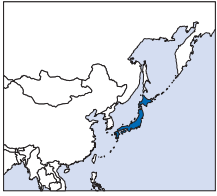


Japan



Permanent-type inflows of foreign nationals to Japan increased only slightly in 2006, to reach about 87 000, in relative terms one of the lowest immigration rates among OECD countries. The flows are about evenly split between labour, family and ancestry-based migrants (persons of Japanese ancestry from Latin America). About 10% of the flows concern changes in status among international students who stay on after the completion of their studies, almost 73% of whom are from China, and a further 11% from Korea. Most of these are specialists in the humanities and international services (interpreters and translators), but about 20% are engineers.

Temporary migrants are more frequent and stood at about 230 000 in 2006, a decline of some 50 000 compared to 2005, due largely to a decrease in the number of entertainers. Other major groups among temporary migrants include students (46 000) and trainees (93 000). The number of trainees has been increasing at the rate of about ten per year. In addition to temporary labour migrants, some 107 000 students and dependents of foreign workers obtained the right to work in part-time jobs in 2006.

The proportion of registered foreigners in the population stands at only about 1.6%. The most important origin groups are Koreans (28%), Chinese (27%) and Brazilians (15%). The working-age population (15-64) is currently declining at the rate of almost half a million persons per year and the vacancy-to-unemployment ratio is at its highest level since 1992. Despite this, there are as yet few if any signs of an increasing recourse to immigration to satisfy labour needs. However, there have been significant increases in the participation rate of residents in recent years, in part (but not entirely) attributable to cyclical factors.

The number of overstayers in Japan continued to decline and reached 171 000 in 2006, a 43% fall since 1993. This does not include persons who entered or landed illegally, however. Among persons deported for violations of the Immigration Control Act, those who entered or landed illegally were about

one-fourth of the number of overstayers. This suggests an unauthorised population of about 0.2% of the total population, among the lowest in OECD countries. The low percentage reflects the impact of favourable geography (no land borders), but also strict immigration controls and workplace enforcement.

Although Japan does not carry out large-scale regularisations, it is possible for foreign nationals to obtain a special permission to stay from the Minister of Justice for individual circumstances. These are decided on a case-by-case basis and numbered about 9 400 in 2006. They have been at or greater than the 10 000 level since 2003.

Recent policy initiatives include the extension of the right to stay from three to five years to researchers and data processing engineers in facilities or businesses located in special zones. In 2006 the Immigration Bureau created guidelines for granting the status of permanent residence in Japan, which included duration-of-stay criteria, a relaxation of the “contribution-to-Japanese society” criterion and the clarification of other general requirements.

Two changes in administrative procedures are noteworthy. The first relates to the establishment of a reporting system on the employment of foreigners. Because foreign workers have been subject to unstable employment, sometimes poor working conditions and the lack of social insurance coverage, employers who employ foreign workers have been required to report on the employment situation of their foreign workers since October 2007. This reporting system is one key element in a broader effort to ensure that the best use the skills of foreigners in Japan with work permission is being made.

The second key change concerns new entry procedures for foreign nationals. These have been in force since November 2007 and require most foreign nationals entering Japan to have an interview with immigration inspectors, in addition to taking fingerprints and photographs upon entry.

For further information...

www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/

Flow data on foreigners

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)			
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Inflows	1.7	2.7	2.9	2.5	2.1	2.8	325.6			
Outflows	1.6	1.7	2.3	1.7	1.5	2.0	218.8			
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type Permit based statistics (standardised)	Thousands		% distribution		<p>Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners</p>					
	2005	2006	2005	2006						
Work	20.6	28.6	22.4	29.8						
Family (incl. accompanying family)	26.9	30.1	29.2	31.3						
Humanitarian	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1						
Free movements	-	-	-	-						
Others	44.4	37.3	48.1	38.8						
Total	92.2	96.1								
Temporary migration	2000	2005	2006	Annual average						
				2000-2006						
<i>Thousands</i>										
International students	41.9	41.5	45.8	45.3						
Trainees	54.0	83.3	92.8	69.7						
Working holiday makers	3.4	4.7	6.1	4.6						
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..		
Intra-company transfers	3.9	4.2	5.6	3.9						
Other temporary workers	114.3	110.2	59.1	119.5						
Inflows of asylum seekers	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)			
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0			

Macroeconomic, demographic and labour market indicators

Macroeconomic indicators	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
Real GDP (growth, %)	2.0	2.9	1.9	2.2	1.0	1.7	
GDP/capita (growth, %) – level in US Dollars	1.7	2.7	1.9	2.2	0.8	1.6	27 695
Employment (growth, %) – level in thousands	0.1	-0.2	0.4	0.4	-	-0.1	63 821
Unemployment (% of labour force)	3.1	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.8	
Components of population growth	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	1.7	2.1	-0.3	-	2.1	0.9	
Natural increase	2.1	1.8	0.1	-	2.1	0.8	
Net migration	-0.4	0.3	-0.4	-	-	0.1	
Total population	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>(Annual growth %)</i>							
Native-born	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
National	0.4	0.1	-	-0.1	0.2	-	125 687
Foreign	0.6	8.4	1.9	3.6	4.4	3.2	2 083
Naturalisations	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>As a percentage of foreign population</i>							
	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.8	14 108

Notes and sources are at the beginning of the Chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/434233624053>