

Handbook for the Employment of International Students and Empowerment after Hiring

~12 Key Points Learned From Company Practices~

- Checklist
- Guide for better use
- Collection of best practices



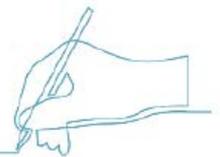
Upon the Utilization of This Handbook

The number of foreign nationals working actively in Japan is increasing every year, and the willingness of companies to employ these foreign workers is also increasing accordingly.

The Project Team for Employment of International Students and Empowerment after Hiring compiled a handbook including a 12-point checklist, as well as a relevant guide for better use and collection of best practices*, in order to help companies in promoting the employment of international students and their empowerment after hiring.

To create more opportunities for the employment of international students according to their diverse levels of Japanese skills and expertise, and to ensure their empowerment after hiring, this checklist organizes **points to be noted** for companies by clarifying problems and difficulties they tend to face.

In general, many of the 12 checkpoints should be applied to all employees including Japanese staff members. Therefore, the handbook aims to contribute to **realizing an organization where various individuals including not only foreign staff but also Japanese staff are empowered, by implementing a PDCA cycle starting with feasible items** based on the business strategy and characteristics of each company.



* The English version is available only for the Checklist and the Guide for better use.

Checklist for employment and empowerment of international students

Guide for better use of the checklist for employment and empowerment of international students 5

- Check item 1 (Establishing definite requirements for foreign workers) 6
- Check item 2 (Sharing the policy of employment within the company) 7
- Check item 3 (Employment policy and the disclosure of past employment records) 8
- Check item 4 (Opportunity to know) 9
- Check item 5 (Flexible employment procedures) 10
- Check item 6 (Support before joining the company) 11
- Check item 7 (Education of Japanese staff members) 12
- Check item 8 (Sense of satisfaction regarding the appointment) 13
- Check item 9 (Exchange opportunities) 14
- Check item 10 (Career development support) 15
- Check item 11 (Objective evaluation) 16
- Check item 12 (Review of in-house systems) 17

Checklist for Employment and Empowerment of International Students

Utilize this checklist to first see what kinds of initiatives are taken in your company.

After streamlining the problems to be solved and items to be tackled in the future regarding the employment and empowerment of international students, try to put into practice the initiatives by utilizing the “Guide for better use” and the “Collection of best practices” *as references.

	Difficulties frequently faced	Points to be checked If the left column applies to your case, refer to the following.	
Before employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although we want to employ foreign nationals, we do not have definite requirements for them. So, we fail to actually employ them, or even if we have employed them, they may soon leave the company. 	1. Establishing definite requirements for foreign workers	 p.6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although we want to employ foreign nationals, there were many objections within the company. Employment was realized based on the decision of management and the human resources department, but there was confusion as the actual place of work was not ready to accept them. 	2. Sharing the policy of employment within the company	 p.7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although we tried to recruit foreign nationals, we could not find adequate candidates. 	3. Employment policy and the disclosure of past employment records	 p.8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although we are interested in employing foreign nationals, we have little knowledge or experience in doing so and feel anxious. We do not even know where to meet them. 	4. Opportunity to know	 p.9
From employment procedures to joining the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regardless of the type of work, we set a requirement of a high level of Japanese skill for employment, or uniformly conduct written examinations in Japanese, which makes it difficult for us to actually employ foreign nationals. 	5. Flexible employment procedures	 p.10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the first time we will employ a foreign national, and we are wondering what kind of support they need before joining the company. 	6. Support before joining the company	 p.11
After joining the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department where the foreign staff members are appointed is not sure about ways to communicate with or the capacity for nurturing their development, and is experiencing difficulty or feeling anxiety. 	7. Education of Japanese staff members	 p.12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foreign staff members left the company saying that they were unable to do the job they wanted to do. 	8. Sense of satisfaction regarding the appointment	 p.13
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foreign staff members are unable to settle into the company, and they do not seem to feel free to consult with those around them. 	9. Exchange opportunities	 p.14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although some foreign staff members are highly aspiring, they do not have enough experience and skills, and they are unable to realize their career prospects. 	10. Career development support	 p.15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been implementing personnel evaluation in our conventional ways, but foreign staff members are complaining that they are not being evaluated appropriately. 	11. Objective evaluation	 p.16
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign staff members are wishing to have long vacations or take breaks during work for religious reasons, but it cannot be approved under the current in-house systems. 	12. Review of in-house systems	 p.17

Checklist for Employment and Empowerment of International Students

Item		Check <input type="checkbox"/>	
Before employment	1	Is the purpose of employing foreign nationals or the roles expected of them being specified?	
	2	Is the policy of employing foreign nationals being shared within the company, including the management, human resource departments, and on-site staff members?	
	3	Are the policies and the past records of employing foreign nationals being disclosed and announced?	
	4	Are there any opportunities for both the company and foreign nationals to understand each other through briefings for international students, internships, etc.?	
From employment procedures to joining the company	5	Are the employment procedures conducted by judging the individual ability and skill according to the varying levels of Japanese-language ability and expertise required for the specific appointment, without regard to the Japanese-language ability at the time of employment?	
	6	Is there a system to support the living of employed students, including the arrangement of residences, or to support the improvement of skills required for them in work, from the period before joining the company?	
	7	Are there opportunities for the Japanese staff who are in charge of the management of foreign staff to learn about effective communication with foreign staff in the workplace?	
After joining the company	8	Is a sufficient explanation on the intention and significance of appointment based on career perspective being provided on the appointment of foreign staff?	
	9	Are Japanese supervisors and senior staff talking to foreign staff from time to time? And, are there any opportunities for exchange with people both inside and outside the company provided to foreign staff?	
	10	Are job opportunities according to career perspectives that are free from conventional employment practices being provided to foreign staff as well as learning support?	
	11	Is a sufficient explanation based on objective evaluation and treatment being provided to foreign staff?	
	12	Are the in-house systems such as the leave system being reviewed to consider diversity among foreign staff, such as the culture of their home country or religion ?	

