



Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in JAPAN



President's Message



Susumu Satomi

JSPS President

This booklet has been compiled to revisit the history of the “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan,” which celebrates its 30th anniversary.



The program has its antecedent in an initiative called the “Postdoctoral Invitees from the United Kingdom and West Germany,” launched in 1979. Partnering with JSPS in carrying out this program were the Royal Society in the UK and the Humboldt Foundation in Germany, which recommended young researchers from their countries who would be invited to Japan for 2-year stays. Looking back at records regarding this program, its purpose was described as follows.

“Considering the goodwill shown to Japan in the post-war period by the UK, West Germany, America and France in providing a wealth of valuable opportunities to young Japanese researchers, this program, which is fully supported by the Japanese government, invites young researchers from their countries to Japan with the intent of contributing to international scientific exchange.” After that, France

was added as a partner country to the program, which was renamed “Postdoctoral Invitees from the United Kingdom, West Germany and France” in 1983. In 1988, the name of the program was changed to “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for foreign Researchers (The Japanese title “Gaikokujin-tokubetsukenkyuin” remains the same to present).” Up to that time, fellows had only been selected via nominations from JSPS’s overseas counterpart organizations that acted as nominating authorities. As part of the 1988 system reform, open recruitment was initiated in Japan and fellows were for the first time issued Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI). In so doing, the foundations were laid for the present “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan” program.



At the time when the invitational program was launched in 1979, only three researchers came to Japan. They were from the UK. Now, at this 30-year juncture, more than 10,000 postdoc level researchers from countries around the world have been received in Japan under this fellowship program.

Some have gone on to advance their research in their mother countries and others in third countries. What’s striking, however, is that in recent years more than one-third of overseas researchers remain in Japan immediately after finishing their postdoctoral fellowships to continue their research. Among them, there are those who become host researchers and receive other overseas postdocs into their labs, thereby elevating the standard of Japan’s research while contributing internally to Japan’s internationalization.



As many more excellent overseas researchers are invited to Japan through this fellowship program, I look forward to it contributing to the further internationalization of Japan’s research institutions while bearing in mind its original purpose—to foster and advance international scientific exchange.

Program Outline

● JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Summer Program)

Young pre- and postdoctoral researchers from France, Germany, Sweden, the UK, Canada and the US are invited to Japan for two months during the summer to participate in joint research at Japanese host institutions. The program begins with a one week orientation conducted by SOKENDAI (the Graduate University for Advanced Studies), in which the participants study practical Japanese and experience Japanese culture before moving on to their respective host institutions. Prior to returning home, they reassemble to report on the results of their summer research activities.

● JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Strategic Program)

This program focuses upon the major advanced nations and other selected countries, from which it strategically invites outstanding young researchers at the postgraduate level to Japan to create collaborative research relationships with Japanese colleagues.

● JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Short-term)

Young pre- and postdoctoral researchers come to Japan for relatively short tenures (for 1-12 months) to conduct joint research at a Japanese institution. Researchers from the following countries are eligible: the European Union countries, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Canada and the US.

● JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Standard)

This program allows researchers affiliated with Japanese universities or research institutes to invite promising young researchers from overseas to Japan to participate in collaborative research activities at their institutions for 1-2 years.

Message from a JSPS Alumnus, Revisiting the Program Three Decades Ago



Heinrich Menkhaus

Full/Ordinary Professor
Meiji University, Faculty of Law,
Graduate School of Law, Chair of German Law



I was awarded the postdoc fellowship of JSPS for the years 1987/1989 immediately after successfully finishing my second state exam in law in the Federal Republic of Germany and being admitted to the bar there. It was clear to me, who had worked as a researcher at the Institute of International Economic Law at the University of Münster that I wanted to study a foreign continental legal system outside Europe. At that time Japan due to its overwhelming economic success was seen as a big challenge to Germany and therefore entered the scope of possible destinations. I also at that time was acquainted with a Japanese lawyer colleague who had studied at my alma mater and was willing to accept me as a fellow at his chair at Chuo University Tokyo.



