

Programme Guidance 2026 for Japan-Afghanistan Language School Pathways

1. Programme Outline

This programme is to offer an opportunity for youth with refugee backgrounds to study or work in Japan through assistance of Japanese private schools, foundations, supporting companies, NGOs and local communities. The selected participants can get student status in Japan and study at a Japanese language school with its tuition fee free for two years, the minimum required period to reach academic or business level. The programme offers an opportunity to live and study the Japanese language which is essential to live in this stable and secure country in Asia. At the same time, it is a private sponsored programme and the support participants can get is rather limited. However, if a person is determined to study and work for the future of your own as well as of your family, the programme can open a door for a successful career.

<For High school graduates>

After students improve their Japanese language skills and mark sufficient scores in Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU), one can apply for universities in Japan. The programme will give regular consultation on your preparation for exams, however, scholarship for universities is not guaranteed and it will be on students' own responsibility. After graduating a university or a vocational school, one will have a good opportunity of being employed in Japan. When one gets employment, one can obtain a resident status with work permit in Japan.

<For university graduates>

If one has already obtained a university certificate, one can find a job and obtain resident status with work permit after completion of Japanese language study. It is normally required to have business level of Japanese language to find a job in Japan, even if one is fluent in English. It is also possible that after accumulating some savings through a few years of work, one will apply for a Master's degree with some partial scholarship opportunities.

2. Implementing organization and schools

Implementing Organization

●Pathways Japan (PJ):

It is a Japanese non-governmental and non-profit organization, independent from the Japanese government and UN agencies, supporting people with refugee experience abroad to be admitted to Japan and get higher education and employment. PJ has succeeded JLSP from Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) on 1st July 2021.

<https://pathways-j.org/>

Japan ICU Foundation – Funding and Implementing Organization

The [Japan ICU Foundation \(JICUF\)](#) is a US non-profit organization based in New York. Since 2016, JICUF has partnered with JAR, and later with PJ, to administer the [Syrian Scholars Initiative \(SSI\)](#), a scholarship program for Syrian students to study at International Christian University (ICU) in Tokyo, Japan. JICUF currently provides funding to administer Language School Programs for Syrians, Afghans and Ukrainians. It also manages Japan Education Pathways for refugee-background youth living in Japan to access a scholarship to study at universities in Japan.

Japanese Language Schools In 2026, around six language schools are planning to admit youth with refugee backgrounds to learn Japanese language for 2 years from April 2026 to March 2028. Below is the information of one of the schools as an example.

Japan International Institute of Cybernetics (JIIC) (previously known as Meisei Institute for Cybernetics(MIC)) Japanese Language Department

<https://www.nkk.ac.jp/japanese/>

*The school is located in Chiba Prefecture within walking distance of the station of Shin Matsudo, about an hour by train from city center of Tokyo. It is a suburb of Metropolitan Tokyo area.

*The school is suitable for students who want to live and study in an area close to the capital city of Tokyo, with the population of 1.2 million, to get access to a variety of groups of people, companies, events and information.

School Curriculum

*The school will offer courses of Japanese language which is two-years at maximum

* To prove your Japanese proficiency in general and especially for job-hunting, you will need to take and pass N2 level of Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) basically within two years of your study. .

JLPT: <https://www.jlpt.jp/e/index.html>

*To be entitled to make application for undergraduate education in universities in Japan, you have to take Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU) and mark sufficient score for each university and faculty. For those who apply for faculties of literature or social science etc., you need to take Japanese and “Japan and the World” (social studies of Japan). For those who apply for faculties in natural science or engineering etc. you need to take Japanese, mathematics and science (chemistry and/or physics) within 1 year and 7 months.

EJU: <https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/eju/index.html>

School life

Below is an example from JIIC on campus life.

<https://www.nkk.ac.jp/japanese/en/campus-life/>

3. Resident Status in Japan

1) Status of language school student

* You will stay in Japan with a “student” status for 2 years. Please note that you will not travel to Japan under “refugee” status.