Guide for Better Use of the Checklist for Employment and Empowerment of International Students

The “Guide for better use” explains the **necessity and specific measures** of each of the **12** checklist items, as well as the **effect that can be expected** by implementing them, by also **referring to the examples of actual practices in different companies**.

Please enrich your understanding on the details of the **12** checklist items and utilize the knowledge for your company’s initiatives.

Companies introduced in the examples of actual practices are explained in detail in the “Collection of best practices of leading companies as a reference for employment and empowerment of international students.” *





Establishing definite requirements for foreign workers

Specify the purpose for employment, and what roles and abilities are expected of the person.

It will also result in more efficient recruiting activities and prevention of attrition soon after employment due to mismatch.

Necessity

If the **purpose for employment, roles that are expected, or technical and Japanese language skills necessary for work are uncertain**, you cannot dispatch the employment information adequately **to the desired human resources**. Also, there is a risk that residency in Japan may not be permitted without considering in advance whether the employment conforms to the qualification of work with residence status granted to the candidate. If the roles they are expected to play are not clarified, they cannot fully perform at work, and are also feeling anxiety, which may **result in early departure from the job**.

Specific measures and expected effects

- **Specifying** the purpose of employment and **roles** expected by **streamlining management challenges**
 - ⇒ By **considering in advance the assignment and career path after joining the company** based on the management policy and future prospects of the company, effective recruitment can be made, which will result in efficient human resources development in the company.
- **Clarification of necessary technical and Japanese language skills** according to the purpose of and expectation in employment
 - ⇒ By informing **the specific requirements for foreign workers**, it becomes possible to **employ human resources** that are strongly interested in and **have suitability for the work**.

Examples of actual practices in companies

Flatagency Co., Ltd. (real estate business)

~Specifying the skills and character of the desirable person based on management policy~

[Background/problems]

Following the Kyoto City Internationalization Promotion Plan, which aims to increase the number of international students in Kyoto City to 10,000, the company decided to **reinforce services for international students** as its management policy. The company is now in need of employees who can give explanations in the students' native languages and can **respond to their requirements**.

[Details of efforts]

Sales representative personnel for the office newly established, mainly targeting foreigners, are recruited. Because there are many international students from China, the company solicited those who can **communicate in Chinese and in Japanese at a level sufficient for sales work**, and recruited three international students from China. They are currently actively working as sales representatives who can not only **handle the work in their native language** but also can **support the client closely** by utilizing their own experiences.

Sankyo-Seiki Co., Ltd. (manufacturing business)

~Recruiting human resources expected to work actively in overseas business~

[Background/problems]

After the global financial crisis in 2007, the company was **considering business development overseas** as a way out towards business recovery. Human resources to support the launch of overseas business and development thereafter was necessary.



[Details of efforts]

Requirements for human resources expected to work actively in overseas business have set as having language skills that can **communicate with clients abroad** and overseas business know-how. On the other hand, Japanese language skills are not required as a condition for employment. In order to realize employment of truly required human resources, the company also hears from **employees in the actual worksite on specific needs of human resources**.

Reference information

- Immigration Services Agency of Japan, Guidelines on Permission to Change the International Students' Status of Residence to "Engineering/Specialist in Humanities/International Services"
- http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00091.html
- Immigration Service Agency of Japan, page on released materials related to the status of residence (>[related to work] Guidelines on the "Designated Activities" relevant to employment support for international students [those who graduated from universities in Japan])
http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri01_00006.html
- JETRO Open for Professionals, What are "Highly-Skilled Professionals?"
<https://www.jetro.go.jp/hrportal/forcompanies/about.html>

Before employment	2	Is the policy of employing foreign nationals being shared within the company, including the management, human resource departments, and on-site staff members?
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Sharing the policy of employment within the company

The policy of employment should be shared within the company, including with the management, human resources department, and the staff members at the actual working site, before the recruitment.

Smooth acceptance becomes possible by the management and the human resources department giving in-depth explanations to employees at the workplace, etc.

Necessity

Management should take initiative in employing foreign nationals, and it is also necessary to **share the employment policy with the human resource department and the employees at the workplace**. If the human resources department does not understand the policy, they cannot make an ideal approach to human resources during recruitment activity. Also, if the employees at the workplace lack understanding, it may result in dissatisfaction, anxiety and worry after hiring, which will lead not only to hindering adequate human resources development but also to preventing the personnel from fully performing at work.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Setting an **opportunity for briefing** by the management and the human resources personnel for employees at the actual working site
- ⇒ With human resources personnel understanding the employment policy, it becomes possible to employ human resources suitable for the expected roles. Further, a briefing to employees at the workplace will lead to **resolving anxiety** upon accepting foreign employees and to ensuring **smooth acceptance** and **adequate human resources development** after acceptance.