My studies in Japan became crucial for my further academic career. Indeed, after my scholarship ended I never took up any position that had no connection with Japan. This led me through the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo into the position of General Secretary of the European Association for Japanese Studies in Leiden, The Netherlands, back to Japan as the head of the Law Department of the German



Chamber of Commerce and Industry and finally into the chair for Japanese Law at Philipps-University in Marburg, Germany, which I still hold, however only as a honorary professor. Out of these positions I had and still have a lot of collaborative research with German and Japanese colleagues which is documented by my publications and honorary positions.



In Germany Japan is no longer regarded as a major challenge, which weakens the interest in Japan and the demand for scholarship. On the other hand, in Japan, given the budgetary restrictions, voices saying that the limited financial means should not be used for foreign scientists are on the rise and capping the available scholarships, which makes Japan even less attractive as a scientific

destination. This political direction has to be modified in order for Japan to stay in the focus of international scientific interest and debate. After all, it is not all that easy to manage the language and characters of Japan, which however is absolutely necessary for scientists in the humanities and social science fields.



As can be seen from the above the JSPS scholarship was the basic boost to my career as a lawyer. Although in the beginning of my studies in Japan I had to overcome a lot of obstacles, I nowadays would not hesitate to take the same path again. After all it is something very special in the western hemisphere to be familiar with the Japanese legal system.

Message from a JSPS Alumna, Revisiting the Program Two Decades Ago



Agnès TIXIER-MITA

Associate Professor
RCAST - The University of Tokyo

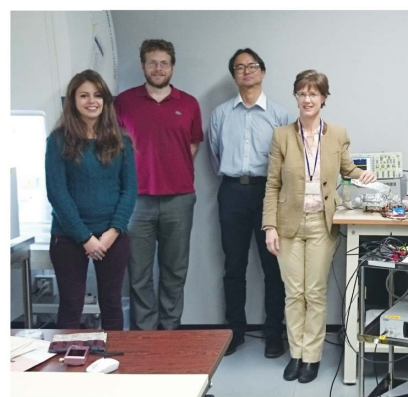


When I came to Japan for a JSPS post-doc, 20 years ago, it was still the 20th century. It was the last year of these 100 years which saw so many changes in people's lives, thanks to the advent of electronics era, which is now everywhere. Thanks to that JSPS post-doc and to Professor Hiroyuki Fujita who welcomed me in his laboratory at the Institute of Industrial Sciences (IIS), The University of Tokyo, I could then jump into the research field of Micro-Electro-Mechatronics-System (MEMS) which is another revolution to the way we interface with the outside world. Japan has been a leader since the beginning in that field. The experience of my JSPS post-doc built the bases of all my research carrier until now.

I made my post-doc in the frame of the LIMMS/CNRS-IIS UMI 2820, an international research unit, operated in joint names of France and Japan, at the IIS, The University of Tokyo. I discovered then that my stay won't only deal with research, but also with discovering a different culture, language, way of thinking and being in relation. It has been a particularly rich and challenging experience, which continues even now, as I have chosen to stay in Japan. I am now an associate professor in the laboratory of Professor Hiroshi Toshiyoshi, at the

Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology (RCAST), The University of Tokyo, and my research field deals with MEMS for biological applications. All my career until now has been performed in Japan; so I am in a particular situation in which I am a foreigner but considered from the academic point of view as a Japanese researcher. So, in addition to obvious collaborations with Japanese colleagues, I also have some with several laboratories in France, as a Japanese laboratory. These collaborations are mainly the fruit of meeting people in the frame of LIMMS laboratory: I am still related to that laboratory, as a host professor.

Foreign young researchers, who would like to apply to a JSPS fellowship, might wonder which life they will expect in Japan, and how easy it can be to adapt. Japan is a safe and very modern country and it is easy for foreigners to find all comfort for everyday life. It seems that everything is organized to make life easier: kindness of people, excellence of transportation organization, shops open 24 hours for some of them. The delicacy and sophistication of Japanese culture is spread in all aspects of the society, and makes the approach to the society very interesting and smooth. Relationship is



maybe the most striking difference with what we are used to in Europe for instance. There is modesty in expressing strongly and straightly feelings or thoughts, and it might be disconcerting, when we are not used to it.



To finish, I would say that to have good chance to have a very fruitful research and life experience in Japan, there are 3 important points. First: study Japanese, to express your willingness to communicate with colleagues, and to begin to have access to some keys to Japanese society. Second: learn from a Japanese tutor in the laboratory, about organization and way of working there. Third: participate in parties of the laboratories: this is where people become close each other and many secrets are revealed there.