* While being a student, you can legally work part time within 28 hours per week during school semesters, and 40 hours during school holidays. It is necessary for you to work part time while being a language student to support your life and we also encourage you to do so as it will help you improve your language skills and get accustomed to local culture and people.

2) Status after graduating from a Japanese Language School

<high school graduates>

• By entering university, you can extend student status for four years.(If you enter a vocational school, it will be two years.)

• After graduation from a university/vocational school, you can apply for a resident status with work permit, if you get employment.

- It is basically not allowed in Japan to get a work permit without a university or vocational school certificate (except getting designated skills status by passing certain language and skill tests)

<university graduates>

- You can apply for a resident status with work permit, if you get employment.
- If you enter the graduate program of a university after graduation from language school, you can extend your student status for another two years, before getting employed.

3) In case of not getting any scholarship/employment

<Temporary protection status for both high and university graduates>

*In case of failing to renew your student/employment status, you can change to humanitarian temporary protection status (called Designated Activities). PJ can give technical assistance but one has to be primarily responsible for one's own resident status.

<high school graduates>

- In case you fail to get a scholarship and enter any university/vocational school during your study period at a language school, you can try again in the following year to apply for a scholarship. You may study by yourself, or attend some courses by covering the cost to prepare for applications and exams, while working part time. As preparation, you will need to save money as much as possible during two years of language study.

<university graduates>

- In case you fail to get employment during your study period at language school, you can still stay in Japan by applying for temporary protection status as explained above and may continue your full-time job hunting.

4. Career options after graduation

1) Scholarships for universities

a. Toshizo Watanabe International Scholarship by PJ

PJ is offering its own scholarship programme for higher education since 2022 based on a generous donation by Mr. Toshizo Watanabe. Students who have been admitted through JLSP and have attained sufficient EJU score will be eligible for application. The details can be referred to in our web site.

<https://pathways-j.org/en/twis>

b. UNHCR Refugee Higher Education Programme (RHEP)

UNHCR Japan provides a programme called Refugee Higher Education Programme (RHEP) for refugees determined by GoJ or those who has a refugee-background living in Japan. After your arrival in Japan, you will be eligible to apply for some of the member universities in RHEP. RHEP is a full scholarship programme.

<https://rhep-japanforunhcr.org/en/>

c. Philoxenia Scholarship by JELA

Japan Lutheran Evangelical Association (JELA) offers Refugee Assistance Programme Scholarship for those people with refugee background residing in Japan. After your arrival in Japan, you will be eligible to apply. A student will need to apply and pass the exam of any university in Japan on one's own choice to get the scholarship. It is a partial scholarship to cover the tuition fee.

<https://www.jela.or.jp/refugees/philoxenia/>

d. Other scholarship opportunities

There are other organizations which provide scholarship to international students in Japan. It can be referred to in the site of Study in Japan below.

<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/ja/planning/scholarships/>

- 2) Scholarship for vocational schools

Some graduates of language schools are admitted to vocational schools in Japan. There are a variety of fields including IT, graphic/game designing, animation, physical rehabilitation and so on.

UNHCR, JELA and Wesley Foundation offers Refugee Vocational Education Program (RVEP) to support people with refugee background to study at vocational education schools. It is a partial scholarship.

<https://www.jela.or.jp/refugees/rvep/>

Below is an example of an affiliated vocational school of JIIC
Japan International Institute of Cybernetics

<https://www.nkk.ac.jp/ib/>

3) Employment

For those who have university certificates in or outside Japan, you are eligible to find a permanent job and get a resident status with work permit. From among alumni of JALP in the past who sought employment in Japan, most of them got a full-time employment in the fields like IT, pharmacy, and social welfare. Japanese language skills are mandatory for employment in Japan and some working experiences outside Japan, part time job experiences in Japan and English proficiency can also be of your advantage.

5. Earning your living cost

You will need to work part time to pay for your room rent and food. In practice, language students from other countries often work for their living and study costs. For your part-time job hunting, the school or PJ will assist you to find a job.

