

FAQ on the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

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Question 1: What is the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: The Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is a points-based system that provides Highly Skilled Foreign Professional with preferential immigration treatment. In other words, it is a system that uses the mechanism of "points" to promote the acceptance of foreign nationals recognized as "highly skilled foreign professional" by giving them preferential treatment in matters of immigration control.

In Japan, statuses of residence (qualification for employment) for foreign nationals who work in Japan are stipulated by the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act under a basic policy of actively accepting foreign-national workers in specialty and technical fields. Qualification for employment is classified by type of activity. Status of residence is decided for foreign nationals who meet stipulated conditions. Out of the foreign nationals allowed to enter and stay in Japan with one of those qualifications for employment, the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional provides personnel with outstanding abilities and credentials who are expected to especially contribute Japan's economic growth and innovation (in other words, "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional") with preferential treatment in terms of immigration control in order to promote their acceptance.

The Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is incorporated into Cabinet decisions on growth strategies and economic policies such as the June 2010 New Growth Strategy and the December 2011 Strategy for Rebirth of Japan as a means for promoting the acceptance of outstanding foreign personnel.

Question 2: What kind of person is covered by the Points System?

Answer: As indicated in the answer to Question 1, the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is a system that provides preferential treatment to particularly outstanding foreign nationals who can obtain a qualification for employment. Therefore, foreign nationals who cannot obtain a qualification for employment, i.e., those who plan to engage in activities such as so-called unskilled labor that are not eligible for any qualification for employment, and foreign nationals who are eligible

for a qualification for employment but whose academic histories, remuneration, etc., do not meet certain standards, do not qualify under the Points System.

Foreign nationals eligible for a qualification for employment are assigned points for their academic and work histories, remuneration, and so on. Those whose point totals exceed a certain score will be considered "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional."

Question 3: What are the benefits of being allowed to enter Japan as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: Under this system, in order to promote the acceptance of advanced foreign personnel, those considered Highly Skilled Foreign Professional will receive the following preferential immigration control treatment.

①Permission to engage in multiple activities during stay

For example, foreign national with a status of residence of "Engineer" cannot engage in activities covered by the status of residence "Specialist in Humanities/International services." Likewise, a foreign national with a status of residence of "Researcher" would need separate "permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted" in order to apply the findings of research to the operation of a venture company.

In contrast, under this system, Highly Skilled Foreign Professional are allowed to engage in activities that pertain to multiple statuses of residence without needing to obtain permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted or to change their status of residence.

②Determination of a period of stay up to five years

There are multiple types of period of stay for each status of residence. Period of stay is determined based on a foreign national's situation and activities during his or her stay. For Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, the maximum length of period of stay permitted by law (see Note) is uniformly granted.

Note: The maximum period granted through July 8, 2012 is three years. Beginning July 9, 2012, it will be five years.

③Easing of length of residency requirements related to obtaining permission for permanent residence

In principle, permission for permanent residence requires at least 10 years residency in Japan. In the case of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, they can be considered for permanent residency after only five years if they have continued their activities as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional throughout those five years.

④Priority processing of entry and stay paperwork

For Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, the Ministry of Justice will work to process paperwork for entry (application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status) within 10 days of receipt and for staying (application for renewal of period of stay or change of status of residence) within five days of receipt.

Note: This does not include cases in which necessary documents are not complete, cases in which there are questions about the content of the application, etc. If the content of points for "research performance" comes under 2 on the points sheet, the application will be evaluated in consultation with the head of the relevant government agency, so priority processing will not be available.

⑤Employment of spouses

Ordinarily, in order to carry out activities pertaining to a status of residence of "Instructor," "Engineer," "Specialist in Humanities/International services," and so on, a foreign national must have that status of residence. In order to obtain such a status of residence, the foreign national must meet certain conditions regarding academic and employment history. In the case of the spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional who wishes to carry out activities pertaining to such a status of residence, s/he may do so with the status of residence of "Spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional." The conditions regarding academic and employment history need not be met.

Note: The spouse must live with the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and must be paid remuneration equivalent to that which would be paid to a Japanese national.

⑥Bringing parents

Ordinarily, the parents of a foreign national staying in Japan with a qualification for employment will not be accepted to live in Japan. In the case of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, if a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or his/her spouse has a child under the age of three, the parent(s) of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or his/her spouse will be permitted to enter and stay in Japan.