Message from a JSPS Alumnus, Revisiting the Program One Decade Ago



Stephen Obrochta

Associate Professor
Akita University



I came to Japan in 2008 as a JSPS postdoctoral fellow to conduct research on understanding Earth's climate history and am still here, 10 years later.



Early in my doctoral research at Duke University, I participated in a two-month research expedition to the North Atlantic Ocean, during which I made connections with scientists from Akita University. Following this, I became interested in collaborating with Japanese scientists in my field, and becoming a JSPS postdoctoral fellow allowed me to strengthen those ties. As a JSPS fellow, I joined a dynamic lab group at the University of Tokyo where I received substantial opportunities to grow as a scientist and was introduced to a variety of research techniques that are still central to my most current research.



My two-year stint as a JSPS postdoctoral fellow was over in an instant. I had experienced so much both personally and professionally, but I also felt that my research group had only scratched the surface on projects that had the potential to greatly impact the field. Thus, I decided not to return to the US and remain in Japan. I later received a second JSPS award (the "Pathways"

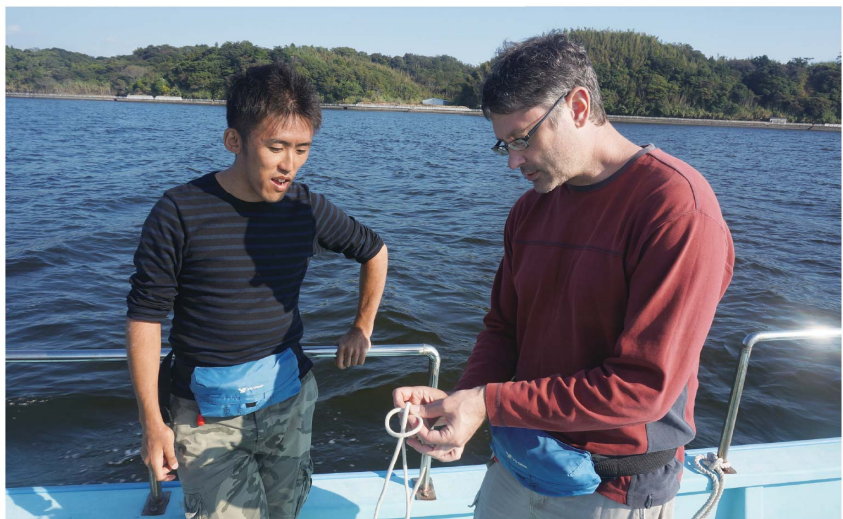
Program) that allowed me to continue my research with my University of Tokyo group. Shortly after beginning the Pathways program, Akita University recruited me to join their university faculty where I am currently a tenured Associate Professor. As fate would have it, I was reunited with the researchers whom I had met on that North Atlantic excursion as a graduate student.



Early career researchers from overseas may not fully appreciate the scope and depth of research occurring in Japan. Let me assure them, however, that the sciences are quite vibrant here and new

discoveries are being made regularly at facilities all over the country. Therefore, the JSPS postdoctoral fellowship program is a fantastic way to join Japan's community of researchers.

The JSPS offers a variety of research programs that vary in both scope and duration. Each and every one of these fellowships is sure to have lasting, beneficial effects that will stay with you throughout your career.



Messages from Host Researchers - 1

Susumu Kitagawa

Director, Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences (iCeMS)
Distinguished Professor, Institute for Advanced Study (KU-IAS)
Kyoto University



Prof. Sujit K. Ghosh, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Pune, India

Prof. Jie-Peng Zhang, Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China



Associate Prof. Nicolas Lowain,
University of Montpellier, France



Prof. Tapas Kumar Maji, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore, India

Up to now, I have hosted many JSPS Postdoctoral Fellows in my lab and have enjoyed conducting research with them. They have come from China, India, France, America, Germany, Spain, and other countries. I believe that I may have more than any other professors taken advantage of this JSPS fellowship program.

