

TUTOR GUIDE

A Guide for Tutors Providing Support to
International Students



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Kyoto University

国際・共通教育推進部 国際教育交流課

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International and General Education Promotion Department

Introduction

More than 3500 international students from approximately 120 different countries and regions are currently enrolled at Kyoto University.

International students can face various difficulties when they come to Kyoto for the first time to embark on their new life as a student in Japan. Kyoto University provides various forms of support for international students, so that their experience begins well, and so that their time at the university is fruitful. The tutoring system is one such form of support.

Many students with an interest in international exchange are also interested in serving as a tutor, but it is important to note that the task can be a challenging one. A keen sense of good judgment is required to maintain an appropriate relationship with the students you are tutoring. In addition, tutors are often required to act on their own initiative in dealing with unanticipated situations.

This guide aims to provide undergraduate and graduate students currently serving as tutors (and those who hope to do so in the future) with information on what the role entails and how they are expected to fulfill it.

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Overview of the Kyoto University tutoring system

The following FAQ will help you understand the Kyoto University tutoring system.

What is the tutor system?

A tutor is a graduate or undergraduate student who provides international students with support and guidance in their studies and in their daily life in Japan.

What are the duties of tutors?

Tutors are expected to provide international students with support in the following three areas:

- Support in daily life
- Support for Japanese study
- Support in studying their field of specialization

Who is eligible to become a tutor?

In general tutors are selected from among Kyoto University's graduate students, but in some cases undergraduate students may also serve as tutors. Most tutors are Japanese students, but international students with sufficient experience of life in Japan can also be eligible in some cases. Please note that international students who serve as tutors are not required to obtain a Certificate of Authorized Employment, as tutoring is considered to be an educational support activity.

How are tutors selected?

Tutors are selected based upon a recommendation from their supervisor or through a screening process.

What should I do if I am selected as a tutor?

- Have a meeting with their supervisor to confirm the types of support you will provide. If you are taking over from a predecessor, please continue to provide support as they did.
- Please meet with the international student and discuss the support you will provide. It is necessary to confirm what support you can and cannot provide.
- It is preferable that their supervisor, tutor, and international student have a meeting to determine the details together.

How long does the job of international student tutor last?

In principle, if the student you are assisting is a graduate or research student, support is usually required for approximately one year after their enrollment, or in the case of undergraduate students, for approximately two years after their enrollment.

Is it possible for tutors to receive an honorarium?

Kyoto University usually provides tutors with an honorarium of no more than JPY 1,300 per hour.

How many hours per week are tutors expected to work?

Tutors are expected to work approximately forty hours in one six-month period, and approximately eighty hours in one year. They are expected to use this time appropriately and effectively to provide the necessary support. On average, tutors provide approximately one two-hour support session per week. They are not required to provide support during the summer and winter vacations.

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Specific duties of tutors

The type of support required may vary depending on the circumstances of each individual student. Generally, international students need support beginning their day-to-day lives in Japan and beginning their studies at the university. Below are some typical examples of the types of support provided to international students.

To determine the types of support needed by an individual student, please discuss the matter with the student and allocate an appropriate amount of time (approximately 40 hours over six months or 80 hours over one year is a rough estimate) to provide your support effectively.

① Examples of how tutors provide support to international students as they begin their day-to-day lives in Japan.

- Accompany the student to the supermarket, etc. after arrival, and assist them in buying items that they need.
- Accompany the student to the local city or ward office to complete the necessary registration procedures.
- Provide the student with information on traveling to Kyoto University from their place of residence, and on how to use public transportation (purchasing a commuter pass, etc.).
- Help the student to open and use a bank account (including showing them how to use their personal seal), help them to purchase a mobile phone, begin using their electricity and gas services, and show them how to pay their bills. (To the extent possible, please take care not to interfere in the student's personal affairs).
- Teach the student about basic traffic rules and regulations, such as the rules for bicycles and traffic manners.
- Assist with the preparation of official documents, etc.

