

# Multilingual Living Information

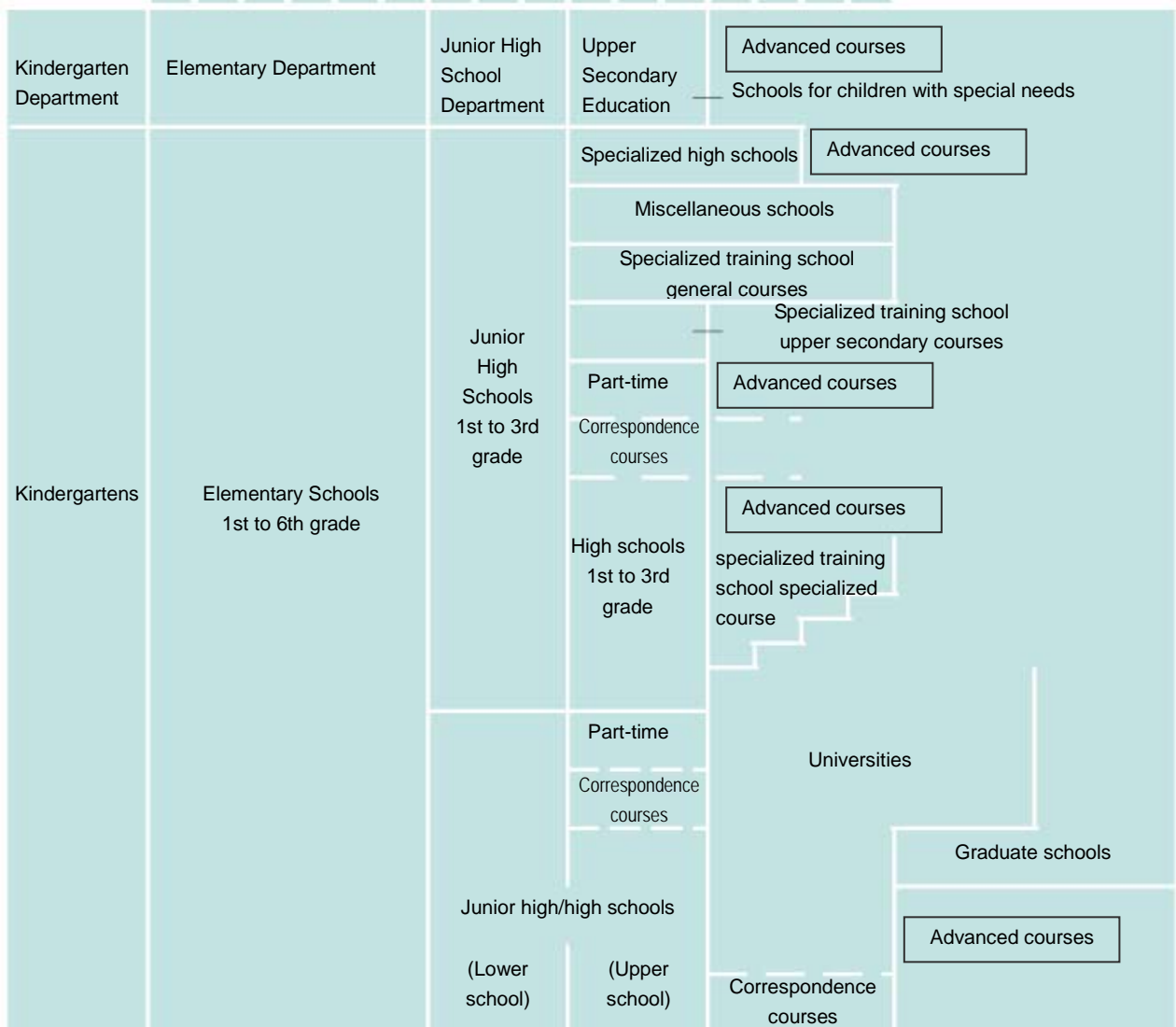


## J Education

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### School Education System

Age 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28  
 School year 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 4



Reference: Guide to Starting School Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,  
 Science and Technology, April 2005





- Specialized training schools are categorized into three courses according to the qualifications for entry: upper secondary courses for junior high school graduates, specialized courses for high school, university and junior college graduates, and general courses that have no entry qualifications. Schools with upper secondary courses are called upper specialized training schools, whereas schools with specialized courses are called specialized schools.
- Prep schools, car maintenance schools, and international schools fall under the category of miscellaneous schools.

