

Kumamoto Prefecture Visa Guide



Special thanks to contributions made by the Kumamoto City PAs and JET community members.

Table of Content

Table of Content	1
What is a Visa?	2
Status of Residence (在留の資格) & Period of Stay (滞在期限)	2
Types of Visa Procedures	3
Change of Status	4
Materials Needed for Your First Trip	4
Materials Needed for Your Second Trip	4
Extension of Stay	5
Materials Needed for your First Trip	5
Materials Needed for your Second Trip	5
Temporary Visa Status	7
Materials Needed	7
Kumamoto City Immigration Bureau: Step-by-Step Guide	9
Directions to the Kumamoto City Immigration Bureau	9
At the Immigration Bureau (Part I)	9
Invitation for your Second Trip	9
At the Immigration Bureau (Part II)	10
Final Remarks	11

What is a Visa?

A “visa” is what you use to enter a country as a way of saying you are entering legally and with permission. When you enter Japan, a Landing Permit is stamped in your passport and your visa is used. The Landing Permit contains your Status of Residence and Period of Stay.

1. **Status of Residence** (在留の資格, *zairyuu no shikaku*) dictates what you are in Japan to do (e.g. tourism, instructor, engineer/specialist in humanities/international services) - If you want to do something not permitted under your current Status of Residence, you must apply for permission at the Immigration Bureau.
2. **Period of Stay** (滞在期限, *taizai kigen*) tells you how long your Status of Residence is valid for - If your Period of Stay is about to expire, you need to apply for an extension at the Immigration Bureau.

We often use phrases like “change my visa” or “extend my visa”, but what we are really referring to is a change in our Status of Residence or an extension of our Period of Stay.

Status of Residence (在留の資格) & Period of Stay (滞在期限)

The standard JET-issued Period of Stay is for three years and will likely expire on, or the day after, the end of your appointment. If you plan on staying in Japan after your original Period of Stay expires — whether it be for a short vacation before returning to your home country or for a fourth year on JET — you will have to visit the Immigration Bureau and either change your Status of Residence or renew your Period of Stay.

First and Second-Year JETs – If you accepted reappointment, then you will not need to do anything regarding your visa. However, if you are leaving JET but will be staying in Japan for a short term before you return to your home country, you are highly encouraged to change your Status of Residence to Temporary Visitor within two weeks before the end of your period of appointment.

Third to Fifth Year JETs – The standard Period of Stay for JETs is valid for 3 years, so your Period of Stay will likely expire on, or within days of the end of your term of appointment. **You will need to extend your Period of Stay every year you reappoint after your third year on JET.**

- If your Period of Stay will expire before your term of appointment ends for some rare reason, you must extend it in order to fulfil the term.
- If your Period of Stay expires on or a few days after your term of appointment ends, and you want to have extra time to pack, say farewell, travel, etc. you will need to apply for a “Temporary Visitor” visa.

DO NOT risk letting your Period of Stay expire. Immigration will check your Period of Stay before you leave, and you do not want to be arrested and banned from visiting Japan in the future.

Your current **Status of Residence (1)** and **Period of Stay (2)** can be found on your residence card (在留カード, *zairyuu kaado*).

JET’s residence cards will show this as:

- (1) “Instructor” or “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services”
- (2) 3 years from your first arrival in Japan - For 4th or 5th year JETs who have previously extended their Period of Stay, this may only read 1 year.



Types of Visa Procedures

There are three main processes that JETs need to be aware of:

1. [Change of Status](#) – for those changing to a different occupation in Japan
2. [Extension of Stay](#) – for those staying or have stayed longer than three years on JET
3. [Temporary Visa Status](#) – for those who intend to stay in Japan short term after their period of appointment

Later in this guide, there will be several documents that you, your supervisor, and your CO (or sponsoring company or institution) may need to prepare before you request to change or extend your visa. Although you may not be able to submit the request until a later time, it is best to begin the process with your supervisor in advance to ensure there is enough time to gather all of the necessary documents. In addition, some documents may be available in English, but they are mainly available to serve only as reference materials. It should be expected that the Japanese version/translations of the documents should always be submitted.

