

Pre-Arrival Handbook

for International Researchers & Students





NAOJ Pre-Arrival Handbook

Introduction

This handbook does not cover provisional anti-COVID-19 measures related to entry to and stay in Japan. If you plan to stay at NAOJ during the period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, please check out the latest information issued by Japanese governmental sectors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or NAOJ.

This handbook will introduce prospective visiting researchers and students to some key information you will need to know before you arrive at NAOJ.

The information included in this handbook was compiled by the Office of International Relations, and each section contains the contact details of the responsible unit. If you have any questions, please contact the relevant unit through your host researcher at NAOJ.

Unless another period is specified in this handbook, “short-term residents” refer to those expected to stay at NAOJ for less than three months, and “medium- to long-term residents” refer to those expected to do so for three months or more. (Please note that counting “three months” in accordance with the procedures for acquiring a status of residence is rather complicated, so if necessary, please contact the International Academic Affairs Unit through your host researcher.)

The documents you will need to prepare for each procedure vary depending on your situation, such as how long you intend to stay in Japan or whether you are employed by NAOJ, so please make sure to refer to appropriate information that suits your personal circumstances.

May 2021
NAOJ Office of International Relations

First Edition: May 2021
Second Edition: January 2022
Third Edition: November 2022
Fourth Edition: March 2023

© 2023 NAOJ All rights reserved.
Any duplication or other use of this publication without written permission of NAOJ is prohibited.

Contents

1. Procedures for Entry into Japan.....	3
1.1. Required Documents	3
A. Certificate of Eligibility (COE)	4
B. Visa.....	4
1.2. How to Obtain a COE & Visa.....	5
A. Obtaining a COE	5
B. Obtaining a Visa.....	6
2. Accommodation and Housing	8
2.1. Mitaka Campus	8
A. Accommodation and Housing for Mid- to Long-Term Residents.....	8
B. Accommodations for Short-Term Stay	11
2.2. Mizusawa Campus	13
A. Accommodation on the Mizusawa Campus: Keyaki Kaikan.....	13
B. Hotels Near Mizusawa Campus.....	14
2.3. Nobeyama Campus (Nobeyama Radio Observatory)	15
A. Accommodation on the Nobeyama Campus	15
B. Hotels Near Nobeyama Campus.....	15
3. Medical Care and Health Insurance	16
3.1. If You Have a Pre-existing Health Condition/ Bringing Medicines into Japan 16	
3.2. Health Insurance.....	16
A. MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance	17
B. National Health Insurance.....	18
C. Short-Term Residents who do not have an employment contract with NAOJ..	18
3.3. Bicycle (Bike) Liability Insurance (for those planning to use a bike during their stay)	19
4. Bank Account & Credit Card	20
4.1. Bank Account.....	20
4.2. Credit Card.....	20
5. If you have Accompanying Family Members.....	21
5.1. Procedures at a Municipal Office After Coming to Japan	21
5.2. Children’s Education.....	21
A. On-Campus Nursery School.....	21
5.3. Working of Your Dependent Family Members.....	22

1. Procedures for Entry into Japan

Before entering and staying in Japan, you must go through the procedures stipulated by the Japanese law. These procedures vary depending on whether you will engage in paid activities or whether your stay will be short-term or mid- to long-term.

If NAOJ employs you as a staff or accepts you as a researcher, NAOJ will carry out the necessary procedures as your host institution. The unit responsible for these affairs at NAOJ is the International Academic Affairs Unit. Please contact this unit through your host researcher if you have any questions or need more details.

If you are a graduate student enrolled at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), please follow the instructions of the person in charge at SOKENDAI, for the procedures for entry to Japan will be carried out through SOKENDAI.

1.1. Required Documents

Before entering Japan to stay at NAOJ, you may need a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and/or visa. Please refer to the table below and check what kind of document(s) you need to prepare.

Paid or Unpaid	Period of Stay	Nationality	Required Document
Unpaid activities	90 days or more	Any nationality	- COE - Visa
	Less than 90 days	Countries and regions with visa Exemptions	(No COE and Visa required)
		Countries and regions other than those above	- Visa (No COE required)
Paid activities	(Any period and nationality)		- COE - Visa

* Countries and regions with Visa Exemptions: https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html

(Information may be subject to change depending on the world situation, so please be sure to check the latest information and pay close attention to the footnotes.)