[Reference] Household expenditure on education per student per year in kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools.

(Includes tuition fees, class room activity expenses, transportation fees, and uniforms)

(unit: yen)

| Classification              | Kindergarten |         | Elementary school |         | Junior high school |         | High school |         |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-------------|---------|
|                             | Public       | Private | Public            | Private | Public             | Private | Public      | Private |
| <b>Educational expenses</b> | 133,346      | 368,392 | 56,655            | 780,001 | 133,183            | 957,893 | 343,922     | 785,289 |

Source: EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE PER CHILD, PUPIL OR STUDENT (F.Y.2006)

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)



## 1 Education System

Japan ratified the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994. This agreement recognizes the rights of the child to education. In Japan, primary education is not compulsory for children of foreign nationality, but every child has the right to receive education.

### 1-1 Japanese education system

#### (1) 6.3.3.4 system

The Japanese education system consists overall of six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, three years of high school and four years of university (or two years of junior college)

#### (2) Compulsory education

Among the 6.3.3.4 years of education, every child must enter and graduate from an elementary school and a junior high school, as this is compulsory education. Compulsory education is an obligation for Japanese citizens. However, children of age six to 15 with foreign citizenship may enter or transfer to local elementary schools or junior high schools with same expenses as Japanese citizens, regardless of their nationality. Looking ahead to your child's future, it is highly desirable for your child to be entered/ transferred into a school. Please consult the municipal administrative office in the area where you reside.

#### (3) Others

Most students in Japan go on to study at high schools/universities. To be admitted into a high school or a university, applicants must take an entrance examination.

There are kindergartens for children under school age. There are also specialized training schools and miscellaneous schools basically for junior high school and high school graduates which teach them the skills and knowledge necessary for a vocation. For children with disabilities there are also schools that provide special needs education.



### 1-2 Japanese schools

#### (1) National/public schools and private schools

Schools are categorized into three types according to the management jurisdiction. National schools are run by the national government, public schools are run by local municipalities, and private schools are run by incorporated educational institutions.

Entry into public elementary schools and junior high schools as a general principle is determined according to the school district that students live in, and an entrance exam is not required, whereas students who wish to enter a private school must pass an entrance exam.

#### (2) School year, terms, and vacations

A school year in Japan begins in April and ends in the following March.

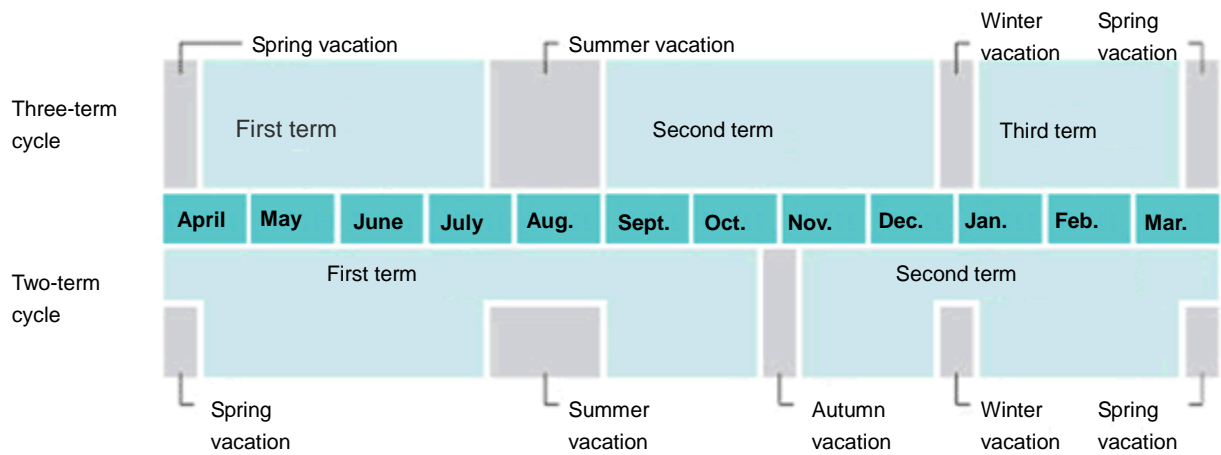
In most schools there are three terms in a school year.

