

## Preparing to Conduct Research in Japan

As you prepare to come to Japan, we would like to offer some suggestions that may facilitate the implementation of your research. You may have had previous experience in Japan, be fluent in Japanese, and have many Japanese friends. Nevertheless, you will find that conducting individual research may be quite different from your previous Japan experiences. The following hints are based on the cumulative experiences of your predecessors in the Fulbright Program.

### Before arrival:

1. Write a letter (or e-mail) of introduction to your Japanese host professor, indicating your schedule and stating that you will contact him/her as soon as you have settled-in.
2. Enclose your curriculum vitae (CV) and one page abstract of your research. Both of these should be prepared in Japanese. If you cannot do it yourself, find someone to translate the documents for you. This will be essential once you are in Japan, especially when making arrangements to meet various individuals for interviews or consultation on your project, and will save you valuable time. Although many Japanese, including your advisor, may be proficient in reading English, a Japanese CV and research abstract will ensure that they will read it rather than putting it aside to read "when they have time".
3. Prepare some kind of gift (a small gift from your university bookstore such as a bookmark, paperweight, desk calendar, etc.) to give to your host professor and office staff as a token of appreciation. Also, prepare extra items that you may be able to use if you plan to do a lot of interviewing. If you prefer, you can always buy a box of sweets in Japan, which is considered an acceptable gift. The gesture of appreciation rather than the value of the gift is important, so please do not be overly concerned with the idea that gift giving must be strictly followed.

### Once in Japan:

1. Have your Japanese/English name card (*meishi*) printed immediately. It can be done fairly easily online. If possible, prepare them in advance. The average cost in Japan for bi-lingual cards would be approximately ¥3,000 for the first 100 copies, although they may be cheaper at a Japanese university Co-op. In preparing your cards, we suggest that you use the official universal logo of the Fulbright Program, registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark office. Please refer <<https://www.fulbright.jp/forms/grantus/>> to download samples of *meishi*.

Essential information to include on your *meishi* are:

- 1) Fulbright status, e.g. "Fulbright Research Scholar", "Fulbright Professor", "Fulbright Graduate Research Fellow", or "Fulbright Fellow".
  - 2) U.S. affiliation, with or without address.
  - 3) Japan affiliation with address.
  - 4) Addresses/telephone numbers/e-mail addresses of your Japan affiliation/residence, as you wish.
2. Upon arrival, contact your host professor and make an appointment. Since Japanese professors usually do not have secretaries, they are hard to contact by telephone. Sending an e-mail message is fine, to be followed up with a phone call when you are settled in.

3. Dress conservatively (business attire is standard in Japan) when you visit your host professor or anyone else in Japan, especially for the first time. You'll make a better impression if you dress conservatively when meeting Japanese for interviews.
4. When meeting your host professor, discuss clearly what kind of assistance you need and whether he/she is prepared to do it. If you do not wish to be too confined by one professor, you should clearly state that you also hope to consult with others. If you wish to participate in your advisor's seminar, be sure you know what the ground rules are for participation, i.e., whether you are expected to attend regularly, make a presentation, be "one of the students", or whether you will be permitted to be audit the course, attending only occasionally.
5. Arranging interviews. Even if your host professor or others arranges an interview for you, you should follow up by sending in advance of the (online) meeting date (1) a letter of introduction - which JUSEC will prepare for you upon request, explaining your status as a Fulbrighter; (2) your Japanese CV; (3) your research abstract in Japanese and (4) the questions you wish to ask. This will "establish your credentials." Otherwise, you may find your one-hour "interview" to consist mostly of polite "let's get acquainted" talk.
6. Please know it will take more time than in the U.S. to arrange appointments and interviews. It is not uncommon to have to wait two or more weeks to make an appointment with professors, government officials and businessmen.

**Before leaving Japan:**

Visit or call your advisor and others who have assisted you to thank them for their help or send a thank-you card. If there are many persons with whom you wish to maintain contact in the future, it is standard Japanese custom to print cards thanking them for their help and indicating your U.S. mailing address.

**Upon return to the U.S.**

A letter of thanks to your closest advisor/colleague is highly recommended. Holiday Greeting cards sent at year-end to others will help assure the continuation of professional ties which often last a lifetime.