

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q: I have a U.S. green card. Do I still need the Visa to enter Japan?

It depends on your nationality. If you are a National/citizen that is not visa exempt, you need a visa to enter

Q: I am currently reside outside of your jurisdiction. But, my hometown is in your jurisdiction. Can I apply for my visa at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago?

No. If you are residing in outside of our jurisdiction, you must apply within the appropriate jurisdiction where you current reside.

Q: I am residing in your jurisdiction. But I am temporary outside of your jurisdiction due to travel, business, etc. Can I apply by mail from outside your of jurisdiction?

We can't accept applications by mails that are from outside of our jurisdiction. You must apply for your visa when you back in our jurisdiction.

Q: I am dual Japan and U.S. citizen. Can I apply for a Japan visa?

No. We do not issue a Japan visa to a Japanese national. Please use your Japanese passport to enter Japan. If you wish to apply for a Japan visa, you must renounce your Japanese nationality before you apply for the Japan visa.

Q: I have a transit via Japan to a third country. Do I need the visa?

It depends on your transit conditions. Generally, if you have no intention to enter Japan and your transit is within the same airport, on the same calendar date and you possess confirmed airline tickets to the third country, you do not need a visa. You can wait at the gate area without going through immigration.

Q: I have criminal record. Can I apply visa?

It depends on the criminal charge. Please submit your criminal record documents that state your charges, sentence from the court.

Q: How can I check my visa application has been approved or not?

We will not give the visa application status. You will see whether application has been approved or denied when you receive the processed passport from us.

Q: How can I get a Certificate of Eligibility?

Since we are not the issuing authority, you may ask your proxy or immigration bureau in Japan. We don't have any detailed information about obtaining or the processing time of the Certificate of eligibility.

Q: Why was my visa application not accepted?

If any of the following cases apply to you, your application may not be accepted.

- (1) Applications from persons holding Japanese nationality.
- (2) The applicant reside outside of our jurisdiction.
- (3) You currently hold a valid Japan visa or re-entry permit.
- (4) Your previous visa application to visit Japan for a specific purpose was rejected and you reapply to visit Japan for the same purpose within six months from the rejection.
- (5) The visa application is already being processed at a different Japanese Embassy / Consulate General.
- (6) There are some errors or omissions in the submitted documents.
- (7) The period of validity or the visa attachment space of your passport is insufficient.
- (8) The application is made by a person who does not have the qualifications to make a proxy application.
- (9) An application for issuance of a Certificate of Eligibility is still pending.

Q: Why was I asked to provide additional documents?

Sometimes additional information will be required for the examination process, and sometimes you will be asked in the process to submit extra documents in addition to the required documents. Each applicant has different conditions and circumstances, and sometimes we do not become aware of these until after the application has been accepted, therefore there are some documents that we do not ask everyone to submit from the beginning. If you do not submit the additional documents, the examination cannot be preceded any further, and you will not be able to get the visa issued.

Q: I don't have all required documents, will you accept the visa application?

In order to review and exam your visa application, you must submit all required documents.

Q: My departure date is approaching. Can you issue the visa as soon as possible?

We process the applications fairly in the order in which we received them. Apply for the visa as soon as possible once your travel plan has been decided.

Q: I don't have an ordinary passport. But, I have emergency/temporary passport, travel document. Can I apply for the visa?

We can accept it as long as the Government of Japan recognizes your emergency/temporary passport, travel document as a valid travel document.

Q: Tell me why you rejected my visa application.

The reason for the rejection is that your application did not meet the criteria of visa issuance. We do not give you the reason of the rejection because if we do so, the information would eventually become known to the public. Once that happened, there is a danger that some people might misappropriate such information to get around the visa examination process and try to enter Japan for illegal purposes. It would impede the proper visa examination process in the future and have negative effects on Japanese society. The Administrative Procedure Act, Article 3, Paragraph 1, Item 10 excludes "dispositions concerning departure and immigration of foreign nationals" from application of the obligation to show the examination criteria or the reasons for the rejection of the application.

Q: Why was my visa application rejected even though a Certificate of Eligibility was issued?