Examples of actual practices in companies

SINKO INDUSTRIES LTD. (electric machine and appliance manufacturing business)

~In-depth explanation by human resources department to employees at the actual working site~

[Background/problems]

There were voices of **concern among employees at the workplace** when the company first decided to employ foreign nationals.

Those in charge of the international department who go on business trips abroad and communicate internationally on a regular basis had relatively less resistance to accepting foreign nationals. Among others, however, anxiety was building.



[Details of efforts]

The human resources department gave an **in-depth explanation** to employees at the workplace regarding the **purpose of accepting foreign nationals, roles expected, and assumed career vision**. **Explanation on training policy** was also given **in advance to the managers whom foreign employees report to in order** to resolve concerns on acceptance. As a result, smooth acceptance was realized at the working site, realizing the fostering and empowerment of foreign employees.

KYUSHU KYOUGU. CO., LTD (accommodation and restaurant business)

~Making explicit the purpose of employing foreign nationals~

[Background/problems]

The human resources department in the company was assuming work that utilizes abilities unique to foreign employees, such as translating the website, in addition to serving guests at the hotel.

Work assignment and shift adjustment are the responsibilities of the **supervisor at the actual worksite** and not of the CEO's Office (in charge of human resources). Appropriate management could not be achieved without sharing the roles expected in advance, which could cause **disruption of coordination at the worksite**.



[Details of efforts]

Within the company, the CEO's Office (in charge of human resources) **made explicit the purpose of employing foreign nationals and roles expected of them**, based on the "Statement of Employment Reasons" prepared at the time of recruitment. An opportunity is provided to give explanation in advance to the supervisor at the actual worksite and general staff for their understanding. Thus, no confusion occurred at the worksite.





Employment policy and the disclosure of past employment records

Convey information on the specific policy and whether there are any past experiences of employment of foreign nationals at the company. If there are already foreign employees, also explain how they are performing in the company.

In addition to uploading on the website, it is also effective to have an opportunity for foreign employees to directly give explanations in briefing sessions for candidates, etc.

Necessity

It is important to clearly show the specific policy of employment. If there are already foreign employees, **sharing information on how they are actively working** will be an important **source of assurance** for foreign nationals to apply for the job. If important information is left undisclosed, foreign nationals will have no way to know the true intention of the company, so it will make it difficult for the company to solicit the human resources they want.

Specific measures and expected effects

- **Make explicit** the specific **requirements of employment, past records of employment, and the policy of employment** including career development plan at the time of recruitment.
 - ⇒ **Clearly showing** the specific **requirements of employment and career development plan** including promotion will make it easy for foreign nationals to judge whether their ability level and career outlook match the employment policy, and will lead to **applications by desirable human resources**.
- **Sharing information** related to the **performance of foreign employees** on the company's website, in employment briefing meetings, etc.
 - ⇒ By presenting how the foreign employees are actively working, especially in their own words, it becomes possible for candidates to draw a **specific picture after joining the company**. It will also lead to **resolving anxiety** upon joining the company.

Examples of actual practices in companies

Sankyo-Seiki Co., Ltd. (trading house)

~The CEO directly explains how foreign employees are actively working in employment briefing meetings~

[Background/problems]

The company developed business overseas after employing **international students from China**. Foreign employees are in charge of sales activities in general, but they are also expected to be engaged in overseas business. The company wishes to approach students from abroad who are interested in overseas business.



[Details of efforts]

The CEO directly explains how foreign employees are actively working in the employment briefing meetings. This has led to an increase in the number of **international students who are interested in overseas business applying for jobs**. As a result, employment is realized. There are also foreign employees who **feel assured in joining the company**, knowing the company's past performance in employing foreign nationals.

RINGROW CO., LTD. (wholesale business)

~Explanation of the company given by a foreign employee~

[Background/problems]

The company is planning to **expand its overseas business**. It wishes to employ foreign nationals to get **some clues for overseas business development**, and employ human resources who can assume **sales activities abroad** in the future.



[Details of efforts]

Foreign employees, who are former international students, are appointed to the human resources department to assume mainly the task of employing international students from abroad. In the joint company explanation session targeted to international students from abroad, foreign employees explain the attractive points of the company as well as the necessary mindset and difficulties upon working, **from the perspective of foreign employees**.





Opportunity to know

Actively provide an opportunity where the company and foreign nationals can get to know each other from before the employment.

Exchange events and internships are effective as opportunities to understand each other.

Necessity

It is important that the company and foreign nationals **conduct employment procedure based on a mutual understanding of their roles and responsibilities**. Employment without mutual understanding not only results in discrepancies of recognition or dissatisfaction after joining the company, but also, it may also lead to early departure from the job due to being unable to realize the expected roles and career promotion.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Participation in **employment briefing meetings** for international students and **exchange events between the company and international students**
 - ⇒ It will **deepen mutual understanding** on roles in the company and perspectives on the future, and provides a specific image of how they are expected to perform after joining the company.
- Acceptance of foreign nationals through **internship and part-time jobs**
 - ⇒ By accepting foreign nationals in the workplace and working together, they will be able to know **the details of the actual work and the atmosphere of the company**. Companies will be able to realize the aptitude and capabilities of the foreign nationals **not only among the human resources department but also among employees in the workplace**.