At the University

- Accompany the student to their faculty or graduate school of affiliation and assist them with the necessary initial procedures.
- Show the student around the campus facilities and explain their use, including: faculties other than the student's faculty of affiliation, the International Education and Student Mobility Division, **Advising Lounge 'KI-ZU-NA'**, the International Student Counseling Office, cafeterias, libraries, the university CO-OP, the Kyoto University Hospital and Health care office, etc.

② Examples of how tutors provide support to international students as they begin their studies at Kyoto University

- Provide advice on how to begin courses at their faculty or graduate school of affiliation.
- Provide counseling and advice on how to proceed with their studies. Please note that, as research guidance is provided by their supervisor, the tutor's advice must be limited to how to consult with their supervisor, or how to proceed with their research according to the instructions given by their supervisor.
- Comprehensive Japanese language classes are provided by the Education Center for Japanese Language and Culture of the Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences. International students who wish to study Japanese should be advised to attend those classes. Tutors can assist the students with learning academic terms related to their field of specialization, or with aspects of their Japanese classes which they have difficulty understanding.

*Please note that a tutor is not required to do time-consuming translation work in their assistance of international students. If international students make such requests please consult with their supervisor.

③ Providing consultation about worries and problems

- Providing consultation and mentoring to international students with worries and problems is one important role of tutors. However, tutors should not have to shoulder excessive burdens. If a student is facing particularly difficult issues, please be sure to seek the help of an appropriate assistance organization as soon as possible. For further details, please refer to, "Dealing with problems," on page 11.



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Important points for tutors

1

Tutoring is neither a simple part-time job, nor volunteer work. It is hoped that tutors will provide support for international student as friends, rather than out of obligation. However, if a tutor's relationship with the student they are tutoring becomes too close, it can become a burden for both parties. Therefore, it is important for tutors to ensure that they maintain an appropriate degree of detachment from the student they are tutoring. Maintain a good balance in this respect is of great importance.

2

Tutors should also be cautious with regards to activities during the course of tutoring work that may lead to misunderstandings, such as taking advantage of the tutoring position to further one's own language learning. Although communicating with an international student in the course of tutoring work can often benefit tutors in this way, a tutor must remain mindful of the fact that the primary objective of the tutoring work is to provide support to the international student.

3

Cultural differences and differences in backgrounds between tutors and international students may result in miscommunication. Please be sure, therefore, to discuss matters thoroughly to avoid misunderstandings. Tutors should try to see things from the international student's perspective, and try to appreciate how a non-Japanese will perceive and experience a Japanese university and Japanese society. Tutors should also try to be understanding with regards to cultural customs and sensitivities relating to matters such religion, food and drink, etc.

4

The support needed by international students varies depending on their individual circumstances. Please therefore discuss the matter thoroughly with both the student and their supervisor, and come to a mutual understanding about the type of support that is to be provided. For example, initially, you will mainly be required to assist the student with the various administrative procedures that they must complete at the city/ward office, bank, etc., and help to facilitate a smooth start to their life in Japan. Then, once they have become more accustomed to life in Japan, you will mainly be required to assist them with their studies, including their Japanese studies. As the time you will have with the student is limited, please establish a suitable schedule, allocating time appropriately.

If the student is also receiving study guidance from their supervisor or their laboratory, please incorporate it into your support. Please provide support flexibly and in cooperation with any other persons or organizations concerned.

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As tutors receive an honorarium, tutoring should be conducted in accordance with the instructions of their supervisor. Students working as Teaching Assistants (TA), Research Assistants (RA), or Office Assistants (OA) should ensure that your work hours as tutors do not conflict with your other work hours.

6

As the people who serve as tutors are regular Kyoto University students themselves, they are not expected to be able to handle every possible situation. If a situation arises that you do not know how to deal with personally, you should not feel embarrassed or responsible. It is sufficient for a tutor to provide the student with advice on where to go to seek the help they need. If you are unsure of what to do, please advise the student to seek help the administrative office of their faculty or graduate school, a faculty member in charge of international students, the International Student Advising Room, or the International Education and Student Mobility Division.

