

Guide for the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Application Process

1. What is a Certificate of Eligibility (COE)?

A Certificate of Eligibility (COE) is an official document issued by the Ministry of Justice. All applicants, excluding those who possess a valid status of residence in Japan (*), must have a COE issued before applying for a student visa. (*A visa for short-term stays such as a tourist visa is not regarded as a valid status of residence in Japan.)

Hitotsubashi University(HU)'s partner law firm will act as a proxy and apply for your COE at the Tokyo Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.

*There is **no need** to apply for a "COE" for those who have a Japanese passport or a valid status of residence in Japan.

*You must obtain a student visa rather than a short-term visa such as a tourist visa to study abroad.

The payment of the COE processing fee is required to apply for a COE.

*There is **no need** to pay for those who have a Japanese passport or a valid status of residence in Japan.

Processes for obtaining your student visa		
When	By who	What to do
April, 2026	Law firm	<input type="checkbox"/> sends each applicant an email regarding the COE application.
April~	Applicant (you)	<input type="checkbox"/> submits required information and documents for COE application to HU's partner law firm following their instructions by the due date.
Late May	<input type="checkbox"/> HU <input type="checkbox"/> Law firm	<input type="checkbox"/> HU: announces the result of application for the exchange program to applicant by email with the acceptance letter. <input type="checkbox"/> Partner law firm: sends applicant an announcement regarding the payment of "the COE processing fee".
Late May ~ Early June	Applicant (you)	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to pay the COE processing fee following instructions by the due date. * We cannot process proxy applications for your COE if your payment cannot be confirmed.
Early June	Law firm	<input type="checkbox"/> applies for the COE at the Immigration Bureau of Japan on behalf of applicants who have completed payment of the COE processing fee.
~Mid-August	Law firm	<input type="checkbox"/> will send applicant the electronic COE by email once the COE is issued. *The COE screening process by the Immigration Bureau generally takes 2-3 months, but we cannot guarantee or estimate when the COE will be actually issued.
August (Before Your Departure)	Applicant (you)	<input type="checkbox"/> applies for a student visa at a Japanese Embassy/Consulate in respective country upon received the electronic COE. For documents required for student visa application, please refer to the website linked below. https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/long/visa6.html
Late Aug	Applicant (you)	<input type="checkbox"/> enters Japan with a student visa .

► Receive an electronic COE



► Apply for a "Student" visa.



A visa seal will be placed on a passport when granted.



► Receive a residence card at the airport



The Residence Card will be your official identification during your stay in Japan. Please be careful not to lose it.

If your application documents are insufficient, the COE screening might be delayed. Please submit correct information and submit an acceptable photo. Please refer to the following "Photo submission requirements".

【Reference】 https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/applications/status/photo_info_00002.html?hl=en

【Reference】

Immigration Services Agency: Application for Certificate of Eligibility

<https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/applications/procedures/16-1.html>

FAQs: VISA / Residing in Japan https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/faq.html

Need Help?