Examples of actual practices in companies

Flatagency Co., Ltd. (real estate business)

~Understanding the ideas of international students from abroad on employment through exchange of opinions~

[Background/problems]

There are several universities near the company, and the number of international students from abroad in those universities is increasing. The company is also **considering increasing the number of international students to be employed**. Before employment, it was necessary to first get the company known to the international students, and to **understand their ideas on employment**.



[Details of efforts]

The company participated in an employment briefing meeting for international students from abroad, held by universities and governments, to explain the business of the company or roles expected of foreign employees. The company also called upon international students and companies within the region and held a self-study seminar on the employment of international students from abroad. They **exchanged opinions on employment, recruitment, and performance expected after joining the company**. It was a valuable occasion to get to know each other.

ANDEX Co., Ltd. (information and communications business)

~Participation in internship opportunities provided through the collaboration of industry, academia, and government

[Background/problems]

There are many international students from abroad in neighboring universities, not to mention Japanese students. However, **not many of them are employed by local companies**, which was also a regional problem. In order to be considered as one of the options for a place of employment after graduating, it was necessary to get the **company's advantages, details of work, and worker-friendly atmosphere** known to the students.



[Details of efforts]

The company took the foreign students' internship opportunities **provided through the collaboration of industry, academia, and government**, and accepted students for two weeks. Upon acceptance, the human resources department prepared a program in line with the interest of the intern students. Explanation on the purpose of acceptance and points to note for training were given to employees at the actual worksite to prepare a support system. This resulted in increased understanding of foreign nationals within the company, and the creation of an atmosphere to accept them. Also, some international students who became **interested in the business** of the company **through internship** were employed thereafter and are actively working.

Reference information

- Immigration Services Agency of Japan, For Those Who Wish to Participate in Internship (general information on internship) http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00109.html
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Efforts by Selected Universities of "Program for Enhancing Employment of International Students" https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/1394574.htm
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is implementing interview sessions and internships for international students at Employment Service Centers for Foreigners and corners for international students. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/koyou_roudou/koyou/gaikokujin/index.html#h2_free3
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan Internship Program <https://internshipprogram.go.jp/>
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan Job Fair <https://japanjobfair.go.jp/>
- JETRO Open for Professionals, Recruitment Activities <https://www.jetro.go.jp/hrportal/forcompanies/adopt.html>

From employment procedures to joining the company	5	Are the employment procedures conducted by judging the individual ability and skill according to the varying levels of Japanese-language ability and expertise required for the specific appointment, without regard to the Japanese-language ability at the time of employment?
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Flexible employment procedures

Conduct the procedures according to the expected roles and profession, including the Japanese language skills and expertise required for the work.

Devising effective methods of procedure will lead to adequate assessments of abilities and skills of foreign nationals.

Necessity

Requiring high level of Japanese language skills uniformly, regardless of the type of work, will risk **missing out on candidates who have expertise and skills that are truly required for the job**. It is important to **conduct the procedures, appropriately, so that** the level of Japanese language skills and expertise according to the expected roles and profession can be **adequately assessed**.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Procedure under the **evaluation criteria of expertise and skill according to the role to be played**, instead of requiring a certain level of Japanese skill uniformly.
- ⇒ By setting an opportunity for foreign nationals to explain themselves regarding **expertise** based on studies in universities or **skills obtained through work experience, rather than sticking with scores on the Japanese Language Proficiency Test** or conducting a written examination in Japanese, it becomes possible to adequately judge whether or not they are suitable for the expected role. It will also bring out ideas and advantages of foreign nationals. Even where Japanese language skills are required, it will be effective to set **flexible standards based on the nature of the job** instead of requiring a uniform level or consider providing language training after joining the company. Further, preparing a system where interviews can be implemented in English or other native languages as needed will broaden the scope of candidates.

Examples of actual practices in companies

teamLab Inc. (IT and software development business)

~Job interview attended by employees at the actual worksite, focusing on technological capability~

[Background/problems]

Engineers with **high technological capability** are essential for the development of services provided by the company. Diversity is also required to create better content. Therefore, the company needs to obtain talented human resources with various backgrounds, whether at home or abroad.



[Details of efforts]

The company clarified the expertise level and technological capability required for supporting its business, and that **Japanese language skills are not required** at the time of employment. The interview during the employment procedure is also **attended by staff members of the actual workplace**, in order to **appropriately judge the technological capability necessary for the work**. Talented engineers from Japan and other countries are currently working actively at the company, utilizing their technological capabilities.

KUMONOS Corporation (measurement service/content service business)

~No uniform requirements for Japanese language skills are set, and flexibility and adaptability are evaluated~

[Background/problems]

The company is **considering developing business abroad**, and has started local marketing research. It was requiring human resources with a **flexible mindset and adaptability** who can support the full-fledged launch of overseas business in the future.



