



## Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

### Welcome to the new JETs

Approximately 1,500 new JET Programme participants arrived in July and August, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 4,400. There are a total of 36 countries participating for the 2009-2010 JET Programme year.

### CLAIR Publications

The 2009-2010 General Information Handbook, which contains important information on working and living in Japan, was distributed to new JETs prior to their arrival in Japan. All new ALTs and SEAs also received Japanese for JETs (with CD), and all new CIRs received Japanese for CIRs (with CD) and the CIR Handbook.

During Tokyo Orientation, all new JETs receive the JET Journal, JET Diary, JET Calendar, Japanese Language Course Guide Book, Earthquake Emergency Procedures Handbook, the Resource Materials & Teaching Handbook, and the JET Accident Insurance Policy Guide (including the Declaration of Beneficiary). In addition, new SEAs receive the SEA Handbook.

All new JETs need to fill out the Declaration of Beneficiary form for JET Accident Insurance Policy and hand it to their Supervisor in their Contracting Organisation as soon as possible.

### CLAIR News

CLAIR News is a bimonthly publication sent to those involved in the JET Programme, namely JET Programme participants, Contracting Organisations, Host Prefectures / Designated Cities, the embassies of the participating countries, embassies and consulates of Japan overseas, and the three related ministries. CLAIR News provides necessary information about the JET Programme, and is available in English and Japanese.

Information about issues such as re-contracting, insurance, status of residence and the lump-sum pension refund are addressed in CLAIR News articles, as well as frequently asked questions posed by both JETs and Contracting Organisations. Therefore, we recommend that you keep past issues of CLAIR News for future reference. This edition has been distributed to new JET Programme participants during the Tokyo Orientation. In the interest of cutting costs and saving the environment, the next edition will be delivered to all new JETs by e-mail.

Previous editions of CLAIR News can be accessed through the JET Programme website ([www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)).

### Participant Contact Information

CLAIR annually updates address and contact information of all JET Programme participants. This information is vital for distribution of CLAIR publications, for organising JET conferences, and for the smooth management and administration of the JET Programme as a whole. Data forms for re-contracting

JETs have been sent to the Host Prefectures and will be forwarded to JETs via their Contracting Organisations.

New JETs will need to complete the form that is now combined with the Japanese Language Course Application Form. The forms are found in the Japanese Language Course guidebooks that were distributed to each individual JET at Tokyo Orientation. Please be sure to hand your completed form to the supervisor of your Contracting Organisation even if you are not applying to the Japanese Language Course. Your Contracting Organisation will then send the completed form to the Host Prefecture who will then forward it to CLAIR.

Please make sure these forms are completed accurately and submitted before the deadline.

### Japanese Language Courses

#### 1) Translation & Interpretation and Linguistics & Pedagogy Courses

Successful applicants for the 2009-2010 JET Programme Translation & Interpretation Course and Linguistics & Pedagogy Course were finalised at the end of July. CLAIR will send a list of unsuccessful / successful applicants to Host Prefectures, who will notify individual applicants via Contracting Organisation supervisors. As results of the qualifying exam are private, we cannot give them out over the phone, so please do not contact CLAIR directly to enquire about your results. If you have not received information regarding your application, please ask your Supervisor at your Contracting Organisation. Both courses will begin in September. The first set of course materials will be delivered at the beginning of August.

#### 2) Beginning/Intermediate/Advanced Courses

##### **For re-contracting JETs:**

Depending on the number of applicants, those JETs who did not complete last year's Beginners, Intermediate, or Advanced Course may not be able to enroll in these courses for a second time. The Beginners / Intermediate / Advanced Courses will begin in November.

##### **For new JETs:**

The Japanese Language Course Application Form is combined with the JET Programme Participant Contact Information & Confirmation Form, which is included in the "2009-2010 JET Programme Participant Contact Information Form and Japanese Language Course Guide". All new JET participants are required to fill out this form and submit it to their supervisors at their Contracting Organisations by the date indicated on the front cover, regardless of whether or not they are applying for one of the Japanese language courses. Please understand that if you do not submit this form, we cannot register your address information.