The first term is from April to July, the second term is from September to December and the third term is from January to March. Each term is followed by a vacation: around 40 days of summer vacation, and two weeks of winter vacation and spring vacation respectively.

\* In some schools, a school year may consist of two terms. In such cases, the first term is from April to September and the second term is from October to March. Apart from summer vacation, winter vacation and spring vacation, four to six days of autumn vacation are given between the two terms.



### Example of terms and vacations in a school year





## 2 Pre-school education

Pre-school education for children under school age is provided at kindergartens.

### 2-1 Kindergarten

A kindergarten is an educational institute for children above age three to children until they enter elementary school. There are national, public and private kindergartens run by the national government, local governments, and incorporated educational institutions respectively. Depending on the regions, subsidies may be provided to children who go to private kindergartens.

\* There are also facilities known as nursery kindergarten (houikusho, hoikuen) where infants and young children who would otherwise lack children are consigned by their parents/guardians to be taken care of. For details, please refer to section [5-1 Certified nursery schools on chapter H Childbirth/childcare](#).

|                           | Public kindergartens  | Private kindergartens  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Open to</b>            | Four- to five-year-olds within the residential district (in some municipalities, three-year-olds are also accepted)   | Children of age three to five.   |
| <b>Open hours</b>         | 9:00-14:00; closed on weekends and during national holidays and long vacations.   | Differ for each kindergartens  |
| <b>Application period</b> | Around Oct. to early Nov. each year   | Around Oct. to early Nov. each year  |
| <b>Where to apply</b>     | Respective kindergartens  | Respective kindergartens   |
| <b>Fees</b>               | Entrance fees (at time of entry) and day-care fees  | Some kindergartens charge extra fees for facilities or ask for donations. in addition to entrance fees and day-care fees. Interviews or examinations prior to entrance will require examination fees.  |
| <b>School district</b>    | Your local municipality   | No particular limitation   |
| <b>Other</b>              | Pick-up and drop off by parents/guardians and preparation of lunch are essential. Expenses differ for each municipality. For details, please enquire at the educational affairs section of the Board of Education of the municipality where you reside for details. | Some municipalities provide subsidies, such as assistance with entrance fees, subsidies for day-care fees, and subsidies to assist with attending kindergarten. Private kindergartens are each managed under various education principles, so it is important to enquire at the respective kindergarten for details. |



## 2 Pre-school education

### 2-2 Accredited daycare-kindergartens

Accredited daycare-kindergartens combine the functions of kindergartens and nursery schools. A child may receive a combination of pre-school education and day-care whether or not a child's parents/guardians work during the daytime. Parents/guardians may also receive various services including consultation services regarding the raising of children.

There are four types of accredited daycare-kindergarten: cooperation type, kindergarten type, day-care type, and unaccredited type. You are advised to check carefully as the facilities and administrative methods vary for each type.

- How to apply: Contact the respective accredited daycare-kindergarten.
- Fees: Set by each accredited daycare-kindergarten. Day-care fees are set according to the circumstances of the parents/guardians such as income.
- Subsidies: Kindergartens may have systems providing subsidies to assist with attending kindergarten

If you wish to make use of it, consult the Department of Health and Social Welfare of your prefecture for further information.



### 3 Elementary school and junior high school

Six years of elementary school education and three years of junior high school education are compulsory in Japan. School life will involve Japanese customs, events and rules. Please respect them and encourage your child to enjoy his or her school life without stress.

#### 3-1 School age

School age means the age at which a child can enter a school: age six to enter an elementary school and age twelve to enter a junior high school.

In Japan, students belong to each grade according to their age. Those of foreign nationality are likely to be transferred into a grade according to their age.