[Details of efforts]

In order to meet the needs of the company, human resources with a **flexible mindset and adaptability** are needed. In order to appropriately assess those points, the company does **not evaluate Japanese language skills uniformly, such as based on test scores**, at the time of employment. That avoids unfairness being caused among regions that use kanji and regions that do not, and leads to the employment of necessary human resources. On the other hand, **minimum Japanese communication skills** are required at construction sites where risk is involved, which can be **assessed through interviews**.



Reference information

- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Do not exclude a potential candidate based on his/her nationality or religion, and conduct fair procedures based on his/her aptitude and capability, as it relates to the employment position.
<https://kouseisaiyou.mhlw.go.jp/>
- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Implement fair employment management complying with rules upon employing foreigners. (Click the "Brochure on the rules for employing foreigners" on the website shown below.)
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/koyou_roudou/koyou/gaikokujin/index.html#h2_free4

From employment procedure to joining the company	6	Is there a system to support the living of employed students, including the arrangement of residences, or to support the improvement of skills required for them in work, from the period before joining the company?
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Support before joining the company

In addition to various procedures applying for the status of residence, etc. also support securing residences, etc. to support the employees' daily lives.

Supporting the improvement of skills necessary for work from before joining the company will allow for a smooth transition into employment with a company.

Necessity	Support the employees going through necessary procedures such as applying for the status of residence. In addition, because relocation becomes necessary in many occasions upon joining the company, it is also necessary to provide support for establishing the basis for daily lives , including the securing of residences. If the company wants an employee to acquire Japanese language skills and expertise, utilize the period before joining the company. Without support and follow-up after employment, the employee may feel anxiety or develop a feeling of distrust towards the company.
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Specific measures and expected effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for applying for the status of residence, securing residences (providing residences, supporting the lease contract, paying the expenses, etc.) and other support that become necessary for living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Providing support for applying for the residency status, securing residences, etc. and establishing the basis for daily life before joining the company will allow the employees to join the company without worries. ● Support for obtaining Japanese language skills, technological knowledge, and other necessary skills (providing learning opportunities and paying learning expenses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Allowing the acquisition of necessary Japanese language skills and expertise before joining the company will remove the anxiety of the prospective employee and encouraging a smooth transition into their role.
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Examples of actual practices in companies

KYUSHU KYOUGU. CO., LTD (accommodation business)

~Supporting those who need relocation to join the company in securing residences~

[Background/problems]

Some of the newly employed international students have to **relocate from remote areas** to join the company. The company wishes that they **devote themselves to their work without concerns** by establishing the basis for their daily lives before joining the company.



[Details of efforts]

The company grants **special monthly allowances** of a fixed amount (equivalent to the upper limit of commutation expenses) to those moving in from outside the city. The **rent deposits, refundable and nonrefundable**, for the lease contracts of residences are **paid by the company**. There are cases where the **company concludes the lease contract** if the foreign national is unable to sign a lease as lessee. The general affairs department also assists the employee with the **purchase of furniture and household goods**.

The company also helps find residences near the company for students who move out of student dormitories.

I-O Data Device, Inc. (manufacturing business)

~Business Japanese language education before joining the company utilizing lectures at universities~

[Background/problems]

While international students to whom the company gave an informal promise of employment were able to communicate sufficiently in Japanese everyday conversation, the company hoped that they would **further improve their Japanese language skills before joining the company** to ensure **smooth transition into their role**.



[Details of efforts]

The company arranged for the students to **take the business Japanese language course** (within the Hokuriku-Shinshu Employment Promotion Program for International Students) **for international students held at Kanazawa University**, based on referral from the Organization of International Affairs, Kanazawa University.

Reference information

- Immigration Services Agency of Japan, "Designated Activities" for prospective employees
http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00013.html
- Immigration Services Agency of Japan, materials related to the status of residence
http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri01_00006.html
- JETRO Open for Professionals, procedures before and after employment
<https://www.jetro.go.jp/hrportal/forcompanies/procedures.html>
- NHK World-Japan, "Easy Japanese for Work"
<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/program/video/easyjapaneseforwork/>



Education of Japanese staff members

Provide an opportunity for the Japanese staff members around the foreign staff, including the supervising employee, to learn about effective communication with foreign staff. Improving the ways of conveying messages will help to avoid miscommunication.

Necessity

As the **backgrounds** of foreign employees are different, things that seem obviously natural for **Japanese staff members** may not be so for foreign staff. It is also **important that Japanese staff understand** that ambiguous expressions Japanese people often use may **result in miscommunication**.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Implementation of **training and guidance for supervising employee and colleagues** at the workplace in which the foreign employee is employed
 - ⇒ Understanding points to be kept in mind **in advance** of accepting foreign employees results in **effective communication** with them. As a result, it becomes possible for them to fully exert their potential without miscommunication.
- Providing **opportunities for the Japanese staff members**, such as meeting with the foreign staff.
 - ⇒ Those meetings offer an **opportunity to notice communication issues** that may be new to Japanese staff. It will result in improved mutual understanding and allows for smooth operation of work.

Examples of actual practices in companies

EBARA CORPORATION (manufacturing business)

~Providing guidance for the department to which foreign employees are appointed~

[Background/problems]

Initially, some employees at the department to which the foreign employees were appointed expressed concerns. It was necessary to **resolve the anxiety among Japanese employees** with whom foreign employees will work with, such as how to give instructions to them and how to explain the result of performance evaluation.