This will be stated later in the guide, too, but please contact the Immigration Bureau at 096-362-1721 before you make a trip there to submit your forms to confirm that you have all of the necessary documents and whether there is anything else you may need to prepare. It is highly recommended that you have your supervisor make this call, or you can request assistance from the [Kumamoto Support Center for Foreign Residents](#) at 080-4275-4489 (available Mon-Fri, 8:30-17:15).

When to Apply

JETs seeking a **Change in Status (1)** or a **Temporary Visitor Status (3)**:

- Wait until at least two weeks before the end of your appointment period as you will no longer be legally allowed to work at your current position after your visa status has been changed.

JETs applying for an **Extension of Stay (2)**:

- Submit an application about 3 months before the change will go into effect. For example, JET's with a Period of Stay expiring in July should submit the application as mid to late April.

Note: The Extension of Stay (2) application process is a bit time-consuming and involves a lot of paperwork. You must make a minimum of two trips to the Immigration Bureau. The second trip is usually two or three weeks after your first trip, provided that there is no issue with your paperwork. It is recommended you make your first trip at least a month and a half before your current visa expires.

Passport Expiration

(Transferring your visa to a new passport)

If you have a new passport for whatever reason, it is ***not necessary to visit the Immigration Bureau to transfer your visa***. After entering Japan and receiving a residence card, your residence card now acts as your work visa. ***However, when traveling outside Japan, remember to bring both your residence card and passport.***

If you no longer have a residence card because you are no longer considered a foreign resident of Japan, you should have your visa transferred to your new passport. You can do this by taking both your old and new passports to the Immigration Bureau and filling out a **Petition for Transfer of Endorsement** form (証印転記願, *shouin tenkigan*).

1. Change of Status

(For JETs changing to different occupation in Japan)

JETs will need to change their Status of Residence if they plan to work in a different occupation in Japan. A person of authority at your new occupation may apply for your new visa for you, or they may request that you complete the application yourself.

Materials Needed for Your First Trip

- 1) **Application for Change of Status of Residence** - 1 copy
 - a) “For applicant” parts 1-3: filled out by the visa holder (you).
 - b) “For organization” part: should be filled out by your new employer.

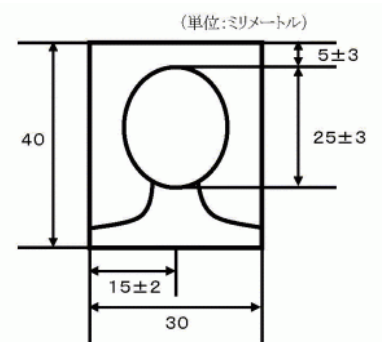
Fill out the application form that is most relevant to your new occupation from [here](#). Be sure you download the forms from the “Application form for change of status of residence” section.

- 2) **Passport** (must be valid and not expired)

- 3) **Residence Card**

- 4) **Health Insurance Card**

- 5) **Passport-Style Photo (4cm×3cm):** 1 copy ([examples](#)):
 - c) Alone and be facing forward without any head covering
 - d) Background should be plain with no shadow
 - e) Must be sharp and clear
 - f) Must have been taken within 3 months prior to submission



This photo can be taken professionally for approx. ¥1,000.

- 6) **Supporting Documents** (based on the type of new occupation); Please consult the list of supporting documents required for the status of residence of which you are applying for for more details:
 - a) **Letter of Guarantor** (身元保証書, *mimoto hoshousho*) - (Filled out by your supervisor or person of authority in your new occupation) ([JPN](#) & [ENG](#))
 - b) **Questionnaire** (質問書, *shitsumonsho*) ([JPN](#) & [ENG](#)) - (Ask your supervisor or person of authority in your new occupation for assistance in filling out this form)