Both the program's operational and support systems are superb. Over their period of tenure, fellows can fully immerse themselves in their research without having to worry about their everyday livelihood. Concurrently, professors in the host lab can guide and help advance the fellows' research without a bit of worry regarding personnel costs or acquiring funding to support the fellows' stays in Japan. This allows hosts and fellows to concentrate on achieving good research results and on

coauthoring high-quality research papers.

This JSPS fellowship program is well known to researchers around the world, who consider it an honor to be selected to participate in it. It is with a sense of pride, therefore, that fellows advance their research during their tenures in the program. Seeing them do this always thrills me. Through their interactions with the fellows, the students in my lab not only hone their language skills and advance their research but also receive inspiration from the fellows' way of living and thinking. As a result, I am able to watch them grow rapidly in many ways.

Despite being young and energetic researchers who recently earned their PhDs, many fellows are unable to conceal their anxiety when they first join our lab. However, seeing them return to their countries full of zeal, confidence and aspiration after a year or two wells up in me a feeling of contentment about having been able to conduct research with them. Going out into the world when their tenures end, many former JSPS fellows acquire professorships or

research positions in their home countries. It makes me very happy to hear about their exciting activities. With so many of them obtaining important academic positions in their countries, I decided to organize a former-postdoc community and to hold a joint symposium. Now, in cooperation with my former Chinese JSPS fellows, Japanese post-docs, and former Japanese PhD students, we will hold a joint symposium entitled "China-Japan Symposium of Functional Coordination Chemistry" in April. All of the speakers will be former members of my laboratory. The event will be venue at Sun Yat-sen University in China's Guangzhou province. I am very excited to see at the symposium how my former lab members are advancing chemistry in ways that give bud to new genres of chemical research.

I congratulate JSPS on the 30th anniversary of its Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan and pray for the program to thrive while contributing to the advancement of science and technology around the world.

**Messages from
Host Researchers -2**

Franco Nori

Chief Scientist
Theoretical Quantum Physics Laboratory,
Cluster for Pioneering Research
RIKEN

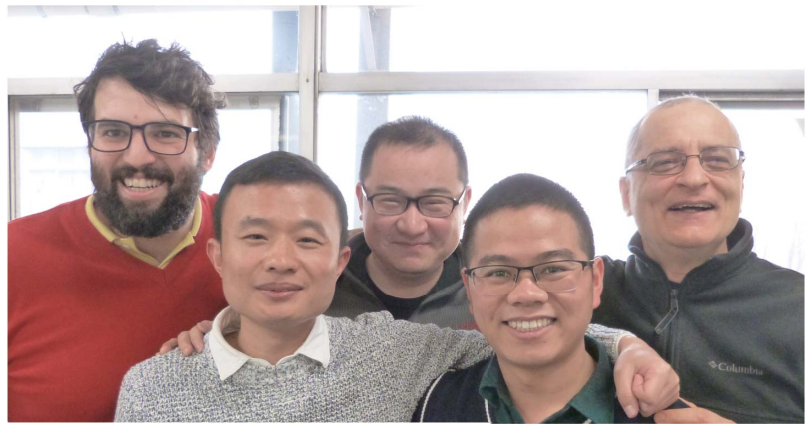


Photo of four JSPS Fellows in RIKEN. From left to right: Dr. Fabrizio Minganti (from Italy), Dr. Tao Liu (from China), Dr. Zhengyang Zhou (from China), Dr. Ye-Hong Chen (from China), and the host Dr. Franco Nori.

Brilliant young researchers are the best hope for the future of science.

The JSPS Fellowship Program has attracted to Japan outstanding young scholars from all over the world. These produce excellent research in Japan and then later on they move on to other countries; many to become academic leaders in their fields. For a very long time, this type of brain circulation (and science diplomacy) has been practiced at a very large scale in North America and Western Europe, providing a phenomenal boost to the science in those parts of the world. Indeed, all the top Science Departments in the world have enormous numbers of graduate students and post-docs coming from all over the world. The JSPS

program helps this international circulation of personnel and ideas.

Scientific research brings people working together, trying to solve very challenging technical problems. This type of activities are also very important to create connections among different countries, to build links among different cultures, and to foster deeper ties between various parts of the world. This is in great need now, when barriers are being erected among countries, increasing tensions among nations.