A. Certificate of Eligibility (COE)

Foreign nationals are not allowed to enter or stay in Japan without any reason or purpose; you must be certified to have a certain activity or status that can serve as a justification for your stay in Japan. The activities authorized for foreign nationals to perform in Japan are divided into a variety of categories collectively called "status of residence." To obtain one, you must be certified as eligible.

The procedure starts with NAOJ, your host institution in Japan, applying to the Immigration Services Agency on your behalf. Once it is confirmed that you meet all requirements, a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) will be issued to prove your status. This COE will be necessary for issuing your visa in the same status category.

The following table summarizes the common types of status of residence among foreign nationals staying at NAOJ and their family members. If you are uncertain about which category you fall into, please contact the International Academic Affairs Unit through your host researcher.

Status of Residence	Authorized Activities
Professor	Research, research supervision, or educational activities at Japanese universities or equivalent institutions
Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services	Activities to engage in services that require skills and/or knowledge in the fields of physical science, engineering, or other natural sciences based on contracts with public/private sectors in Japan
Cultural Activities	Unpaid, academic, or artistic activities
Family Stay	Daily activities conducted by the dependent spouse or children of a status holder described in either of the upper columns

【For details: Immigration Services Agency】

<https://www.isa.go.jp/en/applications/guide/visa.html>

B. Visa

The issuance of your visa is not only a verification that your passport is legitimate and valid, but also an endorsement that your entry to and stay in Japan is rightful. However, having a visa is only one of the requirements, not the guarantee, for entry to Japan.

To apply for your visa, you must submit all required documents to the

Japanese Embassy or Consulate General in your home country or country of residence.

【Residence Card】

If you plan to stay in Japan for more than three months as a mid to long term resident, a residence card will be issued when you arrive at Narita International Airport or Tokyo International Airport. This card serves as your primary identification that verifies your status of residence and period of stay, so you must always carry the card during your stay in case police officers ask you to show it. Please be sure to update your information immediately whenever there is a change in status, such as your address.

*About residence card and residency management system

https://www.isa.go.jp/en/publications/materials/newimmiact_4_index.html

1.2. How to Obtain a COE & Visa

A. Obtaining a COE

- ① The International Academic Affairs Unit will send you an application form for COE issuance based on a request from your host researcher at NAOJ. Upon receipt of the form, please complete all required fields and send it back along with other supporting documents. The documents you need to attach include your head-shot photo and a photocopy of your passport, but the rest of the documents depend on which status category you will apply for. For specific details, please follow the instructions given by the International Academic Affairs Unit.

* Make sure to prepare your documents well in advance, so that the International Academic Affairs Unit can start the application procedure at least two months before the date of your arrival in Japan. When asked to provide your documents, please immediately respond to the request.

- ② The International Academic Affairs Unit will submit your COE application to the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, and your COE will be issued after the screening and certification

process.

- ③ The issued COE will be sent to the International Academic Affairs Unit and then transferred to you. Make sure to keep your COE in a safe place because it is one of the necessary documents for your visa application. Upon receipt of the COE, please start your visa application immediately. Your COE will remain valid only for three months from the date of issuance, during which you need to enter Japan.

B. Obtaining a Visa

(1) If You Need Both a COE and a Visa

If you need a visa as well as a COE, you must submit a visa application, along with your COE issued as described above, to the Japanese Embassy or Consulate General in your home country or country of residence. The visa category you apply for must be the same as that certified by your COE.

- ① While your COE application is underway in Japan following the steps described in (1) above, please prepare all other documents required for visa application. The documents you need to submit depend on which category you fall into. Please visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website linked below and click on “Work or Long-Term Stay,” where you can find a list of resident statuses. Then click on your status category and find out what documents you need to submit.

【VISA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)】

https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html

- ② Submit your visa application to the nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate General along with the COE received from the International Academic Affairs Unit. When submitted with the COE, your application has already passed a preliminary review by the Ministry of Justice, and your visa will usually be issued in about a week.
- ③ The original copy of your COE will be returned when the visa is issued, so do not forget to bring the COE as well as your passport stamped with the visa when you arrive in Japan. Your visa will remain valid for three months from the date of issue, and you will

be required to enter Japan within this period.