Materials Needed for Your Second Trip

- 1) **Postcard from the Immigration Bureau** (*The Immigration Bureau may opt to call you to inform you to go and complete the application process if you choose this option in lieu of the postcard.*)
- 2) **Passport** (must be valid and not expired)
- 3) **Residence Card**
- 4) **¥4,000 Revenue Stamp** (収入印紙, *shuu'nyuu inshi*) - from 2F Immigration Bureau to be applied to the [Certificate for Payment of Fee](#) that you will receive at the Immigration Bureau

2. Extension of Stay

(For JETs staying or have stayed longer than three years on JET)

Materials Needed for your First Trip

1) **Application for Extension of Period of Stay Form** - 1 copy

- a) “For applicant” parts 1-3: filled out by the visa holder (you).
- b) “For organization” part 1: filled out by your CO

Fill out the application form that matches your Status of Residence from [here](#). Be sure you download the forms from the “Application form for extension of period of stay” section.

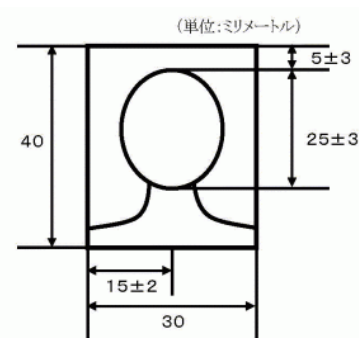
2) **Passport** (must be valid and not expired)

3) **Residence Card**

4) **Health Insurance Card**

5) **Passport-Style Photo (4cm×3cm)** - 1 copy ([examples](#)):

- a) Alone and be facing forward without any head covering
- b) Background should be plain with no shadow
- c) Must be sharp and clear
- d) Must have been taken within 3 months prior to submission



This photo can be taken professionally for approx. ¥1,000.

6) **Letter of Guarantor** (身元保証書, *mimoto hoshousho*) - (Filled out by your supervisor) ([JPN](#) & [ENG](#)) *Not necessary, but this will depend on your circumstances so call to confirm.*

7) **Proof of Employment** (在職証明書, *zaishoku shoumeisho*) - (Provided by your CO) *This can be any official document that you received from your CO that includes your period of appointment.*

8) **Tax Records**

a) **Proof of Payment of Residency Tax** (住民税の課税証明書, *juuminzei no kazei shoumeisho*)

- i) If you did not pay any taxes due to special exemptions in your first two years of JET, then you must receive a document from your local city hall stating you have no unpaid tax (未納がない, *minou ga nai*)

b) **Income Tax Certificate** (納税証明書, *nozei shoumeisho*)

These tax documents can be obtained by yourself from your respective local municipal office or a convenience store if you have a My Number card. Cost is approx. ¥400 for each copy.

Materials Needed for your Second Trip

1) **Postcard from the Immigration Bureau** (*The Immigration Bureau may opt to call you to inform you to go and complete the application process if you choose this option in lieu of the postcard.*)

2) **Passport** (must be valid and not expired)

- a) On your first trip to the Immigration Bureau, an immigration officer should have stapled a piece of paper inside your passport or given the paper to you. Do not lose this paper as you will need it in order to pick up your new residence card.

3) Residence Card

- 4) **¥4,000 Revenue Stamp** (収入印紙, *shuu'nyuu inshi*) - from 2F Immigration Bureau to be applied to the [Certificate for Payment of Fee](#) that you will receive at the Immigration Bureau

3. Temporary Visa Status

(For JETs who intend to stay in Japan temporarily after their period of appointment)

For those who are leaving the JET Programme, it is important to figure out when exactly your Status of Residence expires. This is the date of expiration marked in brackets on your residence card. In some cases, your visa will expire around the final day of your contract.

- **If you intend to stay in Japan temporarily before you return to your home country -**
You will need to request a Change of Status to a Temporary Visitor Visa (TVV). Foreigners without a valid Status of Residence can be detained or deported at any time. To ensure a smooth departure, JETs in this situation will need to apply for temporary visitor status.
- **If you are planning to travel through Japan using the Japan Rail Pass -**
You will need to apply for a Change of Status regardless of whether your residence card expires or not. The Japan Rail Pass is typically only available to foreign tourists.
- **If you are looking for work in Japan after finishing your term of appointment -**
You can submit a Certificate of Employment (在職証明書, *zaishoku shoumeishou*) to the Immigration Bureau with your application to change your Status of Residence. This certificate can be obtained from your CO and proves you have finished your term of appointment on JET. Submitting this document will typically allow you to stay in Japan up to 180 days after your contract ends rather than the standard 90 days on a TVV.