[Details of efforts]

Guidance on the cultures and customs in the home countries of foreign employees, tendencies in their way of thinking, and desirable ways of conveying the result of performance evaluation to them was provided by the human resource department for the department to which foreign employees are appointed. Voices of anxiety and confusion gradually decreased, and the guidance is now gradually shifting from the means of explanation to the occasion of feedback and consultation.

teamLab Inc. (IT and software development business)

~Learning through discussion sessions in Japanese~

[Background/problems]

Although the company lets the foreign employees attend Japanese-language school according to their needs at work, there are no **adequate educational institutions** for Japanese terminology used in IT companies, expressions unique to Japanese, and **information necessary for communication**. While English and Japanese are mainly used within the company, meetings are usually implemented in Japanese. So, it was **necessary to ensure smoother communication** with foreign employees.



[Details of efforts]

In order to improve IT-related Japanese language skills, Japanese and foreign employees hold a discussion session in Japanese once a week. In addition, discussions are regularly held on frequently used Japanese phrases in communication with Japanese people, technical terms used in the IT industry, and information necessary for living in Japan. It provides a valuable opportunity for **Japanese employees to notice the points of communication which are common among Japanese but are difficult for foreign employees to follow**.



Sense of satisfaction regarding the appointment

Explain thoughtfully about the department to which the foreign employees are appointed, including their career path, by understanding their career outlooks. Being engaged in work at the department with a sense of satisfaction will lead to increased motivation.

Necessity

Appointing employees to departments without providing sufficient explanation based on career perspective or considering their wishes or career ambitions, will reduce their trust in the company or motivation, and may constitute a reason for them to quit the job.

If there is a career outlook expected by the company, that **intention must be shared** by the employees for **their understanding**. It is important to give an explanation in advance and decide on the appointment **by mutual consent**.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Appointment based on the employee's **wishes and aptitude**
 - ⇒ By implementing appointment based on the employee's wishes and aptitude, **increase in work motivation** can be expected for them to **play an active role in the company**.
- **Thoughtful explanation** on the intention and significance of appointment
 - ⇒ Even if the appointment differs from the employees' wishes, they will be able to **work with a sense of satisfaction** by recognizing that it is related to their future career.

Examples of actual practices in companies

Sanyo Denshi Co., Ltd. (manufacturing business)

~Submitting the "written plan" for the future and implementing interviews once every three months~

[Background/problems]

The company's policy is to **understand the individual ideas** of employees **for the future**, including those of Japanese employees, and **consider work assignment based on such understanding**. The company fumbled its way when it accepted foreign nationals at first, so it was feeling the **necessity to make careful consideration**.



[Details of efforts]

Employees are requested to submit written plans for their future using a 100-year calendar, showing the ideal future state, when joining the company. They will **explain their milestones in life and specific ideas about the future to the company CEO**, and the company will consider their work assignment by referring to the plan and the style of work. Especially, foreign employees will have an **interview every three months** over a certain period of time after joining the company to have an **occasion to consult and share their career outlooks with the CEO**.

SINKO INDUSTRIES LTD. (manufacturing business)

~Appointment based on the person's intention and sharing of career outlook~

[Background/problems]

The company believes it is **important to show the career outlooks of employees**, not only to foreign employees but for all. On the other hand, employees may sometimes be interested in departments that are different from the shared career vision.



[Details of efforts]

Employees are appointed to different departments every three months for the first one year. **After they understand each department, formal appointment will be decided also by considering their wishes**. Transfer to different departments is also based on the employees' wishes, which contributes in lowering the risk of departure from their job. Career steps expected by the human resources department are shared with the employee to obtain his/her consent. Although there are some cases where employee's interests deviate from those steps, the company will have discussion once again on his/her career from a mid- to long-term perspective and **come to a common understanding before deciding on the appointment**.

Reference information

- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, About Career Consulting: Career consulting is to provide consultation on the job selection and occupational life designing of workers and give advice and guidance, which allows to give shape to the career path aimed at by the worker.
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/koyou_roudou/jinzaikaihatsu/career_consulting.html

After joining the company	9	Are Japanese supervisors and senior staff talking to foreign staff from time to time? And, are there any opportunities for exchange with people both inside and outside the company provided to foreign staff?
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Exchange opportunities

Establish an environment where people actively talk to the foreign employees on a routine basis, and provide occasions for them to exchange with various people.

Various exchange opportunities within the company or in the regional community will give a feeling of assurance and lead to future empowerment.

Necessity

Foreign employees tend to **often face difficulties** in the workplace and regional community. If an environment for them to consult on issues is insufficient, their **anxiety and sense of alienation will increase**. When there are not enough talks and exchange, a feeling of isolation will build up. The employee may become unable to get on with the work smoothly, and there is a risk that he/she may quit the job.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Talking to the foreign employee within the company, creating exchange opportunities, and establishing mentor system
- ⇒ Talking to the foreign employees on a daily basis and providing them with exchange opportunities will lead them to familiarize themselves with the environment of the company. Also, the establishment of a system where senior employees **support newly employed foreign employees as mentors** not only allows the foreign employees able to consult without hesitation and reduces their anxiety at the worksite, but it also offers an opportunity to obtain adequate advice and facilitates work.
- Utilization of external consultation service and participation in regional events
- ⇒ Utilizing the external consultation service efficiently may **resolve problems** occurring within the company or the **anxiety of foreign employees**. Also, being recognized as a member of the regional community through participation in regional events will generate a feeling of **assurance**, which may lead to long and active service with the company.

