

Examining Support for Foreign Students Studying in Japan: Data from Surveys of Foreign Student Job Hunting Patterns and University Career Support

Kazuya TAMURA (Japan Association for Promotion of Internationalization (JAPI))
Daichi ISHII (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
Austin ZENG (MEXT Scholars Association)
Thi Thu Thao, NGUYEN (Vietnamese Youth and Student Association in Japan)

Abstract

This report is a quantitative study examining how foreign students in Japan approach job hunting as well as the current measures by universities in supporting these efforts. The objective of this report is to identify factors impeding foreign student job hunting in Japan and to explore possible solutions to these issues.

We held two surveys to examine this – one aimed at foreign students and another aimed at university staff. The targets of the student survey are foreign students, former or current, which possessed a student visa in Japan and which experienced job-hunting between the years 2011 and 2019. Universities in the university survey were those with large foreign student bodies. The survey for foreign students was provided in either English or Japanese, was conducted online through SurveyMonkey and received 670 replies. The survey for universities was conducted in Japanese and conducted through both Google Forms and a paper questionnaire – receiving 33 responses. The analysis was conducted based on the data from both questionnaires.

The report is divided into three sections. The first deals with the usage of recruitment services by foreign students and examines how such usage may differ from that of typical Japanese students. The results show that there is a large difference in the degree to which students are aware and familiar with recruitment services depending on the language (Japanese or English) that they use in their academic studies. In addition, while there have been increasing numbers of companies providing recruitment services aimed particularly at foreigners, the results show that awareness of these options still remains low on the part of foreign students. The results also show that there may be a correlation between use of face-to-face forms of recruitment services (i.e. recruitment agents and career counselors) and success in receiving job offers.

The second section involves the usage of school career centers by foreign students. From our results, we see that the rate of usage of career centers is quite low among foreign students. In addition, foreign students who were fluent in Japanese tended to answer that they wanted information specifically relevant to foreign students from their career centers.

Lastly, the report examines the support given to foreign students by universities. Respondents from career centers reported the biggest challenge they faced was the lack of information of job postings aimed at foreign students. This tendency was strongest in respondents from universities outside major cities. The results of the previous sections also show that foreign students tend to seek job-hunting information from fellow foreigners. From this, the report draws the conclusion that universities may not be fully utilizing foreign student groups when doing outreach to provide support.