Our group has published 39 publications listed in the Web of Science as "Highly Cited"; these are top 1% cited among all papers in all areas

of physics. This remarkable achievement has been possible by attracting to Riken top-quality scientists, and the JSPS program has been instrumental in this regard. When Fellows and their hosts obtain important scientific results, this becomes a win-win situation for everybody involved: the young scholar can secure very good research positions overseas, the host institution benefits for nurturing top-quality science, and Japan benefits as a place that attracts innovators who produce excellent results which are visible worldwide. In this 30th anniversary of the JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan, we salute them for their great success in the past, and for an even brighter future.

**Messages from
Host Researchers -3**

Richard Culleton

Associate Professor
Institute of Tropical Medicine
Nagasaki University



Richard Culleton and Claudia Gomes at Nagasaki University, 2018.

I arrived in Osaka in the early winter of 2005, a wide-eyed and naïve post-doc fresh from Scotland, with little to no idea what to expect from Japan, or indeed from life itself for the next two years. I was beginning my JSPS International Fellowship with the esteemed Prof. Kazuyuki Tanabe at Osaka University, an experience that convinced me that I'd made the right decision to embark on a career in malaria research. My initial plan was to stay in Osaka for two years, learn a bit more about malaria, then move back to Europe, but thirteen years later, I found myself still in Japan, at Nagasaki University, and hosting Dr Cláudia Gomes on her very own JSPS International Fellowship in malaria...

Having experienced the programme from both sides, as a fellow and a host, I can honestly say that it is equally rewarding for both parties.



Fellows have the opportunity to work with established researchers and to learn the unique workings of Japanese research institutions, whilst hosts benefit greatly from the input of young and highly motivated foreign researchers, who enrich not only their research, but also the environment of the hosting institution. My experiences of the JSPS International Fellowship as both a fellow and a host have had a huge influence on my career to date, and I am hugely grateful to the programme for their support.

History of “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan” Program

In FY 2017, four programs were renamed

- (1) JSPS Fellowship Programs for Overseas Researchers → JSPS International Fellowships for Research in Japan
- (2) JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Overseas Researchers (Standard) → JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Standard)
- (3) JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for North American and European Researchers (Short-term) → JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Short-term)
- (4) JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Overseas Researchers (Pathway to University Positions in Japan) → JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan (Pathway to University Positions in Japan)

2017

2015

“JSPS Fellowship Programs for Overseas Researchers” started by merging “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Overseas Researchers” with “Invitation Fellowships for Research in Japan.”

2013

“Strategic” program launched to strategically invite excellent young research at a graduate school level to Japan from selected countries.

“Pathway to University Positions in Japan” program established with an aim to secure full-time positions for overseas researchers in Japanese universities. (Recruitment ended in FY 2018.)

2003

Short-term fellowship program widely expanded to include Canada and countries of Europe and renamed as the “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship (Short-term) for North American and European Researchers.”

“MEXT Research Experience Fellowship for Young Foreign Researchers” and “MEXT/NSF Summer Program” merged to form “JSPS Summer Program.”

2001

STA fellowship program (of Japan Science and Technology Agency) merged into JSPS fellowship program.

1997

Tenure expanded from one year to 12–24 months.

Budget secured for “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship (Short-term) for US Researchers” program for inviting excellent young researchers to Japan from the US.

1996

Eligibility expanded to “receiving a doctoral degree within 6 years.”

1995

Budget secured for a Center of Excellence (COE) program (under JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Foreign Researchers) Exercising self-initiative, former German JSPS fellows launched the first JSPS alumni association

1994

Eligibility expanded to all countries having diplomatic relations with Japan.

1992

Age limit abolished; eligibility instead set at “within 5 years of receiving a doctoral degree.”