(2) If You Need Only a Visa (COE not required)

If you only need a visa, you should submit your visa application to the Japanese Embassy or Consulate General in your home country or country of residence.

- ① Check what documents will be required for your visa application. The documents you need to submit vary depending on your nationality or other factors. Aside from the documents that must be prepared by each applicant, there are some documents that must be prepared by NAOJ or your host researcher (inviting person). Please visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website linked below and click on your nationality under the “Short-Term Stay.” There you will find an overview of the application process and documents you need to submit.

[VISA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)]

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/j info/visit/visa/index.html>

- ② You will be responsible for preparing the documents to be prepared by the applicant. As for the documents to be prepared by the inviting person, please make a request to your host researcher or to the International Academic Affairs Unit through your host researcher.
- ③ Upon receipt of the documents prepared by the inviting person, submit your visa application to the nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate General. It may take more than one month from application to issuance. Your visa will remain valid for three months from the date of issue, during which you need to enter Japan.

2. Accommodation and Housing

2.1. Mitaka Campus

A. Accommodation and Housing for Mid- to Long-Term Residents

If you plan to study or work at the Mitaka Campus for three months or longer (for mid- to long-term period), you will usually stay at Cosmos Lodge, an on-campus accommodation for short-term visitors, for the first few weeks after your arrival at NAOJ. During this period, you will seek off-campus accommodation or apartments to live in (hereinafter collectively called “off-campus housing”).

Individuals with certain job titles may be allowed to stay at Cosmos Lodge throughout their entire period of stay at NAOJ. However, the maximum length of stay for those with other titles will generally be limited to 32 consecutive nights, and during this time, they need to find off-campus housing and sign a lease. (Please find more information about Cosmos Lodge in “(B) Accommodations for Short-term Visitors” below.)

At NAOJ, there is an Employer-provided Housing Program for international staffs who find it difficult to locate housing in Japan. However, to enroll in this program, you must meet certain criteria. Which type of off-campus housing you are eligible for and which type of lease contract you would choose will depend on your individual circumstances such as whether you are employed by NAOJ.

(1) Employer-provided Housing Program for International Staff

International researchers (excluding graduate students) who have an employment contract with NAOJ and who have been residing outside Japan for at least 183 days immediately before the start date of their appointment at NAOJ are eligible to apply for the Employer-provided Housing Program. For more information, please contact the Asset Management Unit through your host researcher.

(2) Types of Off-Campus Housing and Lease Contract

The type(s) of off-campus housing for which you are eligible varies depending on whether you are employed by NAOJ, and whether you are eligible for the Employer-provided Housing Program. The table below summarizes the eligibility criteria for off-campus housing options.

		Employed and eligible for NAOJ-leased housing	Employed but not eligible for NAOJ-leased housing	Not employed (e.g., EACOA and JSPS fellows)	SOKENDAI students
Staff Quarters of Nearby Universities		○	○	×	×
Rental Housing	Corporate Lease* ¹	○	×	×	×
	Personal Lease* ¹	—	○	○	○* ²

*1 Difference between Corporate Lease and Personal Lease: "Corporate Lease" means that NAOJ will sign a lease agreement with your landlord on your behalf. The search for housing will usually be carried out through a housing management agency (Tokyu Corporate Housing Management Inc.) in discussion with you and the Asset Management Unit, the department in charge at the NAOJ. "Personal Lease," on the other hand, means that you will search for housing with the help of the Support Desk and sign a lease directly with the landlord. In this case, you will need personal information of your Japanese host researcher as an emergency contact.

*2 If you are a student at a graduate school other than SOKENDAI, and conducting research at the Mitaka Campus, please contact the relevant office of your university. The Support Desk services will be limited to introducing housing agencies that can provide services in English.

(3) Types of Off-Campus Housing

The following table shows the types of off-campus housing available in the surrounding area of the Mitaka Campus. Please note that, as described above, the type(s) of housing for which you are eligible and the type of lease contract you would choose will depend on your personal circumstances. (For details, please refer to the table next page.)