For JETs who are not sure what level they should enroll in, a level-check test is available on the JET Programme website, in the "Current JETs" section ([www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)). In addition, discuss thoroughly with your supervisor the level that would be best for you, so as to ensure that the course you enrol in is not too easy or too difficult.

## Registering at Your Embassy

All JET Programme participants are strongly advised to register with their home country's embassy or a local consulate while living in Japan. In the event of an emergency in Japan or in your home country, your embassy may be able to help you and/or your relatives obtain necessary information and check on each others' personal safety. Embassy and consulate telephone numbers are listed in the JET Diary, JET Calendar and General Information Handbook.

## Pension and Insurance

All JET Programme participants are required by law to enroll in National Health Insurance, Pension Insurance and Employment Insurance plans. The monthly premiums for these plans are paid by the JET participant and the Contracting Organisation in percentages determined by Japanese law.

While National Health Insurance helps cover part of the cost of medical treatment incurred, it is not applicable to every kind of illness or treatment and does not cover checkups. Please check with hospitals and medical institutions to see if National Health Insurance is acceptable before you go for treatment. If health insurance can be used it generally covers 70% of treatment costs, and you will be responsible for the remaining 30%. Please also refer to the JET Accident Insurance Policy article in this newsletter for additional information about what treatment costs must be borne by the JET participant. Dependents covered by health insurance will be responsible for 30% of treatment costs (20% for children 3 years of age and under), but please note that dependents must be recognised and approved before benefits can be granted. If you have any questions about National Health Insurance, please direct them to health insurance unions or your local Social Insurance Office.

Pension Insurance allows for payment of benefits to JET participants and/or their dependent family members in cases where a JET participant dies or suffers from a disability during their period of employment on the JET Programme. Please direct any queries about Pension Insurance to your local Social Insurance Office.

Employment Insurance allows for payment of unemployment benefits if, after completing their JET contract, JET participants find themselves unemployed in Japan. Please direct any queries to your local Public Employment Security Office.

For further details regarding the insurance plans mentioned above, please refer to the General Information Handbook (pages 54-63), or consult your local Social Insurance Office. New JET participants should be receiving their health insurance cards in early August, so please make sure to take it with you when you visit the hospital. All JET participants aged 40 years and above are required to additionally enroll in Long-Term Care Insurance. Please consult with your Contracting Organisation supervisor for further information.

## JET Accident Insurance Policy

All JET participants are covered by the JET Accident Insurance Policy which is paid for by their Contracting Organisation. The JET Accident Insurance covers expenses for medical treatment of illness or injury sustained in an accident that has occurred during the period of coverage. The policy covers the 30% of the amount for medical treatment in Japan that is not covered by Social Insurance, minus a mandatory 5,000 yen deductible. For further details regarding the insurance policy, please refer to the JET Accident Insurance Policy Guide (blue pamphlet) that was distributed at the Tokyo Orientation for new JET participants and sent to workplaces in June for re-contracting JET participants. The

Policy Guide cannot be sent again, so please make sure that it is not misplaced. Important information on the JET Accident Insurance Policy is also available on the JET Programme website ([www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)) under "current JETs".

New JET participants are asked to hand in the "Declaration of Beneficiary" form, included within the Policy Guide, to the Contracting Organisation supervisor as soon as possible. (Re-contracting JET participants need not worry about this form, unless they wish to make a change of beneficiary.)

## The JET Counselling System

The JET Programme Counselling System provides support for JET participants in various ways.

### **1) Contracting Organisation**

The Contracting Organisation is the nearest and most direct means of support available to JET participants. If you find yourself in an unpleasant situation and your efforts to solve the problem(s) have been unsuccessful, please consult your supervisor or a colleague.