The Certificate of Eligibility does not guarantee the issuance of the visa. The certificate means that the Ministry of Justice certifies that the foreign national meets the condition of landing (entering Japan): the activity which the foreign nationals wish to engage in Japan at the time of the landing examination is not fraudulent, and the activity is qualified to acquire status of residence that is stipulated in the Immigration Control Act, etc. Therefore, in the visa examination process, we do not examine the applicability of status of residence, but some other points such as the verification of the applicant's identity and the validity of his/ her passport. A visa will not be issued, if in the process of examination, it is found that the application does not meet the criteria of visa issuance, or it is determined that the Certificate of Eligibility was issued based on mistaken or fraudulent information.

Q: Why can't I reapply immediately after my visa application was rejected?

We do not accept your visa application if your previous application was rejected and you will apply for the same purpose of visit within six months from the rejection. This is because if, for example, we accept the same application the day after it was rejected, the circumstances of the applicant would not change so that the result of examination would be the same. However, we sometimes accept re-applications within six months in cases where your circumstances have changed significantly after the rejection, and travel to Japan is necessary for humanitarian reasons. Consult with the Japanese Embassy or Consulate where you plan to apply for the visa before making the application.

Q: I want to postpone my travel. Until when is my visa valid?

The period of validity of a single-entry visa (that becomes invalid as soon as once you enter Japan) is basically three months. Enter Japan within three months of the issuance of the visa. If you wish to postpone your travel for longer than three months, you will be required to make another visa application.

Q: I have lost my passport with the visa in it. What should I do?

Contact the Japanese Embassy / Consulate General that issued the visa to inform what happened. Also, it is recommended that you submit a lost property form to the local police. If you need a new visa, you must make an application again.

Q: Why was my application to enter Japan rejected even though I had a valid visa?

A visa is only one of the requirements for the application to land in Japan and it does not guarantee that you will be able to enter Japan. (There is a warning on the visa application form and your signature on the application form means you have accepted this fact.) Even if you have a valid visa, sometimes you will not be given permission to enter Japan, certainly in cases in which the person making the landing application is different to the person whose name is recorded in the passport and/or visa, and also in cases where you cannot properly explain to the immigration officer the activities you plan to engage in after entering Japan.

Q: How will the personal information I submitted at the time of my visa application be handled?

The personal information of the visa applicant, inviting person and guarantor will be managed appropriately in the Japanese Embassy / Consulate General based on the Act on the Protection of Personal Information Held by Administrative Organs. Also, local travel agencies that wish to handle visa applications have to get the approval by Japanese embassies /consulates, and the condition of such approval is that they have agreed to manage personal information appropriately based on the aforementioned act, under the same criteria as the outsourcing organization.

Q: What is the legal basis for the issuance or non-issuance of my visa?

Under the international customary law, the decision as to whether or not to issue a visa to a foreign national is determined to be a sovereign act of each country. Japanese consuls carry out the administration related to visas based on the Act for Establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Article 4, Item 13, Article 7, Item 1, and Article 10, Item 2 and Item 3.

Q: Isn't it unfair that people from countries which exempt Japanese from tourism visas, are required to get a visa to enter Japan?

Visa exemptions are not necessarily bilateral. For example, there are many cases in which developing countries give visa exemptions to Japanese as a unilateral measure because accepting travelers from Japan is economically advantageous for those countries. However, on the other hand, if Japan gave visa exemptions to people from all of those countries, there could be a negative impact on the internal security and national interest of Japan. For example, it could lead to an increase in the number of illegal overstayers and illegal workers, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to consider visa exemptions carefully from a comprehensive perspective.

Q: What is the scope of responsibility of the guarantor?

The "guarantor" for the visa application is the person who makes a promise to the head of the embassy / consulate (the Japanese ambassador/ consul-general, etc.)to the effect that the visa applicant will stay legally in Japan. The responsibilities of the guarantor only entails moral responsibilities and does not entail legal responsibilities like that of the "guarantor" in the Civil Code. However, if it is recognized that the guaranteed matters (expenses for the applicant's stay in Japan, return travel expenses, compliance with laws and regulations) have not been performed, rightly that person would lose credibility as a guarantor in subsequent visa applications. However, be aware that if the guarantor or inviting person made a false statement in the documents about their relationship to the visa applicant or the purpose of visit, or if that caused terrorists to enter Japan or crime such as human trafficking, they may be held criminally responsible.