#### 3-2 School expenses

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>National/public schools</b> | Entrance fees, tuition fees and textbooks are provided at no cost for elementary and junior high students. However, teaching materials other than textbooks, school supplies, lunch, excursions and uniforms must be prepared at your own expense. |
| <b>Private schools</b>         | Entrance fees and tuition fees must also be paid at your own expense.  |



### 3 Elementary school and junior high school

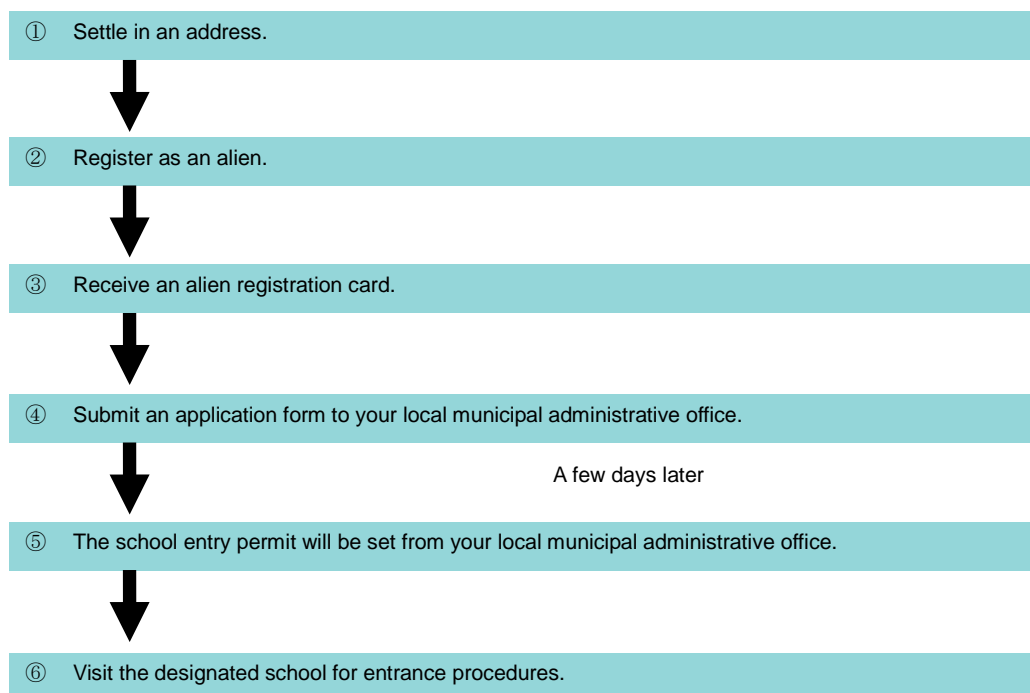
#### 3-3 Entrance procedures

If you wish to enter your child into a public elementary school/junior high school, you are advised to visit your municipal administrative office or the Board of Education and convey your intention to enter the child into a school in Japan. There you will be given an application form; fill in the essentials and submit it to the municipal administrative office. When applying, the alien registration card of the student and their parents/guardians must be presented. The application is open throughout the year. If you wish to enter your child into an international school or national/private elementary school or junior high school, please apply directly to each school.

\* To those who have completed alien registration, a school entrance guide will be sent to parents/guardians of children expected to enter school in the coming school year. This guide will include the school to enter and dates for health checks to be taken prior to entering school.

\* There may be cases where the parents/guardians fail to receive such a school entrance guide. Please consult your municipal administrative office or the Board of Education at an early stage before your child reaches six.

#### School entry procedures





### 3 Elementary school and junior high school

#### 3-4 Procedures for transfer (after entrance)

If you wish to transfer your child to a public elementary school or junior high school, visit your municipal administrative office and carry out the procedures for transfer. The child will then transfer to the designated school on the designated day. As a general principle, the child will transfer to a grade according to his or her age. However, it is also possible for the child to temporarily study in a lower grade due to circumstances such as lack of Japanese ability. If you are concerned about this, please consult the Board of Education in your municipal administrative office or the teachers in the respective school.

If you wish your child to enter an international school or national/private school, please enquire directly at the respective school.

#### 3-5 School life (if your child does not yet speak fluent Japanese)

Classes will be taught in Japanese. Thus, many elementary schools and junior high schools will have a Japanese education program for Japanese learners. Consult the teachers if you are concerned about your child's language abilities; they will help the child to learn Japanese and give advice that will help him or her quickly become accustomed to daily life using Japanese.

#### 3-6 School life (events)

Various school events are held throughout the year. You will be given advance notice from the school. Participation to these events will help you get along with your life in Japan. The following are some examples of commonly held events.

- Sports festivals

Sports festivals are events dedicated to enjoying sports. They are held on weekends most commonly in spring or autumn. Families go to cheer on their child.

- Field trips

Field trips are day trips led by teachers to nearby locations.

- Senior year excursions

The whole grade will go on an excursion for few nights, most likely in their senior year.