Note: Certain conditions must be met, such as the parent(s) must live with the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, and the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional must have an annual income of at least 10 million yen.

⑦Bringing domestic workers employed by Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

Ordinarily, with the exception of some foreign nationals with a status of residence of "Investor/manager" of "Legal/Accounting Services," foreign nationals in Japan are not permitted to employ domestic workers who are also foreign nationals. In the case of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, domestic workers hired in the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's home country may be brought to Japan, and domestic workers may be hired if the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional has a child under the age of 13.

Note: Certain conditions must be met, such as the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional must have an annual income of at least 15 million yen, and the domestic worker employed in the person's home country must have been employed by him or her for at least one year.

Question 4: What is the procedure for entering Japan as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: In order to enter Japan as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, one must first apply for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with a qualification for

employment. However, a status of residence "Diplomat," "Official," or "Technical intern training" is not eligible.

When applying for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status, a person wishing admittance as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional must submit a self-tallied "Point Statement" and indicate that desire. The applicant shall calculate his or her own points based on the publicly available points sheet. If s/he has a passing score, then s/he shall submit a Point Statement accompanied by explanatory documents.

If examination of the application finds entry with a qualification for employment possible and the point total is confirmed as passing, the a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with a notation of the total points and the type of activities as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional will be granted.

The person then attaches the Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status to his or her application for a visa, which is submitted to a Japanese diplomatic mission abroad. If a visa is issued, the person brings it and the Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status and applies to land in Japan.

Common Questions regarding Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

Question 5: Why do people admitted into Japan as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional need to have a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status?

Answer: As indicated in the answer to Question 2, the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is a system for handling particularly outstanding foreign nationals who enter or are staying in Japan with a qualification for employment. Foreign nationals who cannot obtain a qualification for employment are not eligible. Whether a person can receive a qualification for employment is determined through examination of his/her application for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status. Only people who have received such a certificate may calculate their points under the system and be handled as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional if their score is high enough.

Question 6: If a person attempting to be admitted into Japan as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional applies for a visa at a Japanese diplomatic mission abroad, will s/he be issued a visa?

Answer: Unless the person has a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status recognizing him/her as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, s/he will not be granted a visa for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional even if s/he applies to a Japanese diplomatic mission abroad.

Question 7: Can the families of people admitted into Japan as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional accompany them?

Answer: In addition to the dependent spouses and children of people admitted into Japan as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, spouses of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional who want to work in Japan and the parents of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or their spouses who are raising a child under age three can accompany Highly Skilled Foreign Professional to Japan if they meet certain conditions.

Question 8: Can the spouses of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional work in Japan?

Answer: The following methods are available for spouses of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional to work in Japan.

- Enter Japan as the dependent spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and then receive permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted

A person who has entered Japan as the dependent spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is not permitted to work without permission. S/he must obtain a "permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted." Then s/he may work within the scope of that permission.

- Enter Japan as the working spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

One of the preferential treatments for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional under this system is that their spouses are permitted to engage in work activities pertaining to the status of residence of "Researcher," "Instructor," "Engineer" "Specialist in Humanities/International services," or "Entertainer" if they meet certain conditions.

- Enter Japan after obtaining a qualification for employment

Rather than entering Japan based on his/her spousal relationship to a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, a spouse may obtain his or her own status of residence permitting entry into Japan and work, and engage in work pertaining to that status of residence.

Question 9: If I am admitted into Japan as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, can I bring with me a domestic worker whom I have been employing in my home country?

Answer: Domestic workers employed by Highly Skilled Foreign Professional in the personnel's home countries can accompany them to Japan if they meet certain conditions.

Question 10: Can I be admitted into Japan first as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and send for my family and/or domestic workers later?

Answer: As with family members that accompany them, Highly Skilled Foreign Professional may come to Japan first and then send for their spouses and children of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and parents of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or their spouses who have a child under age three if they meet certain conditions.

If a domestic worker is hired because a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional has a child under the age of 13, or his/her spouse is unable to carry out normal daily housework due to illness, etc., the domestic worker may be sent for. If a domestic worker has been in the employ of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional in his/her home country for at least one year, then the above conditions need not be met, but the domestic worker must enter Japan together with the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. The Highly Skilled Foreign Professional cannot enter Japan first and then send for the domestic worker. In any case, certain conditions regarding remuneration and so on must be met.