Materials Needed

Applying for a temporary visitor status will take only one visit to the Immigration Bureau.

1) Application for Change of Status of Residence - 1 copy

Fill out the application form for “Temporary Visitor” from [here](#). Be sure you download the forms from the “Application form for change of status of residence” section.

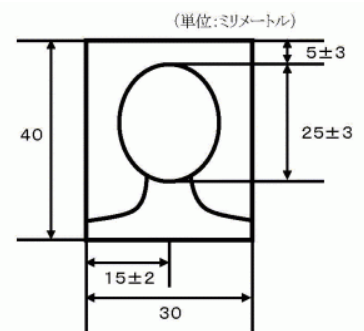
2) Passport (must be valid and not expired)

3) Residence Card

4) Health Insurance Card

5) Passport-style photo (4cm×3cm) - 1 copy ([examples](#)):

- Alone and be facing forward without any head covering
- Background should be plain with no shadow
- Must be sharp and clear
- Must have been taken within 3 months prior to submission



This photo can be taken professionally for approx. ¥1,000.

6) Residence Record (住民票, *juuminhyou*)

- You can obtain a copy of this at your local city hall or at the photocopier of a convenience store (6:30-23:00) if you have a hardcopy of your My Number Card (¥300 per copy).
- You must indicate that you do NOT want your My Number on the certificate.
- Must have been obtained within 3 months prior to submission

7) Tax Records

a) **Proof of Payment of Residency Tax** (住民税の課税証明書, *juuminzei no kazei shoumeisho*)

i) If you did not pay any taxes due to special exemptions in your first two years of JET, then you must receive a document from your local city hall stating you have no unpaid tax (未納がない, *minou ga nai*)

b) **Income Tax Certificate** (納税証明書, *nozei shoumeisho*)

8) **Certificate of Employment** (在職証明書, *zaishoku shoumeisho*) - (Provided by your CO) *This can be any official document that you received from your CO that includes your period of appointment.*

9) Supporting documents

a) Travel Itinerary (including date of departure)

b) Document explaining what you will be doing in Japan until you leave (理由書, *riyuusho*)

c) Proof that you have enough money to last you during your stay (bank passbook with a balance of around ¥200,000 will be sufficient for around a month's stay)

10) **¥4,000 Revenue Stamp** (収入印紙, *shuu'nyuu inshi*) - from 2F Immigration Bureau to be applied to the [Certificate for Payment of Fee](#) that you will receive at the Immigration Bureau

Note: Any JET planning to stay in Japan for more than 30 days after their contract ends should note that their CO is not obligated to pay for their return airfare.

Note: In the case that you seem to be short on money for various reasons and are afraid of not being approved for the switch from a working visa to a TVV due to the lack of funds, you should bring with you a **Letter of Guarantor** (身元保証書, *mimoto hoshousho*) along with a copy of your guarantor's Residence Record and their tax records, too. However, if you have sufficient funds to cover your stay after JET before you return to your home country, and there seems to be no significant issues with your application, then you should not have to prepare a Letter of Guarantor and the guarantor's supplementary documents. **Keep in mind that different situations may require a guarantor, so if you are unsure, it is best to call the Immigration Bureau in advance and make an inquiry.**

Kumamoto City Immigration Bureau: Step-by-Step Guide

Taking Leave for Visa Renewal: You may be granted special leave (特休, tokkyuu) in order to apply for an Extension of Stay (2) and to go pick up your new residence card. It is likely that you may have to take **paid leave** (年休, nenkyuu) in order to apply for a Change of Status (1 & 3), but this will be decided by your CO. Before making a trip to the Immigration Bureau, obtain permission from your supervisor and confirm with them on the type of leave you will need to request.