### 3 Elementary school and junior high school

#### 3-7 PTAs

Each school will have an educational board by the parents and teachers known as the PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations).

This is an organization which carries out activities where parents and teachers work together for the benefit of their children.

#### 3-8 Children's Club (gakudo clubs)

Children's clubs are for children (up to 3rd grade) without parents to look after them during the daytime. They provide a place for children to be after school hours and aim to foster physically and mentally health children through suitable play. For details, refer to [section 5-2 Children's clubs \(gakudo clubs\) on chapter H Childbirth/childcare](#).

#### 3-9 After graduation from junior high school

There are several options for junior high school graduates to continue their studies. They may continue their studies at high schools or specialized high schools, or go onto at specialized training schools, miscellaneous schools, or vocational training schools. They may also choose to work as they study under a part-time system or on a correspondence courses.



## 4 High school

Upper secondary schools are generally called “high schools” (as they will be referred to hereafter). Over 90% of Japanese students go on to study at a high school. Just as in the case of elementary schools and junior high schools, there are national schools run by the national government, public schools run by prefectures/municipalities, and private schools run by incorporated educational institutions. Which public high schools you can apply to is limited according to the district in which you reside.

Note that entrance fees, tuition fees and textbooks must be prepared at your own expense, as high school education is not compulsory.

### 4-1 To enter

You must pass the entering examination to enter a high school. Some high schools have a system of recommendation, whereby students may enter by passing an interview if they have shown outstanding academic achievements or unique talents. Other schools may also have a special quota for foreign students. Contact the school you wish to enter for information.

### 4-2 Eligibility

You must either be predicted to graduate a Japanese junior high school or be certified as having the academic abilities equivalent to graduating junior high school in order to take the entrance exam. Those who have graduated from high schools overseas must have proof of this.

### 4-3 Examinations recognized as equivalent to junior high school graduation (*chugakko sotsugyo teido nintei shaken*)

This is an examination held by the national government to certify that a person has the academic abilities equivalent to those who have graduated from junior high school. It qualifies those who pass it to take high school entrance examinations. Those of foreign nationality may also take the exam if they are over the age of 15 by the 31 May each year.



## 4 High school

### 4-4 Types of high school

Consult your junior high school teachers and the wishes of the student themselves to decide which school and courses he or she should take up.

#### (1) Courses

These are divided into general courses, specialized training courses (technical, business, agricultural, etc.) and composite courses.

#### (2) Schedules

Courses are divided into full-time, part-time and correspondence courses by the hours of classes being held.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Full-time courses</b>      | Study during the day. Takes three years to graduate   |
| <b>Part-time courses</b>      | Study part-time at nights (or day) while working.<br>Takes more than three years to graduate. |
| <b>Correspondence courses</b> | Study at home. (Screenings are held about twice a month.)                                     |



### 5 Other schools

Apart from high schools, there are specialized high schools where students can receive education to become technical specialists, specialized training schools where they can receive practical vocational education and specialized technical education, and miscellaneous schools where they can learn Japanese dressmaking, bookkeeping, calculation on the abacus, car maintenance, cooking and nutrition, nursing, healthcare, hair dressing, beauty care, typing, English conversation, manufacturing, and many others.



## 6 University/junior college

University and junior college are for high school graduates and those of equivalent academic abilities.

### 6-1 University/junior college

#### (1) What is university/junior college?

There are national universities run by the national government, public universities run by prefectures/municipalities, and private schools run by incorporated educational institutions. In some regions, private corporations have established universities.

Junior colleges are usually called "tandai."

It takes four years to graduate a university and two years to graduate a junior college.

#### (2) To enter

You must take an entrance exam to enter a university or a junior college, but there are also many universities/colleges with a system of recommendation. Please check with respective institutions, as study expenses and eligibility for entry differ for each university/college.

#### (3) Eligibility

Basically, applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions in order to take the entrance examination.

- He or she must be a graduate of a high school in Japan or overseas.
- He or she must have passed the examinations recognized as equivalent to junior high school graduation (chugakko sotsugyo teido nintei shaken)
- He or she must possess the International Baccalaureate diploma or an equivalent certification, and be over 18 years old on 1 April of the year of entry.

#### (4) Entrance examinations

Students willing to enter a national/public university must take the National Center Test for University Admissions, which is the first stage of examinations; this is then followed by the second-stage of examinations which is held at respective universities. As for the private universities, the dates and subjects of examination vary for each university.



