

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. <i>*We cannot process proxy applications for your COE if your payment cannot be confirmed.</i>
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. <i>*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.</i>
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 .

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?

► 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.