Question 11: I am currently in Japan with a status of residence of "Engineer." Can I have my status of residence changed to "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional"?

Answer: A person already residing in Japan with a qualification for employment (see Note) can apply to change his/her status of residence to "Designated Activities," with work pertaining to the activities of "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional." Examination of his/her application will determine whether his/her work pertains to the activities of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, whether the point calculation reaches a passing score, and if there have been any problems during his/her stay in Japan. If all those conditions are met, permission to change status of residence can be granted.

Note: "Qualification for employment" as used here refers to "Professor," "Artist," "Religious activities," "Journalist," "Investor/manager," "Legal/Accounting Services," "Medical services," "Researcher," "Instructor," "Engineer" "Specialist in Humanities/International services," "Intra-company transferee," "Entertainer," "Skilled labor," and "Designated activities (limited to so-called designated research activities and designated information processing activities)."

Question 12: I am currently staying in Japan, attending a Japanese university as an international student. I would like to work in Japan after graduating. Can I have my status of residence changed to "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional"?

Answer: As indicated in the answer to Question 1, the Points System for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is a system that provides preferential treatment to particularly outstanding foreign nationals who can obtain "a qualification for employment". Thus, the procedure for their entry into Japan begins with an application for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status related to a qualification for employment. People already in Japan with a qualification for employment can apply to change their status of residence, and if they have a passing score on their point calculation, they can have their status of residence changed to "Designated activities" as a "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional." (See Question 1.)

In the case of an international students in Japan, it is not immediately clear if s/he is a person "who can obtain a qualification for employment." Basically, s/he should leave Japan temporarily and apply for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. If the certificate is granted, s/he can then carry out the procedures for landing and receive permission to enter Japan as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Alternatively, s/he can have his/her status of residence changed from student to a qualification for employment and then have their status of residence changed again to "Designated activities" as "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional." In either case, the burden of paperwork will be heavy.

Therefore, if a person residing in Japan with a status of residence that is not a qualification for employment, such as a student, is granted a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, s/he must apply for [permission to have his/her status of residence changed to "Designated activities" as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. His/her application will be examined to ascertain if it meets certain conditions. If it does, s/he can receive permission.

Note, however, that even if s/he applied for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status, this does not extend his/her current period of stay. There is no guarantee that a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status while s/he is still permitted to reside in Japan.

Question 13: I am married to a Japanese national and currently living in Japan with a status of residence of "Spouse of Japanese national, etc." I understand that Highly Skilled Foreign Professional can bring their parents to Japan. Can I have my status of residence changed to "Highly Skilled Foreign Professional"?

Answer: As with students, it is not immediately clear if a person with a status of residence "Spouse of Japanese national, etc." is a person "who can obtain a qualification for employment." S/he will be handled similarly to a student as indicated in the answer to Question 12.

Question 14: What documents must be submitted in order to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status for admittance into Japan as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: When applying for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status, submit the proper application for status of residence according to the type of activities you wish to perform, plus the following documents.

- Documents listed in the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act Enforcement Regulations Table 3 for that status of residence
(Documents proving content of activities, period, position, and remuneration; documents proving academic and employment histories; materials making clear the business of the inviting organization; etc.)

Point Statement

Explanatory documents for each category in the point calculation

Documents proving academic degree(s), documents proving annual income, documents proving research performance (patent certificates, materials proving participation in research receiving competitive grants from non-Japanese governments at least three times, materials proving at least three publications in journals registered with databases of academic papers, etc.), Japanese national certifications related to the work to be performed, etc.

Note 1: Not every relevant explanatory document for every category need be submitted; submission of documentation proving a point total of at least 70 is sufficient.

Note 2: Regarding research performance, the Immigration Bureau uses Elsevier's SciVerse Scopus database of academic papers to confirm journal publications.

Question 15: What documents must be submitted in order to receive a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status for admittance into Japan as a family member of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: The following documents must be submitted.