1988

October

- Started program: “JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Foreign Researchers (The Japanese title “Gaikokujintokubetsukenkyuin” remains the same to present.)”
- In addition to receiving nominations from overseas nominating authorities, recruitment in Japan was started.
 - Age limit set at 35 and under
 - Tenure set at one year with possibility of one year extension
 - Eligibility provided to apply for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAHENHI)
 - Countries eligible for recruitment in Japan limited to France, West Germany, the UK, and the US

1983

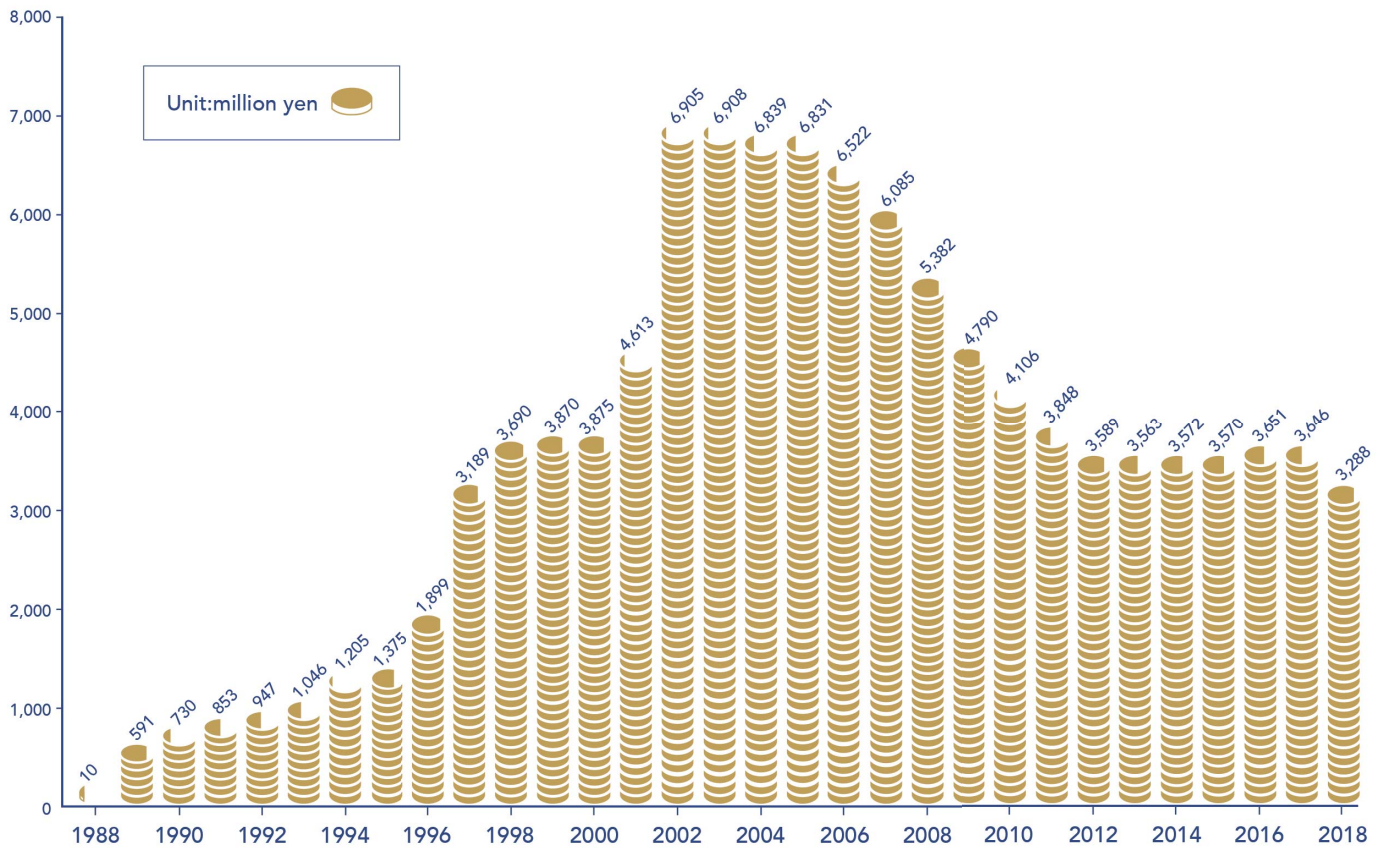
Expanded program to: “Postdoctoral Invitees from the United Kingdom, West Germany and France”

