

The Japan Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa



The Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa is for Applicants who fit one of the following categories.

1. Spouses of Japanese nationals,
2. Children adopted by Japanese nationals, and
3. Children of Japanese nationals.

Applicants who qualify under this SOR category are free to undertake any activity of their choosing (including employment) in much the same way as a Japanese national.

In the case of a spouse, they may be able to apply for permanent residence in Japan after three years of marriage. This article provides additional information about [Applying for Japan Permanent Residence](#).

SIX STEPS TO OBTAIN A JAPAN SPOUSE / CHILD OF A JAPANESE NATIONAL VISA

In order to obtain a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa to live in Japan, an Applicant will need to complete the following six steps:

Step 1

Confirm that the proposed activities in Japan are consistent with those permitted for the holder of a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa.

The permitted activities under a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa are very straightforward as follows:

1. Spouses of Japanese nationals,
2. Children adopted by Japanese nationals, or
3. Individuals born as the children of Japanese nationals.

Step 2

Assemble the documents required to support a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa application.

Once an Applicant has confirmed that her proposed activities in Japan are consistent with those outlined above in Step 1, specific supporting documentation needs to be prepared.

In the case of a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa, the authorities require the following:

1. In cases where the Applicant is the spouse of Japanese national:
 1. Documents certifying that the Applicant is the spouse of a Japanese national and a copy of the spouse's residence card.
 2. Documents certifying the profession and income of either the Applicant or the spouse.
 3. A letter of guarantee by a person living in Japan.
2. In cases where the Applicant is the biological or adopted child of Japanese national:
 1. A copy of the following:
 1. The family registration of the Japanese national,
 2. The birth certificate of the foreign national concerned, and
 3. Other documents certifying the relationship between the parent and the child.
 2. Documents certifying the profession and the income of the foreign national concerned or his or her father or mother.
 3. A letter of guarantee from the Japanese national concerned or another person living in Japan.

Although not technically required, our experience is that providing Japanese translations enhances the quality of the application. This may minimize delays in obtaining final approval.

Japan Visa's certified immigration professionals are able to assist in the preparation and translation of all documentation required for a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa.

Step 3

Submit an application for a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa Certificate of Eligibility (?COE?).

Once the Applicant's activities have been confirmed and the appropriate documents assembled per steps 1 and 2 above, the next step in most cases will be to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility (abbreviated as ?COE?).

A COE is a document issued by the Japanese immigration authorities. It certifies an Applicant's eligibility to undertake specific activities in Japan ? in this case, the activities associated with the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa application.

An application for a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa COE must be submitted in person at a regional immigration office in Japan. The COE application cannot be submitted by mail or at a Japanese embassy outside Japan.

Step 4

Await Approval of the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa COE.

The processing time for a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa COE is generally four to six weeks.

Once approved, a notice is sent to an address in Japan advising that the COE is ready for collection at the regional immigration office where the COE application was originally submitted.

Step 5

Obtain Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Status of Residence (SOR).

Once an Applicant has the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa COE in hand, the next step is for her to exchange the COE for Spouse / Child of a Japanese National ?Status of Residence? (usually abbreviated as ?SOR?).

Technically speaking, it is the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR that will form the basis of the Applicant actually living and working in Japan.

There are two methods for doing this:

1. Exchange the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National COE at a Japanese embassy or Consul outside Japan.

This is the traditional route for obtaining Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR.

The Applicant first exchanges the Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa COE for a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa at a Japanese embassy or consul outside Japan. The process generally takes two to three business days.

The Applicant then travels to Japan and is granted Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR at the port of

entry.

2. Undertake a Change of Status to Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR in Japan.

In some cases, an alternative may be for the holder of a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National COE to enter Japan under the [Japan Visa Waiver Program](#) or some other form of short-term entry. The Applicant then applies for Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR via a change of status at a regional immigration office in Japan.

A change of status takes approximately two weeks. During that time, it is not possible for the Applicant to travel outside Japan.

Where the change of status route is utilized, Japan Visa's certified immigration professionals can undertake the necessary procedures at the regional immigration office in Japan.

Japan Residence Card

Whether you receive your Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR at the airport upon entering Japan or via a change of status application filed at a regional immigration office in Japan (see Step 5 above), you will receive a Residence Card.

This is an official identification card that includes an IC chip. The Residence Card contains personal information such as name, address, birth date, residence status (in this case, Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR), period of stay, etc.

You are required to carry your Residence Card at all times.

Step 6

Consider applying for a Japan Re-entry Permit.

Up until July 2012, if you held a Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa and wished to temporarily leave Japan (e.g., for vacation, business, etc.) it was necessary to obtain a Re-entry Permit for Japan in advance of travelling.

However, it is now possible to leave Japan for up to 12 months without a Re-Entry Permit.

If there is any possibility that a trip outside Japan will last for more than 12 months, an individual holding Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR should ensure that they have a Re-entry Permit. This can be obtained at regional immigration office in Japan.

Some Important Considerations AFTER Receiving your Spouse / Child of a Japanese National Visa

There are three particularly important tax matters to bear in mind as you live and work in Japan:

1. Japanese Tax for holders of Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR

If they are employed, people living in Japan under Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR will typically be

working for an institution that handles most Japan tax matters on their behalf. This is done by way of withholding tax deducted each month and a year-end adjustment as part of the December payroll.

However, if you have multiple jobs or if you have other sources of income you may need to submit a Japanese tax return by 15 March each year. It is very important that you understand your Japan tax obligations since no extensions are available.

Complying with your Japanese tax obligations is essential in order to renew your visa.

2. US Tax for holders of Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR

If the holder of Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR is a US citizen or green card holder, they will continue to have US tax obligations even while living in Japan.

The US rules applicable to Americans living overseas are complex and constantly changing. In order to avoid possible penalties, anyone with a US tax filing obligation should seek specialist advice to ensure that they fulfill their US tax obligations.

3. Taxes when the holder of Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR leaves Japan

Before leaving Japan, the holder of Spouse / Child of a Japanese National SOR is required to fully settle her taxes or appoint a tax agent.

The above is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute advice to undertake or refrain from undertaking any action. Only qualified Japanese professionals are able to advise on Japan immigration, legal, and tax matters.