(1) Dependent spouses and children of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

- Application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with the status of residence of "Dependent"
- Documents listed in the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act Enforcement Regulations Table 3 for the status of residence "Dependent"

(Documents proving the relationship to the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, copy of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's certificate of alien registration or passport, documents proving the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's occupation and income)

(2) Working spouses of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional

- Application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status for the status of residence (Instructor, Researcher, Engineer, Specialist in Humanities/International services, Entertainer) that accords to the activities s/he wishes to undertake
- Documents listed in the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act Enforcement Regulations Table 3 for that status of residence

(Documents proving content of activities, period, position, and remuneration; materials making clear the business of the inviting organization; etc.)

- Documents proving the relationship to the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and a copy of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's certificate of alien registration or passport

(3) Parents of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, etc., with a child under the age of three

- Application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with the status of residence of "Designated activities"
- Documents proving the relationship to the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or his/her spouse, documents proving that the child they are raising is the child of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or the spouse, copy of the certificate of alien registration or passport of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional and the child, proof of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's annual income

Question 16: What documents must be submitted in order to receive a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status for admittance into Japan as a domestic worker of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional?

Answer: The following documents must be submitted.

(1) Domestic workers as in Article 2 of the The public notice of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional (domestic workers brought to Japan by Highly Skilled Foreign Professional because of ongoing employment in home country, etc.)

- Application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with the status of residence of "Designated activities"
- Documents proving content of activities, period, position, and remuneration
- Copy of the Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or a copy of the receipt for an application for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status (not required if applying at the same time as the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional)
- Proof of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's annual income
- Document stating that the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional does not employ any domestic worker but the applicant
- Documents proving that the applicant can carry on an ordinary conversation in a language used by the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional
- Copy of an employment contract (see Note) or document proving understanding of work conditions

Note: Use a model contract created by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

- Document promising that when the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional leaves Japan, the applicant will accompany him/her at the person's expense (not required if already specified in the employment contract)
- Documents proving that the applicant has been continuously employed by the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional for at least one year through the date of the landing examination (copy of employment contract, etc.)

(2) Domestic workers as in Article 2 of the public notice of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional (domestic worker employed by a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional because s/he has a child under the age of 13)

- Application for Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status with the status of residence of "Designated activities"
- Documents proving content of activities, period, position, and remuneration
- If entering Japan at the same time as the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, copy of the Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or a copy of the receipt for an application for a Certificate of Eligibility for Residence Status (not required if applying at the same time as the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional)
- If sent for by the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, a copy of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's certificate of alien registration
- Proof of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's annual income
- Document stating that the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional does not employ any domestic worker but the applicant
- Documents proving that the applicant can carry on an ordinary conversation in a language used by the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional
- Copy of an employment contract (see Note) or document proving understanding of work conditions

Note: Use a model contract created by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

- Documents proving that the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional has a child under the age of 13, or his/her spouse is unable to carry out normal daily housework due to illness, etc.

Question 17: What kinds of activities are Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced academic research activities allowed to perform?

Answer: Based on contracts with public or private institutions in Japan, educational activities at a university or other educational institution and research activities in the research labs of private-sector firms are permitted. In addition, starting and operating

businesses utilizing the results of education and research is permitted in conjunction with those activities.

Question 18: What kinds of activities are Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced specialized/technical activities allowed to perform?

Answer: Based on contracts with public or private institutions in Japan, work requiring specialize knowledge or techniques in the natural sciences and the humanities is permitted. In addition, starting and operating related businesses in conjunction with those activities is permitted.

Question 19: What kinds of activities are Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced business management allowed to perform?

Answer: Operation of companies and management of legal and auditing offices, etc., are permitted. In addition, starting and operating related businesses in conjunction with those activities is permitted.

Question 20: Under the status of residence "Investor/manager," only business management of so-called foreign-capitalized firms is permitted. Are Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced business management activities also permitted to perform business management only of foreign-capitalized firms?

Answer: Currently, with the status of residence of "Investor/manager," the business managed must have foreign nationals or foreign corporations as investors.

In contrast, the "advanced business management activities" of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional do not have that requirement. They are therefore permitted to manage businesses in which only Japanese nationals have invested.

Question 21: Are only executives of large firms approved as Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced business management activities?

Answer: Advanced business management activities refer to a person making important decisions regarding company's operations, carrying out work, performing supervisory

work as an officer of the company, managing a department or larger section of a company as a manager, or otherwise performing business management activities. The size of the company and whether the person is an executive is not a direct condition.