1979

April

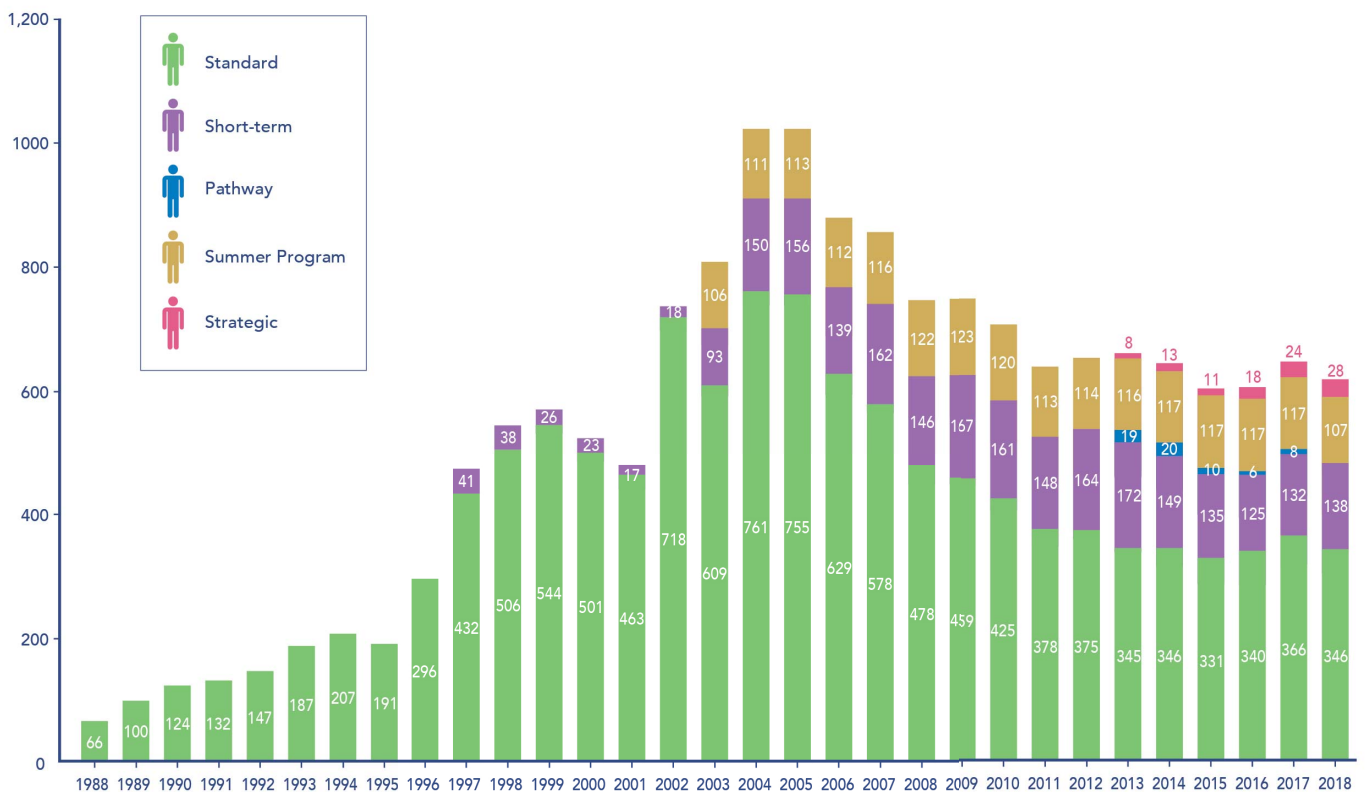
- Started program: “Postdoctoral Invitees from the United Kingdom and West Germany”
- In 1979, only the UK participated
 - Counterparts: Royal Society and Humboldt Foundation
 - Period of visits: 1–2 years

Transition in Program Budget



Transition in Number of Selectees

(*withdrawals included)