### **2) Prefectural Advisors (PA)**

If the problem is not resolved at the Contracting Organisation level, try contacting a Prefectural Advisor (PA). Each Host Prefecture and Designated City has Prefectural Advisors (Japanese and non-Japanese) who receive counselling training and can act as a mediator between Contracting Organisations and JET Programme participants. Please contact the International Exchange (Affairs) section of your Host Prefecture/Designated City to find out how to contact PAs in your area. For a more detailed description of the PA duties, please refer to pages 191-193 of the 2009-2010 General Information Handbook.

### **3) CLAIR**

If JET Programme participants would like to talk with a third party outside of their prefecture, CLAIR Programme Coordinators (PCs) are former JETs available to take calls between 09:00 and 18:00, Monday through Friday. Your conversation with CLAIR staff will be kept confidential and callers can remain anonymous. CLAIR is a neutral body whose role is to advise and help both JET participants and Contracting Organisations. Programme Coordinators are available to take calls in both English and Japanese. The JETLINE number is 03-5213-1729. This line is always answered in English by Programme Coordinators. CLAIR staff can usually speak about any subject large or small, JET-related or not, and can refer you to other sources for additional assistance.

### **4) Self-support Group Leaders**

The Self-support Group Leader (SGL) system was established with the aim of accommodating phone consultations and counselling for non-English speaking JET participants. The target languages are Chinese, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. JET participants who speak one of the above languages are able to consult with the appropriate SGL in their native language. SGLs are requested to attend counselling training seminars hosted by CLAIR. Information about the current SGLs can be found in this year's June edition of CLAIR News, available on the JET Programme website.

### **5) Mental Health Specialists**

Please get in contact with your PA, an SGL, or call the JETLINE (03-5213-1729) if you would like to have the contact details of a mental health specialist.

### **6) Emergencies**

Please ask for phone numbers where your supervisor can be reached on evenings and weekends. In the event of an emergency, please call your supervisor as soon as possible. Your supervisor will then contact the Prefectural Advisor(s), who will call CLAIR and other relevant agencies. It is also very important that you provided your own contact details to your supervisor so that they are able to contact you in case of an emergency. CLAIR

recommends that you also register with your embassy.

### 7) Other Resources

AJET Peer Support Group (PSG) Telephone Line, at 050-5534-5566, operates daily from 20:00 to 07:00. The PSG is available for information, medical referrals, or if you just want to talk. Also, the Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL) offers telephone counselling and general information, as well as information on other support groups. TELL phone counsellors can be reached daily at 03-3498-0261, from 09:00 to 23:00.

There are many counselling services available to JETs. Please feel free to contact PSG, a Programme Coordinator at CLAIR or the Prefectural Advisor(s) in your prefecture for more information.

## AJET Peer Support Group

The AJET Peer Support Group (PSG) is an anonymous and confidential listening service provided for JETs by fellow JETs. For the 2009-2010 year, the National Coordinator is Emily Collins, a fourth year ALT in Kagoshima. The Volunteer Coordinator is Ido Gabay, a third year ALT from Sapporo City.

Whether you have had a bad day, need a doctor at 02:00, or just want to speak English with someone, give PSG a call on 050-5534-5566 between 20:00 and 07:00.

## JET Forum and Homepage

The JET Forum is a discussion board that can be accessed through the JET Programme website ([www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)). It is a monitored forum where users can actively voice their opinions and thoughts about the JET Programme. We invite current JET Programme participants, JET alumni and prospective JETs to become actively involved in this forum. Although anyone can read the forums freely, you must create a user account in order to write posts.

The JET Programme homepage itself also contains a wealth of news, information, resources, and downloadable conference materials, so please check it frequently.

## CLAIR International Affiliation Support

CLAIR supports Japanese and overseas local authorities with international affiliation exchange (sister city exchange, etc.). It provides information about how to set up an international affiliation agreement to domestic and foreign local authorities that are currently seeking an international affiliation partner supplies related information materials, and gives advice regarding international affiliation exchange in general.

