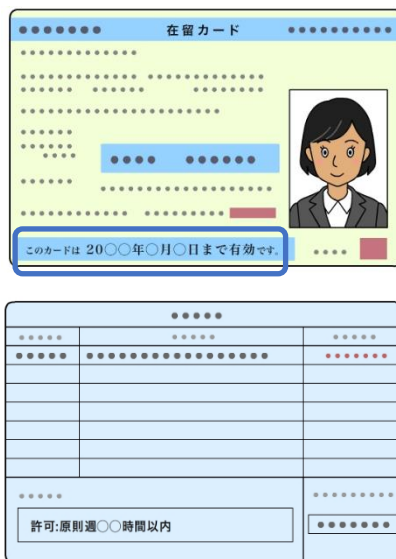


## ■ Non-Degree Students

The "College Student" status of residence is valid only during your enrollment. Please be sure to leave the country immediately after graduation because the "College Student" status will terminate. However, a one-month grace period is allowed for preparations. If you need to extend your stay for an unavoidable reason for more than one month, please inquire directly to the Immigration Bureau.

### \* Non-Degree Students

Students studying at Waseda University to learn Japanese, exchange students, and research students.



Even though the date is still valid, you will not be able to use it after the program is complete.



As for the necessary documents to get the recommendation letter and the procedure for changing visa status, please refer to our official website in addition to checking the Immigration Bureau Official Website.



Career Center Website in English

## 2-6 Organizations and Agencies

### Supporting Job Hunting

Job information websites in Japan include those operated using advertising revenue from companies, and those operated by public organizations such as the Tokyo Employment Service Center for Foreigners and business organizations. Many companies accept entries from the applicants through such websites.

Leading job-hunting websites	
Mynavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to apply to multiple companies by registering</li><li>• Once registered on the website, you will receive information regarding career-related matters.</li><li>• You need to select the website you use depending on companies.</li></ul>
Career-tasu job hunting	
Rikunabi	
Asagaku navi	
Gaishishukatsu.com	
Job-hunting websites for international students, bilinguals	
Career Forum Net (CFN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to search job information in English</li><li>• Able to find multinational companies</li></ul>
Glassdoor	
Agencies, scouting	
OfferBox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive offers from companies that are interested in you</li><li>• Offers will not always come from companies you are interested in.</li></ul>
Mynavi Global Agent	
Public institutions	
Tokyo Employment Service Center for Foreigners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer various services included individual consultation services for free.</li></ul>
SNS	
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to gather information on persons whom you want to know and find common points between you and them easily.</li></ul>



#### Caution

Take precautions when registering personal details on any of the above websites.