*It will usually take over a month from viewing a rental property to signing a lease contract. To ensure a smooth transition into your new home after you arrive in Japan, make sure to contact either the Support Desk for reaching out to housing agencies (for Personal Lease) or the Asset Management Unit (for Corporate Lease) to start your house hunt before you arrive at NAOJ.

Type of Off-Campus Housing		Overview
Staff Quarters of Nearby Universities		As of April 2020, staff quarters owned by the nearby universities (Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, the University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo Gakugei University, or Hitotsubashi University) can be chosen if there is any vacancy available. The monthly rent is relatively cheap, but note that the restoration costs upon move-out can be expensive (about 200 to 300K JPY). If the Employer-provided Housing Program is applied, the maximum period of application will be 3 years.
Rental Housing	General Rental Properties	These are rental housing for tenants who expect to stay over a relatively long period of time, and are further divided into “apartments” and “houses” based on the structure and number of stories. An initial payment of 3 to 4 months’ rent is generally due (via bank transfer) at the time of signing the lease agreement. Please make sure that you are prepared to make this upfront payment.
	Monthly Apartments	<p>These are rental housing for tenants who expect to stay over a relatively short period of time, and are usually furnished with furniture, electrical appliance, equipment, and Wi-Fi. The typical monthly rent is over 100K JPY with all utilities included. In most cases, there are no English-speaking staff available, so you will need to be accompanied by someone who is fluent in Japanese during the process of viewing a property and signing a lease.</p> <p>The following website provides information about monthly apartments in the Mitaka area.</p> <p>Libest: https://www.libest.co.jp/ (Japanese language only)</p>
	Guesthouses	<p>A guesthouse is a type of shared accommodation, usually furnished with a shared kitchen, bathroom, and lounge. The initial and monthly payments are more affordable than those of other housing options. This option is popular among younger generations such as students, and suitable for those who prefer interacting with other people and living in a lively environment. However, if you prefer a quiet environment, this is not a good choice. Many guesthouses can provide services in English.</p> <p>The following website provides information about guesthouses in the Mitaka area.</p> <p>OAKHOUSE: https://www.oakhouse.jp/eng/</p>

B. Accommodations for Short-Term Stay

There is an on-campus accommodation, Cosmos Lodge, available for short-term visitors who plan to stay at the Mitaka Campus for purposes such as joint research. However, if there is no vacancy at Cosmos Lodge, you will need to book and stay at a local hotel.

(1) Cosmos Lodge

Cosmos Lodge is an accommodation facility located on the Mitaka Campus, designed to provide housing for short-term visitors. Whether you can make a priority booking or how long you can stay depends on your employment status and job title. Reservations must be made through NAOJ staff, so please contact your host researcher if you wish to stay here.



(2) Hotels Near Mitaka Campus

Hotel/Telephone/URL	Address	Rate
Hotel Mets Musashisakai TEL: 0422-32-5111 https://www.hotelmets.jp/en/musashisakai/	2-1-8, Kyonan-cho, Musashino-shi, Tokyo, 180-0023 0 min. walk from JR Musashisakai Station, South exit	【w/ Corporate Discount】 Single: From ¥9,900 (Inc. tax, service charge, breakfast)
Business Hotel Citytel Musashisakai TEL: 0422-33-5111 http://www.hotel-citytel.jp/citytel_sakai/ (Japanese only)	2-4-15, Kyonan-cho, Musashino-shi, Tokyo, 180-0023 1 min. walk from JR Musashisakai Station, South exit	【w/ Corporate Discount】 Single: From ¥7,250 (Inc. tax, service charge)
Mitaka City Hotel https://www.mitakacityhotel.jp/ (Japanese only)	3-21-5, Shimorenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo, 181-0013 5 min. walk from Mitaka Station, South exit	Single ¥7,273~
Kichijoji Tokyo Rei Hotel TEL: 0422-47-0109 https://www.tokyuhotelsjapan.com/global/kichijoji-r/	1-6-3, Kichijoji Minami- cho, Musashino-shi, Tokyo, 180-0003 1 min. walk from JR Kichijoji Station, South exit	【w/ Corporate Discount】 Single: From ¥11,640 (Inc. tax, service charge)
Kichijoji Excel Hotel Tokyu TEL: 0422-22-0109 https://www.tokyuhotelsjapan.com/global/kichijoji-e/	2-4-14, Kichijojihon-cho, Musashino-shi, Tokyo, 180-0004 5 min. walk from Kichijoji Station, North exit	Single ¥6,808~
Urban Hotel Twins Chofu TEL: 042-486-3500 http://www.tokyowest-hotel.co.jp/urban-tw/ (Japanese only)	1-47-4, Fuda, Chofu-shi, Tokyo, 182-0024. 1 min. walk from Keio Chofu Station, East exit	【w/ Corporate Discount】 Single: From ¥9,350 (Inc. tax, service charge)
Cerston Hotel Chofu TEL: 042-489-5000 https://www.crestonhotel.jp/chofu/en/	1-38-1, Kojima-cho, Chofu- shi, Tokyo, 182-0026. 1 min. walk from Keio Chofu Station, North exit.	【w/ Corporate Discount】 Single: From ¥10,240 (Inc. tax, service charge)
Wild Cherry Blossom, Hostel, Tokyo Koganei TEL: 042-401-1221 https://wildcherryblossomhostel.com/	4-15-14, Naka-cho, Koganei-shi, Tokyo, 184-0012 5 min. walk from Musashi Koganei Station, South exit	Cabin Room ¥5,500~