For more detailed information, please refer to the "Local Government International Affiliation Exchange" section of CLAIR's website ([www.clair.or.jp/e/simai/index.html](http://www.clair.or.jp/e/simai/index.html)).

In addition, please feel free to contact CLAIR's Exchange Division directly (TEL: 03-5213-1723; FAX: 03-5213-1742; e-mail: [shimai@clair.or.jp](mailto:shimai@clair.or.jp)).

## SEA and CIR / Non-English ALT Mid-Year Conference

The CIR Mid-Year Conference will be held at the Tokyo Bay Makuhari in Chiba from Monday, November 9 to Wednesday, November 11. The SEA Mid-Year Conference will also be held in November at the Japan Institute of Sports Sciences (JISS) in Tokyo. Detailed information will be sent to all CIRs and SEAs and their Contracting Organisations at a later date. In order to ensure a productive conference, we welcome suggestions for content or speakers from both JETs and their supervisors. Please e-mail any ideas to the CLAIR staff.

CIR: Yasuaki Hayashi ([y-hayashi@clair.or.jp](mailto:y-hayashi@clair.or.jp)),  
Sacha Batrick ([s-batrick@clair.or.jp](mailto:s-batrick@clair.or.jp))

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Also, MEXT is planning to host a conference for ALTs from non-English speaking countries (ALTs who teach a language other than English) at the same time and venue of the CIR Mid-year Conference. Detailed information will be given at a later date.

## TOA T-Shirt Design Contest

CLAIR would like to thank everyone who sent in submissions for the Tokyo Orientation Assistant (TOA) T-shirt Design Contest.

We would like to congratulate Ms. Katlin Mulligan, an ALT in Saitama Prefecture who completed her tenure on the JET Programme this summer. Her design was chosen from an excellent pool of submissions, and it was featured on the T-shirts worn by the TOAs as they welcomed the new JETs to Japan at Narita Airport.

## Local Inhabitants' Tax

Recently, CLAIR has had an increasing number of enquiries from JETs who are confused about the procedure for paying Local Inhabitants' Tax.

**JETs** – if you are receiving more than 300,000 yen each month in your pay cheque, please ask your supervisor about this extra amount, as it may be related. This is particularly important for those JETs who are not exempt from Japanese income tax (i.e.: all CIRs and all SEAs; all ALTs who have been on the Programme more than two years (more than three years for Chinese ALTs); and, all first and second year ALTs from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Singapore, Turkey, Jamaica, Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, Slovenia, Barbados and Kenya.)

**Supervisors** – if the Contracting Organisation is adjusting the JET's salary in order for the JET to pay Local Inhabitants' Tax, please make sure to tell the JET well in advance that they need to pay the tax in June.

The tax situation for JETs varies according to job type, nationality and other factors. There is detailed information about this on pages 63-77 of the 2008-2009 General Information Handbook and on pages 137-141 of the Contracting Organisation Manual. Please carefully check this information.

## US - Japan Tax Treaty

In accordance with the US-Japan Tax Treaty, ALTs participating on the JET Programme from the United States will need to obtain a United States Residency Certificate (Form 6166) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to apply for exemption from Japanese income taxes. Certification is required for the year prior to the JET's arrival in Japan (i.e. JETs who have just arrived in Japan need to receive certification for 2008).

In order to obtain this certification, please download the application form (Form 8802) from the IRS homepage, fill out the necessary items and send it to the IRS by regular mail. The pertinent address can be found in the instructions for the request form. The IRS charges a \$US35 fee to process each copy of Form 8802. ALTs from the US are responsible for bearing this fee, which can be paid by cheque, money order, or electronically via the IRS homepage. Incorrectly filling out the application form may cause an applicant to have to pay this fee more than once, so please take care when filling out Form 8802.

A more detailed explanation and links to the necessary forms and instructions can be found on the JET Programme website ([www.jetprogramme.org/e/current/tax/tax\\_exempt\\_us.html](http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/current/tax/tax_exempt_us.html)).