Upon arrival and while your Japanese language skills are basic, you can get only basic "survival" jobs that are not related to your education or experience, – for example, 24 hour operating food-processing factories or freight distribution centers and hotels for cleaning.

After your language skills are improved, you can find a job in the customer service industry, like chain restaurants and 24 hour open "convenience stores (super markets)". The minimum payment for part time workers is JPY 1000(USD 8-9) per hour.

You will need to study at school during the day, and work at evening, early morning or holidays. For the average income and expenditure of foreign students, you can refer to the link below.

Student Guide to Japan of JASSO

<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/life/livingcost-price/>

6. Japanese language

Japanese has an archaic writing system and requires at least two years to memorize all characters that originated from Chinese.

To be fluent in speaking at intermediate level may take just 6 months to a year, but it will certainly take at least two years to master over 1,000 characters and grammar to reach business or academic level of required for university education and job opportunities.

As the writing system is very different from other languages and is time consuming to study with a repetitive memorizing process, the programme recruits those who have already learned its basics, as it shows how one is really prepared for studying it with the basic knowledge of basic grammar and writing system.

Therefore, for those who would like to apply, we strongly encourage you to start studying the basics using the online study sites as below.

- a. NHK World on simple Japanese in Farsi: The site is good to know about the language in Farsi. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/fa/learnjapanese/>
- b. Erin's Challenge; If you would also like to know about Japanese culture, the site Erin's Challenge can be recommended. <https://www.erin.jpf.go.jp/>
- c. Minato: If you would like to learn and improve systematically, the site offers an opportunity. <https://minato-jf.jp/>
- d. Irodori: This is the site most lately developed for the Japanese learners who wants to study systematically. <https://www.irodori.jpf.go.jp/en/starter/pdf.html>
There is also an online learning site. <https://www.irodori-online.jpf.go.jp/>

7. Society, culture and housing

Society

Japan is not a traditional immigrant nation such as Canada or Australia. Though there are foreigners living in Japan, they comprise only 2.8 % of the society. The biggest foreign populations are from Korea, China, and other East Asian countries. It might happen that you sometimes feel culturally and mentally alienated from others.

Cultural issues and climate

The climate is totally different from the Middle East. Japan has a rainy season in June and July and it rains heavily on most of the days. The hottest months are from July to September and it is 35C and very humid.

You need to be prepared to live in a totally different society and culture.

Housing

Living costs in Japan are just as expensive as in some Middle Eastern countries.

Moreover, a large population is densely inhabited, housing cost is very expensive and rooms are usually very small, compared with other countries.

You can watch a video below as a typical apartment in the neighborhood of JIIC in Chiba as an example. Note that Japanese apartments are extremely smaller than in the Middle East and you have to be ready for it.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=11Rm44wlkSyf9-fr2yu2pkHcHx4bcs_Zd

*Some schools can introduce a rental room within walking distance and assist you to adjust to the society and neighborhood. The rent may be around 35,000 - 40,000yen per month (water and electricity NOT included) for a person in a single room.

*PJ can assist you to find a room in an apartment or a shared house with the range of 35,000 – 50,000 JPY for monthly rent based on request.

7. Family reunion and social welfare

Family Reunion

The programme does not support your family reunion financially, so once you arrive in Japan, it is necessary to earn some savings to plan your travel for family reunion or in any other countries, as you have to cover your own travel cost for it. It means you might not have chances to see your families for several years.

Social Welfare

In Japan, foreign residents can and have to participate in the national social welfare system and 70% of the most of the medical treatment cost will be covered. You need to monthly pay the social welfare premium and 30 % of the medical treatment cost.

8. Useful links for student life in Japan

You can refer more to general information on foreign students in the links below.

Japan Student Services Organization(JASSO)

https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/study_i/index.html

Japan Study Support

<http://www.jpss.jp/en/>

Study in Japan

<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/>

Japan Navigation

<https://www.jpnavi.com/>

5. Application Procedure

Please refer to Pathways Japan's website below.

<https://pathways-j.org/en/jalp2026>