Examples of actual practices in companies

FUJI FURNITURE Co., Ltd. (manufacturing business)

~Senior employees offer interviews every month as mentors~

[Background/problems]

The number of employees used to be limited. With close relationships with their supervising employees and frequent occasions to talk with senior employees, there had been no special system established. However, with an **increase in the number of employees**, the company decided to **introduce the mentor system**.



[Details of efforts]

Instead of the employee to which the foreign employee reports, a **senior employee close in age is appointed as a mentor**. Based on the targeted vision one year later expected by the company, new employees set their goals and go through **interviews with mentors every month**. In addition to previous month's review and this month's target, they also discuss the mental aspects, and the details of the interview are shared with the management. It **will be easier to consult with the mentor about matters that one may feel reluctant to discuss with the supervising employee**, making it easier to set forth work plans and goals.

Takeuchi Construction Inc. (construction business)

~Daily talks and participation in the festivals in the region~

[Background/problems]

Because the foreign employees seldom talk to Japanese staff, an **opportunity to know** what they usually think or what difficulties they are having was necessary. Also as a part of support provided to foreign employees, the company thought it was important for them to have **exchanges with Japanese employees and the regional community**.

[Details of efforts]

The CEO talks to the foreign employees and hears from them. Because there are many foreign employees with strong aspirations, an environment is provided to **earnestly hear their intentions, and let their capacity develop**. The company also **participates in "Yassa Matsuri," the local festival**. Sometimes a foreign employee assumes the role of the leader. Also, with a suggestion from foreign employees, a **futsal team was formed and holds exchange matches with local teams**. These occasions provide **opportunities for local residents to understand the foreign employees better and for developing friendships between them**.

After joining the company	10	Are job opportunities according to career perspectives that are free from conventional employment practices being provided to foreign staff as well as learning support?
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Career development support

Provide opportunities for work and learning according to career outlook.

Providing support necessary for career development in a style free from the conventional way will lead to employees' active service with the company.

Necessity

Insufficient support or lack of opportunities for acquiring skills necessary for current and future work may result in decreased motivation. Further, foreign employees tend to have a **clear plan regarding their career**, and if there are not enough opportunities of career development or learning, there is a risk that they will depart from the job early.

Specific measures and expected effects

- Providing **opportunities** that result in skill improvement
 - ⇒ Providing **work opportunities based on career outlooks** will lead to increase in motivation and skill improvement.
- **Learning support** based on future career outlook
 - ⇒ **Providing opportunities for learning skills** that becomes necessary for future work **in advance** will result in realizing the assumed career outlook.

Examples of actual practices in companies

EBARA CORPORATION (manufacturing business)

~Qualification exam introduced as a requirement for management post-

[Background/problems]

Because foreign employees have **clear plans regarding their careers**, they fit in better where a clear career path is shown.



[Details of efforts]

The promotion system was renewed as a meritocratic system in FY 2017. A qualification exam was introduced as a requirement for a core post, which corresponds to a management post. While the age adequate for a management post used to be around 36 under the conventional seniority system, **under the new system, there is a case where a foreign employee assumed a management post at the age of 28.**

SINKO INDUSTRIES LTD. (manufacturing business)

~Support for learning according to career path-

[Background/problems]

It used to be sufficient for foreign employees to **be provided support on Japanese language from supervising employees and colleagues**, and to learn technical terms through work. However, considering the future vision that they will **assume legal work, such as contracts with overseas counterparts**, it became **essential that they learn correct Japanese** with minute accuracy in grammar.

[Details of efforts]

The company felt the limitation of in-house follow-up and **implemented Japanese language training by external service operators on a one-on-one basis for one year**. The foreign employees told their requirements to the training service providers, and found lecturers themselves by receiving a demonstration lecture, etc. The tuition was paid by the company. **The manager and the foreign employee discussed the content of training from time to time and shared the progress of the training.**

Reference information

- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, About Self Career Dock (Self career dock is a comprehensive mechanism to promote and support proactive career development of employees by providing support for employees in a systematic style on a regular basis by combining career consulting interviews and various career training courses, based on the vision and policy of human resources development of the company.)
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/koyou_roudou/jinzaikaihatsu/kigyou_gakkou.html

After joining the company	11	Is a sufficient explanation based on objective evaluation and treatment being provided to foreign staff?
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Objective evaluation

Provide an evaluation and treatment objectively and give sufficient explanations. Careful feedback on the evaluation will bring a sense of satisfaction, resulting in further development.