- * When you book a hotel that offers a company discount, please let the reception know that your stay is for a NAOJ-related matter.
- * The rates and services above are current as of March 2020 and may have changed since that time. Please check out up-to-date information when booking.

2.2. Mizusawa Campus

On the Mizusawa Campus, there is “Keyaki Kaikan” for short term visitors. Short-term visitors can also choose to stay at a nearby hotel.

A. Accommodation on the Mizusawa Campus: Keyaki Kaikan

The “Keyaki Kaikan” provides housing to short term visitors at the Mizusawa Campus. Reservations must be made through your host researcher at the Mizusawa Campus.

For the detailed procedure, see the following website or Contact the General Affairs Unit at Mizusawa VLBI Observatory through your host researcher at the Mizusawa Campus.

<https://www.miz.nao.ac.jp/content/researchers.html> (Japanese only)

B. Hotels Near Mizusawa Campus

Hotel/Telephone/URL	Address	Rate
Hotel Route INN Oshu TEL: 050-5847-7710 / 0197-51-7101 https://www.route-inn.co.jp/hotel/list/iwate/index.html (In multi-language)	105, Yoko-machi, Mizusawa-ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0801 15 min. drive from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥7,300 (Inc. tax, service charge, breakfast included)
Mizusawa Kita Hotel TEL: 0120-51-3456 TEL: 0197-22-8888 https://hpdsp.jp/kitahotel/en/	2, Terakoji, Mizusawa-ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0811 JR Tohoku Main Line 4-minute walk from Mizusawa Station. 15 min. drive from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥6,000 (Inc. tax, service charge) Breakfast available for extra ¥700 (Inc. tax)
Mizusawa Sun Palace Hotel TEL: 0120-43-1125 TEL: 0197-25-4311 http://sun.oshushi.com/ (Japanese only)	4, Azumacho, Mizusawa-ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0818 15 min. drive from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥5,000 (Inc. tax, service charge) Free breakfast available.
Mizusawa Grand Hotel TEL: 0197-25-8311 https://mizusawa-grandhotel.com/english/	40, Azumacho, Mizusawa-ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0818 15 min. drive from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥5,500 (Inc. tax, no meal) Breakfast available for extra ¥500 (Inc. tax)
Mizusawa Green Hotel TEL: 0197-24-5212 https://hpdsp.jp/mizusawa-greenhotel/en/	118-1, Nakamachi, Mizusawa, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0813 1 min. walk from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥2,100 (Inc. tax) Single: From ¥2,650 (Inc. tax & breakfast)
Mizusawa Suimeisou TEL: 0197-25-3311 http://suimeisou.jp/en/	5-33, Ootemachi, Mizusawa-ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0053 8 min. walk from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥7,200 (Exc. tax)
Aoki Ryokan TEL: 0197-23-7115 http://www.aokiryokan.com/ (Japanese only)	23-65, Nakamachi, Mizusawa- ku, Oshu-shi, Iwate, 023-0813 1 min. walk from JR Tohoku Shinkansen Mizusawa-Esashi Station.	Single: From ¥4,000 (Inc. tax, No meal) Single: From ¥4,800 (Inc. tax, breakfast)

* Neither of these hotels offer company discounts. The rates and services are current as of October 2020 and may have changed since that time. Please check up-to-date information when booking.