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As a tutor, it is important to:

- Try to understand the international student's position.
- Have effective communication with the student.
- Maintain an appropriate relationship with the student.
- Seek assistance from appropriate organizations to resolve problems if necessary.

Please do not try to resolve difficult problems by yourself, particularly if the student is having emotional issues, or issues with their supervisor. Please consult with a faculty member in charge of international students in the student's faculty or department, or the International Student Advising Room. Please do not feel that it is necessary to handle such problems by yourself or use too much of your time.

Although your role as a tutor is a very important one for the student, your own priority should be your studies and life as a Kyoto University student.

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Please do not borrow money or items from the student that you are tutoring, or lend money or items to them, even though this may be a common practice in some parts of the world. The student may ask you or others to lend them money for their tuition payment or some other purpose. However, borrowing or lending money can lead to problems, particularly as cultural differences may come into play with regards to the customs surrounding borrowing and lending.

Since you are both students, please do not borrow money or items from each other. Even if the student you are tutoring asks you to lend them money or items, please refuse on the grounds that it is prohibited by the university.

4

Protection of privacy

Tutors must ensure that they protect the privacy of students that they provide assistance to. Students may consult with tutors about private concerns, and in the course of their work, tutors may learn personal details about the student. To protect the students' privacy, please do not discuss the students' affairs or mention their name to others. Posts on social networking services or pictures and videos posted on the internet may cause problems for the students and others. In addition, please do not publicize the fact that you are serving as a tutor, incidents that occur during tutoring, or the content of tutoring discussions on any social networking services. Carelessness or recklessness in this regard can be a serious betrayal of trust and cause serious problems for the students.



① If international students have mental health or other health problems

Please consult with their supervisor, a faculty member in charge of international students, or the International Student Advising Room.

② In the event of harassment

Harassment can take the form of sexual harassment, academic harassment, racial harassment, and other various forms of harassment. Racial harassment, in particular, is sometimes a problem faced by international students. In the event of harassment issues, please advise international students to consult with the relevant organization within the university.



◆ Harassment Policy at Kyoto University

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/about/human-rights/harassment-policy-at-kyoto-university>

③ If problems arise between an international student and their tutor

If the relationship between you and the student you are assisting does not go well, or if you cannot continue to serve as a tutor to a student for practical reasons, please consult with their supervisor, a faculty member in charge of international students, or the International Student Advising Room immediately.

④ In case of emergency

In the case of an emergency, such as an international student's involvement in an accident or other incident, please contact the student's supervisor, a faculty member in charge of international students, the administrative staff in their faculty/graduate school, etc. or the International Student Advising Room immediately. It is also important for you to discuss the preparations for such emergencies with their supervisor in advance. It is recommended that tutors prepare an emergency contact list during the preparation meeting.

【Consultation for International Students at the University】

International students can receive consultation at the university about any worries or concerns that they may have, or regarding issues that they cannot solve by themselves, such as problems in daily life, interpersonal problems, or problems with scholarship procedures. Please encourage international students to take advantage of the consultation services available, rather than trying to resolve difficult issues by yourself.

● International Student Counseling • Advising

International students can receive consultation at the International Student Counseling Office or Advising Lounge 'KI-ZU-NA' (located on the right side of the entrance of 'KI-ZU-NA' building).

Please refer to the URL below for further details.

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/education-campus/facilities/international-student-advising.html>

International Student Counseling Office

Open Hours : 9am-5pm / Mon.-Fri. (except National Holidays)

Advising Lounge 'KI-ZU-NA'

Open Hours : 9am-5pm / Mon.-Fri. (except National Holidays)



Online consultation service is also available at the International Student Counseling Office, so the students who study at Katsura Campus and Uji Campus can also use the advising service.

【Inquiries about tutoring system】

**Faculty/Graduate school, etc. in
charge of international students
and administrative offices**

*Please inquire at the administrative office of the relevant faculty / graduate school, etc.

**International Education and Student Mobility Division
International and General Education Promotion Department**

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