Necessity	Without careful explanation on evaluation and treatment, employees' understanding cannot be obtained, causing dissatisfaction . In addition to ensuring transparency, it is necessary to provide thoughtful feedback on evaluation points and goals to be achieved.
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Specific measures and expected effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective evaluation and decision on treatment based on such evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Decision on treatment based on common and objective evaluation will generate a sense of satisfaction, making necessary points for achieving the next goal clear and promoting further development. ● Thoughtful feedback on evaluation and treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ By giving thoughtful explanations on evaluation and treatment and also hearing from foreign employees, understanding on the evaluation and future goals can be obtained, and motivation will also be maintained.
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Examples of actual practices in companies

<p>SAIMA CORPORATION (manufacturing and retail business)</p> <p>[Background/problems]</p> <p>The company required a mechanism for the management and employees to communicate based on mutually shared indicators, so that specific understanding could be developed on the status of achievement.</p>	<p>[Details of efforts]</p> <p>With support from a Labor and Social Security Attorney, the company prepared a skill map and decided salaries according to the degree of the attainment of points set. In regular interviews held twice a year, employees and the CEO discuss whether points resulting in salary increase are being attained or not, referring to the skill map. Communication based on these points, which are objective indicators, facilitates specific understanding on efforts necessary for salary increase.</p>
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<p>Takeuchi Construction Inc. (construction business)</p> <p>[Background/problems]</p> <p>Because difference in treatment gradually develops even among those who enter a company at the same time, it was necessary to explain the evaluation even more closely to foreign employees who have strong motivation, than to Japanese employees.</p>	<p>[Details of efforts]</p> <p>The CEO himself hears in depth from foreign employees on their intentions, and sets forth their next goals through discussions with them. The occasion also contributes to maintaining their motivation.</p>
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After joining the company	12	Are the in-house systems such as the leave system being reviewed to consider diversity among foreign staff, such as the culture of their home country or religion ?
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Q Reviewing the in-house systems

Consider the culture and religion of the home country of the foreign employee, and review the in-house systems accordingly to allow flexible response. It will not only ensure foreign employees' active and long service with the company, but also improve the working environment for Japanese employees.

Necessity	Foreign employees may have cultural differences or religious restrictions, which sometimes require individual consideration and understanding of other workers . It is important to closely discuss with the individual foreign employees and consider what kind of treatment and consideration can be provided. Insufficient treatment and consideration cannot ensure an environment that is easy for foreign employees to work in, and under such conditions their long and active service with the company cannot be expected. Even if it is difficult to adapt the current system and environment, it is necessary to review the operation or develop a mechanism to gain understanding of other workers.
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Specific measures and expected effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encouragement to take long leave with related systems reviewed ⇒ Being able to obtain leave at a timing necessary according to the culture or religion in their home country will promote the employee's motivation and their family members' understanding, and the active and long service with the company of competent foreign employees can be expected. ● Religious consideration and understanding of cultures unique to different countries such as ceremonial customs, and response to these factors ⇒ It is important to understand and make a necessary response to religiosity and provide considerations such as securing a space for worship service or accepting dietary restrictions, or cultures of different countries such as ceremonial customs lasting for a certain period, so that foreign employees can continue to work in the company.
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Examples of actual practices in companies

RINGROW CO., LTD. (wholesale business) ~Religious consideration, flexible working time, introduction of special leave system, also covering Japanese employees~	
<p>[Background/problems]</p> <p>Foreign employees account for about 15% of all employees, and the company needed to take flexible measures on the different cultures of their home countries. There are also employees who are not fluent in Japanese, who were feeling difficulty in understanding terminology used in the company rules. Further, many foreign employees wish to return to their home country for a long term, so a system to easily allow temporary return was necessary.</p>	<p>[Details of efforts]</p> <p>A room for worship service is established within the office. In addition, bento lunch boxes not containing pork are prepared for daily meals and in-house events.</p> <p>Foreign employees designed a flex working system for the Islamic Ramadan period. Working hours were set according to religious customs, such as lunch breaks being unnecessary because they do not eat or drink during daytime. Also, multilingualization of company rules is under way.</p> <p>Further, a special leave system was established to allow foreign employees to take home leave easily, which offers ten days at maximum for employees in four or more years of service with the company. The system is applied to both foreign and Japanese employees, and travel expenses are paid by the company.</p>



Aytec Corporation (specialized and technical services business) ~Flexible responses to ceremonial occasions and exchange with family members~	
<p>[Background/problems]</p> <p>Cultures of the home countries of foreign employees, including ceremonial customs, often differ from those of Japan, and it was necessary for the company to make flexible responses. The company considers that it is necessary for their family members to feel assured so that the foreign employees can work actively for a long period.</p>	<p>[Details of efforts]</p> <p>The company encourages the employees to take extended leave when they wish to return to their home country for ceremonial reasons, so that they can return to the country efficiently. For example, because wedding ceremonies in Vietnam are held twice and employees need to return to the home country for a long time, the company makes arrangement so that they can work at the local company in Vietnam while they are there. The company also tries to have exchanges with family members of foreign employees who have decided to join the company, and offers an occasion to visit the actual worksite when they have a chance of visiting Japan.</p>

Reference information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare publishes a collection of good examples that contributes to improving employment management for business proprietors, so as to develop a working environment attractive for highly skilled foreign human resources. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000541599.pdf
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[Relative website]

Project Team for Employment of International students and Empowerment after Hiring (Summary)

https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/economy/ryugakusei_katsuyaku_pt/20200228_report.html



Handbook for the Employment of International Students and Empowerment after Hiring (Japanese)

https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/economy/ryugakusei_katsuyaku_pt/pdf/20200228_01.pdf



Handbook for the Employment of International Students and Empowerment after Hiring (English)

https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2020/pdf/0228_004b.pdf



Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry,
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