2.3. Nobeyama Campus (Nobeyama Radio Observatory)

A. Accommodation on the Nobeyama Campus

There is no accommodation facility operated by NAOJ on the Nobeyama campus, but a nearby accommodation facility owned by another university may be available, depending on the time of year and the availability of rooms. For details, please contact your host researcher at the Nobeyama Campus.

B. Hotels Near Nobeyama Campus

Short-term visitors can also choose to stay at a nearby hotel.

Hotel/Telephone/URL	Address	Rate
Yatsugatake Grace Hotel TEL: 0267-91-9515 https://www.y-grace.com/ (Japanese only)	217-1, Nobeyama, Minamimaki-mura, Minamisaku-gun, Nagano, 384-1305 5 min. drive from JR Koumi line Nobeyama Station. (Free Shuttle Bus available)	Single: From ¥13,500 (Inc. tax, service charge, breakfast & dinner)
Hotel Nobeyama TEL: 0267-91-1200 http://www.chateraiseresort.co.jp/HOTEL/ (Japanese only)	1841-5, Goshodaira, Kawakami-mura, Minamisaku-gun, Nagano, 384-1407 5 min. drive from JR Koumi line Nobeyama Station.	Standard Twin: From ¥6,500 (Inc. tax, service charge. no meal) Standard Twin w/ breakfast: From ¥7,000 (Inc. tax, service charge) Standard Twin w/ breakfast & dinner: From ¥7,500 (Inc. tax, service charge)
Kiyosato-Kogen Highland Hotel TEL: 0551-20-8111 https://kiyosato.izumigo.co.jp/ (Japanese only)	3545, Kiyosato, Takane-cho, Hokuto-shi, Hokuto, Yamanashi, 407-0301 3 min. drive from JR Koumi Line Kiyosato Station. (Shuttle Bus available. Reservation required.)	Standard Twin: From ¥16,790 (Inc. tax, breakfast & dinner)
Hotel Hut Walden TEL: 0551-48-2131 https://www.hut-walden.com/ (Japanese only)	3545, Kiyosato, Takane-cho, Hokuto-shi, Yamanashi, 407-0301 10 min. walk from JR Koumi Line Kiyosato Station	Standard Twin: From ¥11,500 (Inc. tax, breakfast & dinner)

* Neither of these hotels offer company discounts. The rates and services above are current as of October 2020 and may have changed since that time. Please check up-to-date information when booking.

3. Medical Care and Health Insurance

3.1. If You Have a Pre-existing Health Condition/ Bringing Medicines into Japan

Please ask your doctor in your home country to issue a referral, medical certificate, test result, or prescription written either in English or in Japanese, and bring them when you see a doctor in Japan for the first time. Some hospitals or clinics in Japan may be reluctant to accept foreign patients because of the language barrier or other reasons. If you have a pre-existing condition that requires you to see a doctor shortly after your arrival, please contact your country's diplomatic mission prior to your arrival in Japan so as to ensure that you can find a doctor or medical facility that can provide services in your native language or English.

If you need to bring medicines into Japan, you may be required to seek advance permission from one of Japan's eight Regional Bureaus of Health and Welfare. Please take the necessary application procedures before traveling to Japan.

[Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare]

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html>

3.2. Health Insurance

The type of health insurance you will enroll in during your stay will differ depending on whether or not you have an employment contract with NAOJ and your length of stay in Japan. In some cases, you may need to switch types during the middle of your stay in order to cover the entire period from the day you arrive to the day you leave. Please refer to the following information and apply for an appropriate insurance to make sure that you are covered in case of a sudden illness or injury.

【Overseas Travel Insurance】

Please note that after you arrive in Japan, it is often difficult to enroll in overseas travel insurance policies that provides coverage for illness during your stay, and you will not be able to acquire a new credit card that comes with overseas travel insurance benefits.

A. MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance

Those on a medium- to long-term stay who are employed by NAOJ with prescribed working hours of more than 29 hours per week, or who meet all the requirements for enrollment in the "MEXT Mutual Aid Association"¹ will join this insurance on the first day of their employment.

(1) During the period of employment: MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance

You are required to enroll in the MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance starting from the day of your employment. However, please keep in mind that eligibility for enrollment in the MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance will only be for the period of employment at NAOJ.

(2) During the period prior to employment (if arriving in Japan before the date of employment): Overseas Travel Insurance and National Health Insurance

If you plan to come to Japan before the start date of your employment, please make sure that you are enrolled in overseas travel insurance that provides coverage for illness or injury for the time period until your employment at NAOJ begins, since the MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance will only be effective during your employment period at NAOJ. Although some credit cards come with travel insurance benefits, please consider purchasing new overseas travel insurance since those benefits tend to have limited coverage.

In addition, while most overseas travel insurance covers illness or injury during travel by airplane, etc., prior to arrival in Japan, there may be inconveniences after arriving in Japan, such as the lack of nearby medical facilities designated by the insurance company. For this reason, it is recommended that you also apply for National Health Insurance, which covers illness and injury up to the day you start employment. Please visit your local municipal office as soon as possible after your arrival and complete the procedures for

¹ Eligibility requirements for enrollment in MEXT Mutual Aid Association: 1) prescribed working hours is at least 20 hours per week; 2) expected to be employed for more than 2 months; 3) monthly fixed salary is 88,000 JPY or more; and 4) is not a student.

enrollment. After you start your employment at NAOJ, revisit your local municipal office and show your MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance certificate to take the necessary procedures for withdrawing from National Health Insurance.

B. National Health Insurance

Those on a medium- to long-term stay who do not have an employment contract with NAOJ or who have an employment contract with NAOJ but do not meet the requirements for enrollment in the "MEXT Mutual Aid Association"¹ must join the National Health Insurance system.

(1) During the period of stay at NAOJ: National Health Insurance

You will need to apply for National Health Insurance. Please visit your local municipal office as soon as possible after your arrival and complete the procedures for enrollment.

(2) During the period prior to resident registration: Overseas Travel Insurance

It is recommended that you purchase an overseas travel insurance policy that provides coverage for illness and injury for the period prior to your resident registration including your travel to Japan, since National Health Insurance will only be available after you take the necessary procedures at your local municipal office. Although some credit cards come with travel insurance benefits, please consider purchasing a new overseas travel insurance since those benefits tend to have limited coverage.

C. Short-Term Residents who do not have an employment contract with NAOJ

Those on a short-term stay (less than three months) are not eligible for both MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance and National Health Insurance.

Before leaving your country, you are highly encouraged to purchase an overseas travel insurance policy to protect yourself from illness or injury

that may occur during your stay.

Although some credit cards come with travel insurance, such insurance may not have enough liability coverage, so if necessary, please consider purchasing new travel insurance.

3.3. Bicycle (Bike) Liability Insurance (for those planning to use a bike during their stay)

Bike insurance has become mandatory in Tokyo since April 2020, and this trend is spreading to other prefectures. From April 2023, all bicyclists nationwide will be responsible for making an effort to wear helmets. In fact, there have been cases of bike accidents where the cyclists were forced to pay a large amount of compensation.

If you are likely to use a bike in Japan, you need to purchase bike insurance that covers injury to yourself and others caused by bike accidents. Mid- to long-term residents can apply for a bike insurance even after coming to Japan, but not all applications will be approved. Thus, they are encouraged to purchase bike insurance before leaving their country. Short-term residents, on the other hand, cannot apply for such insurance after coming to Japan, and thus need to purchase one beforehand. It is recommended, if possible, to purchase an insurance policy that includes services such as Japanese interpretation and settlement negotiation.

Recently, there have been many traffic collisions, particularly between bikes, and when an accident does occur, the language barrier will make the case difficult to settle. In Japan, please make sure to ride a bike with an appropriate insurance coverage.

4. Bank Account & Credit Card

When you come to Japan, please carry enough money for the expected expenses of settling in Japan. Particularly, if you plan to live in off-campus housing under a personal lease agreement, you will need more than three to four times as much money for the initial payment, furniture, and electric appliance as you will pay for each monthly rent.