Question 22: Is a spouse or child supported by a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional allowed to work?

Answer: If a spouse or a child of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional receives permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted, s/he can work within the scope of that permission. Handling of permission to engage in an activity other than that permitted is the same as that for the status of residence of "Dependent" (i.e., general permission for working up to 28 hours per week [excluding adult entertainment businesses, etc.]).

Question 23: If a working spouse living with a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional separates from that person, can the spouse continue working?

Answer: In order to receive permission to work as the spouse of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, a spouse must be living with the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Furthermore, they must continue living together while in Japan. If a spouse separates from the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, the permitted work activities are no longer allowed. (If the spouse continues working, this could be considered engaging in activity outside the scope permitted, and can result in penalties and/or deportation.)

Question 24: Conditions for employers include annual income of at least 15 million yen. Can this include income other than that from my place of employment?

Answer: The "annual income" of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is the annual amount of money received from the institution with which s/he affiliates in order to engage in activities as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional (ordinarily an employer in the case of advanced academic research activities or advanced specialized/technical activities, and the company s/he manages in the case of advanced business

management activities). Therefore, for example, remuneration from a venture company started by a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional based on the findings of advanced academic research activities or profits made from stocks are not included.

Question 25: Conditions for employers include annual income of at least 15 million yen. If my income drops below 15 million yen, will my domestic worker have to leave Japan?

Answer: In order to be permitted to reside in Japan as the domestic worker of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, the employing Highly Skilled Foreign Professional must have an annual income of at least 15 million yen. After receiving permission as a domestic worker, if the employer's annual income falls below 15 million yen during the stay in Japan, permission to stay in Japan is not immediately revoked. However, when the time comes to renew the domestic worker's period of stay, if the employer's annual income is less than 15 million yen, the period of stay cannot be renewed.

Question 26: As a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional who is an employer, when I applied to renew my period of stay, I fell below 70 points and my status of residence changed to a different qualification for employment. Will the domestic worker I employ be allowed to remain in Japan?

Answer: In principle, s/he will not be allowed to remain. Domestic workers of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional are permitted only as part of the special incentives for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional, so if the employer loses that status, the domestic worker will no longer be permitted to stay. However, if the employer's status of residence changes to "Investor/manager" or "Legal/Accounting Services," and the conditions in the public notice regarding Designated Activities Table 2 are met, then the domestic worker can be permitted to remain in his/her employ in Japan.

Question 27: I entered Japan as a domestic worker as specified in the public notice of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. My employer's child was under 13 when I

entered the country. When the child turns 13, will I still be allowed to remain in Japan?

Answer: A domestic worker's permission to stay is not immediately revoked when the employer's child turns 13. However, when the time comes to renew the domestic worker's period of stay, if the no longer has a child under the age of 13 or a spouse unable to carry out normal daily housework due to illness, etc., the period of stay cannot be renewed.

Question 28: If a parent of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional living with him/her begins living separately, can the parent remain in Japan?

Answer: In order to reside in Japan as the parent of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional raising a child, the parent must live with the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Furthermore, they must continue living together while in Japan. If the parent and the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional begin living separately, the permitted childcare activities will no longer be allowed. Even in that case, however, status of residence will not be immediately and necessarily revoked, but renewal of the period of stay will not be permitted.

Question 29: Conditions for a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional to bring a parent include annual income of at least 10 million yen. Can this include income other than that from my place of employment?

Answer: The "annual income" of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional is the annual amount of money received from the institution with which s/he affiliates in order to engage in activities as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional (ordinarily an employer in the case of advanced academic research activities or advanced specialized/technical activities, and the company s/he manages in the case of advanced business management activities). Therefore, for example, remuneration from a venture company started by a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional based on the findings of advanced academic research activities or profits made from stocks are not included.

Question 30: If the child of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or his/her spouse turns three, can the parent of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional who came to assist with childcare remain in Japan?

Answer: S/he cannot remain in Japan. Parents of Highly Skilled Foreign Professional or their spouses with children are permitted as one of the special incentives for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Once the child of the Highly Skilled Foreign Professional turns three, remaining in Japan as an incentive is no longer possible. Even in that case, status of residence will not be immediately and necessarily revoked, but renewal of the period of stay will not be permitted.