Directions to the Kumamoto City Immigration Bureau

📍 Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau Kumamoto Branch Office

Address: 862-0971, Kumamoto-shi, Oe 3-1-53, Daini Goudou Chousha (第2合同庁舎) Building, 1st Floor *ground floor*

TEL: 096-362-1721

Hours: Monday – Friday: 9:00 – 12:00, 13:00 – 16:00

At the Immigration Bureau (Part I)

1. When you enter the building, turn right and walk down the hallway. The Immigration Bureau, one of the many offices in the building, is on your left, and the door is sign-posted in English.
2. Inside the Immigration Bureau, head to the counter and write your name on the designated sheet of paper. Please circle “application” (申込, moushikomi).
3. When your name is called, submit the necessary application materials. They may ask you a few questions to confirm, but this process should be fairly simple provided you have the documents required (if you end up missing any documents, the office may allow you to mail it in, but this is not a guarantee).
4. If you submit your paperwork and everything seems to be in order, they will give you a postcard to write your name and address on. They will send this postcard to you once they are ready for you to come back to finish the visa change/extension process.
5. After turning in your application, you may be given a temporary visa (in your passport) and they will stamp the back of your current residence card stating that your documents are currently being processed. Your application will then be processed for around two to three weeks.
6. When they are finished processing your application, you will receive a notice in the mail to go pick up your new visa.

Note: When you submit your documents, only your passport and resident card will be returned to you — the rest will be sent for processing. If you need to make copies, make sure you do so before you go to the Immigration Bureau.

Invitation for your Second Trip

About two or three weeks after your first visit, you will receive the aforementioned postcard in the mail. The postcard will state the date by which you need to go back to the Immigration Bureau (e.g. 2023年7月1日, July 1, 2023). It is highly recommended you go by this date, but if you absolutely

cannot, please call the Immigration Bureau to reschedule. The office in Kumamoto City can be reached at 096-362-1721.

At the Immigration Bureau (Part II)

1. When you arrive at the building where the Immigration Bureau is, first head to the post office on the 2F of the Immigration Bureau. Head to booth 10 (a small window kiosk immediately on the left as you enter from the main staircase) and ask for a **revenue stamp** (収入印紙, *shuu'nyuu inshi*).
2. After buying the revenue stamp on the 2F, go to the Immigration Bureau on the 1F and, once again, write your name on the designated piece of paper. Please circle “collection” (受け付け, *uketsuke*).
3. When your name is called, give them your postcard, passport, and resident card.
4. They will give you a paper titled “[Certificate for Payment of Fee](#)” (this can also be picked up after your first visit). Place the revenue stamp on this form in the space provided, fill out how much you paid for the revenue stamp (¥4,000), what the payment is for (e.g. “2 Extension of period of stay”), and sign the bottom. *It is likely they will have completed most of these fields for you and you will only have to sign and date the form.*
5. You will likely have to wait again as they prepare your new resident card. Once it is finished, you will be called to the counter to collect your old card, your new card, and your passport as well as confirm that the information on your new card is correct.

Final Remarks

Congratulations! Your visa status/Period of Stay has been changed.

If you extended your Period of Stay or changed your Status of Residence, then you will receive a new residence card. If you look at your new residence card, it states how long your renewed visa is for and when it expires. Your old card is no longer valid, and a hole should have been punched into it by the immigration officer. However, be sure to dispose of it properly or keep it in a secure place as it still contains your personal information.

Note: No new visa stamp will be placed in your passport. Basically, *your residence card is your visa in Japan.* The immigration office will likely explain this to you again once you have received your new card.

Once you have received and confirmed all of the information on your new residence card, make sure you go to your local city hall to renew your My Number Card* as well. Your My Number Card expires the same time your residence card does.

**The Individual Number (My Number) is used in the following three areas; social insurance, tax, and disaster countermeasures within Japan. You should have been sent a 12-digit My Number notification card when you created a resident record for the first time after your arrival in Japan. For more information, check this [pamphlet](#) and [website](#).*