The following are important points to note when you open a bank account or use a credit card.

4.1. Bank Account

While most mid- to long term residents can open a bank account in Japan, requirements and standards vary depending on the bank, and there may be cases where you will not be able to open an account.

During the first six months of your arrival in Japan, your bank account will be considered a “non-resident” account and will be restricted to minimal functions such as deposits and withdrawals. Furthermore, during this “non-resident” period, domestic money transfers will be treated as international transfers, and each transaction will be subject to a costly transfer fee. Once six months have passed since your entry into Japan, you will be able to reregister your account as a “resident” and resume all functions, including normal domestic money transfers using an ATM.

Short-term residents are unable to open a bank account in a Japanese bank.

4.2. Credit Card

It is very difficult for foreign nationals to obtain a new credit card in Japan. If you wish to use a credit card during your stay, please obtain one that is valid internationally before leaving your country and bring it with you to Japan.

To obtain a mobile phone number in Japan, you need a credit card in your name.

If you plan to use a credit card or debit card that you brought from your country, or that was issued by a bank in your country, please make sure, before coming to Japan, to check whether your card is valid in Japan. Even if you find that your card is valid in Japan, never fail to check the card limit.

5. If you have Accompanying Family Members

5.1. Procedures at a Municipal Office After Coming to Japan

After coming to Japan, mid- to long-term residents must notify their local municipal office of their address and, if any, those of their accompanying family members. For each family member, you need to submit the original copy of a document that proves your family relationship (e.g., marriage certificate for spouse, birth certificate for children). These certificates must be officially issued by public entities, such as government agencies of your country, so please make sure to have the necessary certificates issued before leaving your country, and bring them with you when coming to Japan. When submitting to the local municipal office, you must also attach Japanese translations of these certificates.

5.2. Children's Education

In Japanese kindergartens and schools, each school year begins in April and ends in March of the following year.

Nursery schools are open to preschool children of any age, and kindergartens are open to children from three years old until they enter elementary school. However, children will not be admitted into nursery schools unless the parents meet the criteria for admission, such as employment status.

Compulsory education in Japan lasts a total of nine years: six years in elementary school from the age of six and three years in junior high school up to the age of 15. This is followed by further three years of high school and usually four years of college/university education.

A. On-Campus Nursery School

The Mitaka Campus has its own nursery school, Childcare Room "Hoshinoko," which accepts preschool children aged 57 days or older if their parents meet certain criteria. For details about "Hoshinoko," please contact the Employee Affairs Unit through your host researcher.

5.3. Working of Your Dependent Family Members

The spouse and children who come to Japan as dependents of an international researcher or student with a status of residence are granted the “Family Stay” status, which allows them to engage in “daily activities as the dependent spouse or child of a working foreign national residing in Japan.” However, this visa category is not intended for working, so paid activities are prohibited in principle.

Under certain conditions, however, dependent family members may be permitted to work by applying for “Permission to Engage in an Activity Other Than That Permitted by the Status of Residence Previously Granted” to the Immigration Services Agency.

“Unspecified Permission” and “Individual Permission” are the two types of permits granted under the permission to engage in an activity other than those permitted by the status of residence previously granted.

An Unspecified Permission is a comprehensive permit that allows the applicant to engage in part-time jobs without specifying the details of the activity, including the place and the contents of the work, insofar as the working hours are limited to 28 hours per week. If the work hours are expected to exceed 28 hours per week or are difficult to verify objectively, an Individual Permission will be required. To obtain an individual permit, the applicant must provide details of the activity, including the contents, work hours, and remuneration.

Even if the permission is granted, though, there are restrictions such as limitation of working hours according to the type of work permit. Those who violate the rules shall be imprisoned for not more than three years, or fined not more than three million JPY, and may be deprived of their status and/or deported.

Please note that once your spouse or children with the status of a “dependent family member” under the MEXT Mutual Aid Association Health Insurance become able to continue earning a certain amount of income, they may lose the status and may need to remove their registration from the Insurance. For more details about the permission, please see the following websites.

https://www.isa.go.jp/en/applications/guide/nyuukokukanri07_00045.html