## 6 University/junior college

### 6-2 Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU)

The Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU) is used to evaluate whether international students who wish to study universities or other such higher educational institutions in Japan possess the Japanese language skills and the basic academic abilities needed to study at those institutions.

Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) official website will help you find out which Japanese universities consider EJU scores in their admission process for international students. For details, contact JASSO.

| Subjects   | Date of Exam                       | Language options  | Inquiries  |
|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Japanese as a foreign language, science (physics, chemistry, and biology), Japan and the World (liberal arts) and mathematics. Examinees may select the subjects depending on the university they wish to enter and the course of study they wish to pursue. | Twice a year in June and November. | The EJU is available in Japanese or English, except for the Japanese as a Foreign Language test, which is given in Japanese only; applicants need to indicate their preference in the application based on the requirements of the university they wish to enter and the course of study they wish to pursue. | Japan Student Services Organization<br><a href="http://www.jasso.go.jp/eju/index.html">http://www.jasso.go.jp/eju/index.html</a><br>E-mail: <a href="mailto:eju@jasso.go.jp">eju@jasso.go.jp</a> |



## 7 International schools

There are international schools in Japan where you will be taught in English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and other foreign languages.

Many international schools are treated as "miscellaneous schools" according to School Education Act in Japan, and graduates from these schools may not be eligible to take the examinations for some Japanese universities.

However, there are international schools where students will receive qualifications allowing them to enter a Japanese university or a graduate school. Please confirm with respective international schools.



## 8 Assistance

There are systems which provide school expenses assistance and scholarships for students from households which have difficulty putting their children through school for economic reasons.

### **(1) Assistance with school expenses**

There are school expense assistance systems which provide assistance with expenses necessary for putting a child through school, to parents/guardians who have difficulty putting their children through elementary school and junior high school. Consult your school or the Board of Education if you are having difficulty paying for necessary school supplies, transportation expenses or fees for extra curricular activities, senior grade excursions, and lunches. However, receipt of this assistance is restricted to certain income levels.

Some local governments also offer subsidies to parents/guardians of foreign nationality whose children are attending an international school. For details, please contact the municipal administrative office where you registered as an alien.



## 8 Assistance

### (2) Scholarships

#### ● Scholarships for high school students

There is a system whereby prefectural scholarships are awarded to high school students and students of upper secondary courses of specialized training schools who are highly motivated to learn but who may not afford their education expenses. The conditions for receiving scholarships and the amount that can be received will differ for each municipality. For details, please inquire at your school.

#### ● Scholarships for junior college, specialized training school and university students

Scholarships by JASSO are for junior college, specialized training school and university students. The amounts that can be received depends on the circumstances of each student. There are two kinds of scholarships: interest-free, and those which charge interest. For details, contact the scholarship office at your school for further information.

#### ● Scholarships for international students

Scholarships for international students are offered by the Japanese government (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), JASSO, local governments and international exchange associations. A list of scholarships may be found in the Scholarships for International Students in Japan issued annually by JASSO.

[http://www.jasso.go.jp/study\\_j/scholarships\\_sfisij.html](http://www.jasso.go.jp/study_j/scholarships_sfisij.html)

#### ● Scholarships

| Eligibility   | Scholarship   | Inquiries  |
|---|---|--|
| High school students  | Scholarships by prefectural/municipal governments                             | Your high school                                     |
| Junior college, specialized training school, and undergraduate students | Scholarships from JASSO   | Scholarship office at your school                    |
| International students  | Japanese Government ( <i>Monbukagakusho</i> >: MEXT) scholarships             | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japanese universities |
|   | Scholarships from JASSO   |  |
|   | "Honors scholarship" for privately-financed international students            | Japanese universities                                |
|   | "Honors scholarship" for pre-college students in Japanese language institutes | Japanese language institutes                         |

# Multilingual Living Information



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| Eligibility | Scholarship   | Inquiries                 |
|-------------|---|---------------------------|
|             | "Short-term Student Exchange Promotion Program (Inbound) Scholarship" | Japanese universities     |
|             | Scholarships by local governments and international associations      | Local government, schools |
|             | Scholarships by private sector bodies                                 | Each body                 |

*Reference: Scholarships for International Students in Japan, Japan Student Services Organization.*