Question 31: Are graduates of junior colleges, technical colleges, or upper level courses at vocational schools (technical schools) eligible for points for academic background?

Answer: "University" includes junior colleges. Graduates of technical colleges and upper level courses at vocational schools ("advanced specialist" degrees) are considered "persons who have received the equivalent of a university education or higher" and are eligible for academic history points. However, persons completing courses at vocational schools with the degree of "specialist" are not eligible.

Question 32: A Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced academic activities entered Japan with an annual salary of 6.5 million yen. His/her salary subsequently fell to 5.5 million yen. This cost him/her 5 points and dropped him/her below 70. Can s/he still remain in Japan?

Answer: A total of at least 70 points is required in order to qualify as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Once such a person is residing in Japan, however, it is not necessary that s/he constantly maintain a score of 70 points or more. Therefore, it is not the case that such a person would have his/her status as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional immediately revoked if his/her income fell to 5.5 million yen. However, when the time comes to renew his/her period of stay, if his/her point total is below 70 points, it cannot be renewed.

Question 33: What categories of payment are included in "remuneration"? For example, does overtime payment count as remuneration for point calculation?

Answer: "Remuneration" is "payment in return for the value of certain work performed."

In addition to base pay, it includes diligence allowances and adjustment allowances. It does not include compensation for actual expenses, such as commuting allowances, dependent allowances, and housing allowances.

Overtime pay is payment in return for the value of certain work performed, but since it is uncertain at the time of entry into Japan how much will be paid, it is not included in the "Remuneration" point calculation. Even when the period of stay is being renewed, the point calculation for "Remuneration" is based on expected annual income, so past overtime payments are not included.

Question 34: A Highly Skilled Foreign Professional engaged in advanced academic activities entered Japan at age 29. S/he subsequently turned 30, costing him/her 5 age points and dropping him/her below 70. Can s/he still remain in Japan?

Answer: A total of at least 70 points is required in order to qualify as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional. Once such a person is residing in Japan, however, it is not necessary that s/he constantly maintain a score of 70 points or more. Therefore, it is not the case that such a person would have his/her status as a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional immediately revoked upon turning 30. However, when the time comes to renew his/her period of stay, if his/her point total is below 70 points, it cannot be renewed.

Question 35: What are "databases of academic papers"?

Answer: "Databases of academic papers" are services by private-sector firms that collect and provide information on research papers published worldwide. In concrete terms, they include databases of academic papers provided by Thomson Reuters (headquartered in Canada) and Elsevier (headquartered in the Netherlands).

It will be confirmed whether papers used for points for "research performance" in the point calculation were published in academic journals registered with these databases.

Question 36: What kinds of qualifications are given points?

Answer: Of national licenses in Japan, those considered exclusive in practice and in name are eligible for points. These national licenses are not given simply for achieving a certain level of knowledge and skills on an examination. They differ from other qualifications in that they have legal standing. Without them, no one can carry out the work associated with them, and/or no one is permitted to call themselves by the associated titles. They include attorneys, physicians, certified public accountants, engineers, and certified measurers.

In addition, the information processing technology examination and license specified in the so-called IT Notice (formally, the Technology for the Ministerial Ordinance Setting Standards for the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act Article 7 Paragraph 1 No. 2 and Matters Related to Exceptions to Standards for the Status of Residence of Designated Activities [Ministry of Justice Notice No. 579 of 2001]) are eligible.

Question 37: What does "Ability to understand Japanese used in a wide variety of situations" mean?

Answer: This criterion refers to achievement relative to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test level N1. Therefore, those passing the Japanese Language Proficiency Test level N1, are obviously eligible, but those so are those who have passed tests requiring a similar level of Japanese proficiency. For example, those scoring 550 or higher on the BJT Business Japanese Proficiency Test are also eligible.

Question 38: Why do conditions for renewing the period of stay of a parent of a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional include "expected to provide at least three consecutive months of childcare" for the person's child under the age of three?

Answer: If the period for which childcare will be provided for a Highly Skilled Foreign Professional's child is less than three months, then that is a family visit with a status

of residence of "Temporary visitor." There is no need to permit the entry and stay as an incentive for Highly Skilled Foreign Professional.