

September 9, 2022

To the EES Community

We have been receiving many inquiries about obtaining a visa to enter Japan to attend the EES2022 World Congress. Let me first say that *everyone* who wishes to attend *should* be able to apply for and receive a visa. The emphasis is on *should* because decisions are made on a Japanese embassy/consulate basis and different embassies and consulates may process applications differently. Please note that you will all be applying **NOT** for a tourist visa, **BUT** a business visa. Again, let me repeat that we anticipate that everyone who wants a business visa to attend should be able to get a visa.

Things Are Confusing and Subject to Change

That said, the information on each Japanese embassy/consulate website can be confusing, contradictory and even out-of-date. After discussing matters directly with a consulate representative, we have put together the following information on how to apply. We encourage everyone to directly contact their local Japanese embassy/consulate for guidance, particularly if the website information is confusing.

Also keep in mind that visa-related requirements may change before December, but if they do, they will probably be loosened, not tightened.

Accompanying Persons (Spouse and Family Members)

Before we provide a detailed explanation of the visa application process, one question that is arising is who can come along with attendees. The Boston consulate informed me that young children who cannot really be separated from their parents can come in with their parents. Also, we have heard, anecdotally, that older children have been allowed to come in with their parents. Thus, it appears that families can come in on the business visa and we will be happy to issue your family members an ERFS certificate (described below).

These decisions are made by the relevant Japanese embassy/consulate, so consult with them directly and explain your situation.

VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION

Please carefully read the information provided below on the visa application process.

Visa Application Requirements By Country

Visa application procedures appear, at present, to be divided into three categories

1. American and Canadian citizens residing in their native country (Category 1)*
2. Citizens of the 68 countries which previously did not require a short-term visa to visit Japan. Click the following link to be taken to a page listing the 68 countries (https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html). (Category 2)
3. Citizens of all other countries (Category 3)

*Category designations are not official designations, they are used herein to try to better organize the information.

Visa Applications Steps

The steps required to get a business visa and enter into Japan can be broadly broken down into three steps (which are described in detail below).

1. ERFS Registration (done through EES2022)
2. Submission of Visa Application Documents (done through Japanese embassy/consulate)
3. Proof of vaccination status (done by you and presented upon departure)

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Step 1 - ERFS Certificate (required by all)

Everyone will have to be registered in the Entrants, Returnees Follow-up System or ERFS system. This registration will be done by the EES2022 Office of the Secretariat and we will issue an ERFS Certificate which you can submit with your visa

application. We will need the following information from both conference attendees and any accompanying persons which is:

1. Full name (Surname Given Name(s))
2. Nationality (3-digit code) – (USA in your case)
3. Date of birth
4. Gender
5. Passport Number
6. Expected date of entry
7. Email address
8. Hotel name, address and phone number

Items 1 through 5 should be **exactly** as it appears on your passport – Please make sure your name is ordered as Surname Given Name (plus any middle names listed on the passport).

I will need to provide a hotel address for where each person is staying when I register them in the ERFS system. Even if you are not sure, if everyone could provide the name and address (or link) of the hotel which they intend to stay at, that would be very helpful. For those of you who plan on traveling on your own after the Congress or attending the Yamagata Satellite Seminar, I still will only need the Kyoto hotel.

Please send the above information to the following account:

EES2022_Visa_Desk@proton.me.

Step 2 Visa Application (divided below by Category)

a. eVisa for American and Canadian citizens (Category 1)

American and Canadian citizens residing in their native country can submit their application and receive their visa completely online (note that individuals of non-American and non-Canadian citizenship residing in North America are not eligible for an eVisa).

1. Explanation of the eVisa process can be found here <https://www.evisa.mofa.go.jp/index> As the page states, you will need to submit a copy of your passport (I assume the inside page with your photo), a facial image, and the ERS certificate which we will prepare for you (see above).
2. You can set up your eVisa account at <https://www.evisa.mofa.go.jp/personal/user/add>
3. Please note that there are multiple pages to go through when filling out the form for the eVisa **AND** that information is **NOT** saved if you log out before you complete the application. Furthermore, you cannot go onto the next page without filling in the previous page. You will need to provide flight information (which can be tentative and changed without notifying anyone) and hotel information which should be the same as the information which is provided to the EES2022 Secretariat for the ERS registration.
4. Please note that various places on the website say that if you have to pay a visa issuance fee, you have to go into the consulate, but after searching through the site, we confirmed that Americans and Canadians do not need to pay a visa issuance fee which means that everything can be done online. https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/visa-fee-exemptions.html

b. Non-American and Non-Canadian applicants (Categories 2 and 3 listed above)

1. You will not, at present, be able to apply online for your visa and will need to submit your ERS certificate and other documentation in person to the Japanese embassy/consulate covering your area.
2. You can find general information on the Australian consulate page in Canberra which is well organized and up-to-date (https://www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/covid19visapplicationCOE.html)
3. We will provide everyone who needs one with a Letter of Invitation. The Inviter and the Guarantor will be the same (Dr. Kakehata via Yamagata University Faculty of Medicine for EES2022). You may not need to supply all of the items listed such as financial statements. Please consult with your local Japanese embassy/consulate for advice on preparing your documentation. Please note that some of the documentation is designed for individuals going to work with a company and not attending a conference such as EES2022.

Step 3 Proof of Vaccination (Required by All)

Changes have also been made regarding vaccination/Covid status for entry into Japan

- a. the Japanese government **has dropped** the need to submit a negative PCR test within 72 hours prior to departure, **if** you can show proof of vaccination (original two-shot vaccination and one booster).
- b. Proof of vaccination will need to be uploaded to an app which you can download. Detailed information on how to show proof of vaccination can be accessed here <https://www.hco.mhlw.go.jp/fasttrack/en/> As I understand it, you will show the proof via the app on your mobile phone prior to departure.
- c. If you cannot show proof of vaccination, you will need to provide a negative PCR test obtained within 72 hours of departure.
- d. Please note that once in Japan, you will not be required to show proof of vaccination to travel anywhere, **but** everyone who goes out in public is masked and you will find hotels will require you to have your temperature taken.