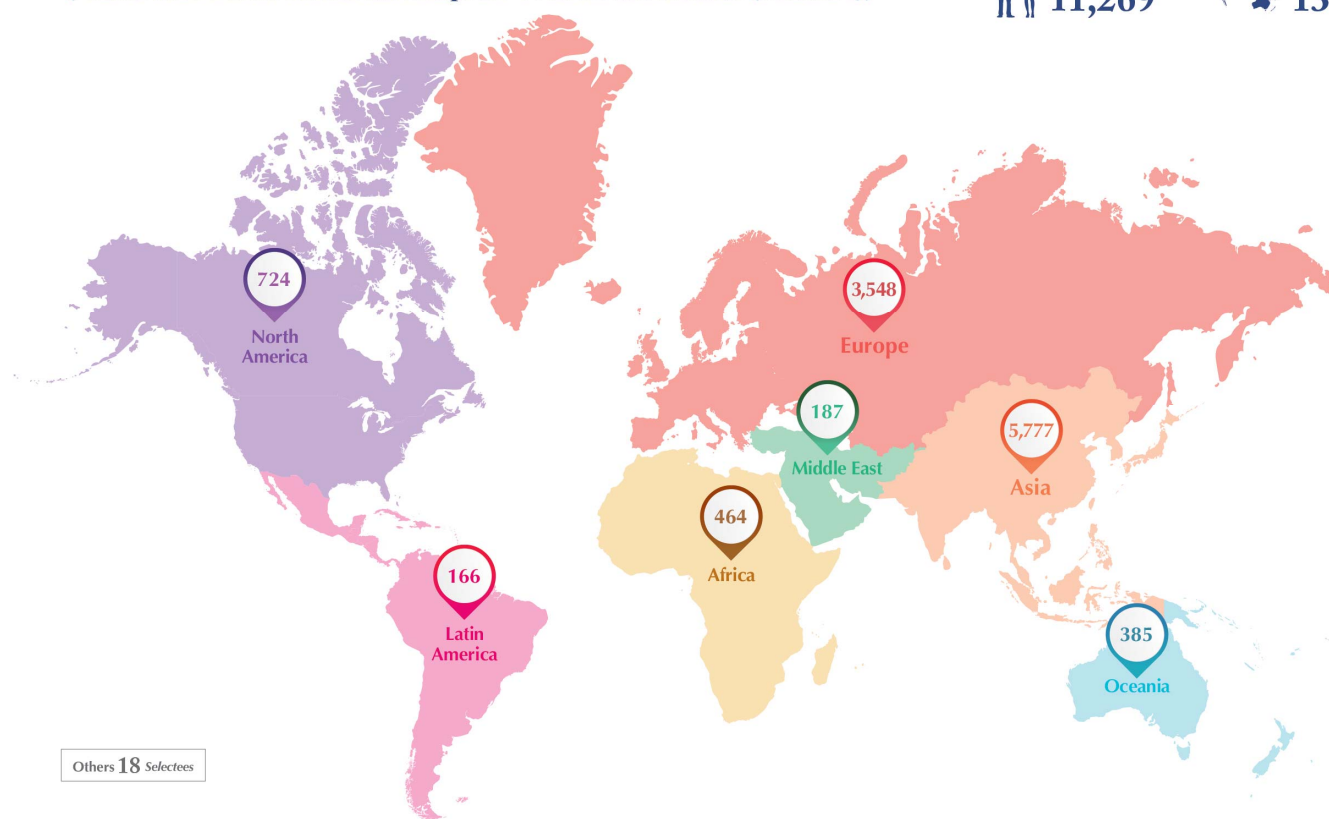
Number of Selectees by Region

(*under JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Overseas Researchers (Standard))

Selectees




Countries

 total
11,269

 total
130


Employment Paths of Former JSPS Postdoctoral Fellows

(under JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Overseas Researchers (Standard))

Year fellowship started	Number of fellowships (withdrawals omitted)	Japan 				Home Countries 				Third Countries 			
		Professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant professor	Other research positions	Non-research positions	Total	Professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant professor	Other research positions	Non-research positions	Total	Professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant professor	Other research positions	Non-research positions	Total
FY2013	304	18	77	20	115 37.83%	32	16	25	73 24.01%	2	25	16	43 14.14%
FY2014	294	16	70	17	103 35.03%	31	28	26	85 28.91%	3	22	7	32 10.88%
FY2015	287	21	66	9	96 33.45%	51	38	18	107 37.28%	9	29	3	41 14.29%
FY2016	301	27	81	6	114 37.87%	37	30	22	89 29.57%	9	31	9	49 16.28%

Others Total 73 (FY2013) 74 (FY2014) 43 (FY2015) 49 (FY2016)



JAPAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE

日本学術振興会

Edited by Overseas Fellowship Division, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
Published in March 2019

<http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/index.html>

Copyright by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
All rights reserved