Form 6166 only needs to be presented once during a participant's time in Japan. However, CLAIR recommends that JETs keep a copy of both forms for their records. If you have any

other questions about applying for the Japanese income tax exemption, please have your JET Programme supervisor contact your local Japanese tax office.

## Harassment

During your JET Programme tenure, you will receive a lot of attention from the people around you, especially at the beginning of your stay. Some of this attention will be welcome, and some may not be. When people cross the bounds of what you consider to be your private space, it can be quite an uncomfortable experience, especially when this may be considered to be harassment.

In the 2009-2010 General Information Handbook (pages 168-169 and pages 260-261) there is information on what JETs can do about sexual harassment. Information on what supervisors need to be aware of regarding such matters is also written in the Contracting Organisation Manual which is sent out to Contracting Organisations. Take precautions and be aware of those around you. Also, please be aware that most sexual harassment occurs at *enkai* (office parties), where alcohol is being consumed.

If you feel in danger of sexual harassment, show your displeasure, ask the person to stop, move away or enlist the aid of others. Speak to your supervisor, colleagues or Prefectural Advisor, explain what happened, clarify what you want to keep confidential and discuss constructive actions that will resolve or improve the situation.

## AJET-JET Effect

JETs are in a unique position to impact their communities and become envoys of grassroots internationalization. Each month, AJET's JET Effect spotlights a JET who has gone above and beyond their work duties to contribute something to their community. For more information, or to see who is featured this month, visit the AJET homepage at: [http://ajet.net/modules/articles/index.php?cat\\_id=53](http://ajet.net/modules/articles/index.php?cat_id=53)

## SGL Correction

In the June edition of CLAIR News, we announced the new SGLs for 2009-2010. We apologise for a mistake made regarding the host prefecture/designated city for Jeong Gyu Sim. "Niigata Prefecture" should have been "Niigata City".

## Q&A - JET

### Question:

I heard from a JET in another Contracting Organisation that they are not required to pay rent for their apartment and have even been provided furniture and appliances for free. There are also JETs who receive more days of paid leave than I do. Can I ask my Contracting Organisation for the same conditions as these JETs?

### Answer:

As written on pages 136-141 of the 2009-2010 General Information Handbook, the purchase of appliances and furnishings is not the responsibility of the Contracting Organisation. A JET's remuneration is calculated to be sufficient for living comfortably in Japan. This includes the purchase of essential appliances and the payment of rent.

Some Contracting Organisations provide their JETs with furnishings for their apartments, but the money for this exceeds the amount that they are allotted to host a JET. Other Contracting Organisations do not have the budget for these extras even if they would like to provide them.

Although there is no extra "JET fund" from which Contracting Organisations can draw, JETs should feel welcome to consult their Supervisor regarding their living arrangements in Japan.

CLAIR guidelines do not indicate how many days of paid leave

JETs should receive per year. The Labour Standards Law states that employees should receive at least 10 days in a year. Some Contracting Organisations raise that number to grant JETs the same amount of paid leave allotted to Japanese staff, while others do not. Please be aware that working conditions, regulations and budgets vary and that this will unavoidably result in differences in JET contracts and conditions.

## Q&A - Contracting Organisation

### Question:

A new JET arrived in our town in July/August. Is there anything in particular that we should keep in mind during the initial period following his/her arrival?

### Answer:

CLAIR recommends that new JETs be given assistance in gaining information and goods necessary to adapt smoothly into their new surroundings. These may include: a map of the town including workplace, supermarket, train station, bus stop, police station, etc.; supervisor's contact information; and a work schedule for the month ahead.

Please be aware that many JETs will experience culture shock. Try to be sensitive to cultural differences and help them adjust to Japanese culture. Though it is important that the JET does not feel isolated and lonely, it is also important to respect their right to privacy and to give them some time to be alone. Please take the time to communicate clearly and fully answer any questions the JET may have to help alleviate any of their anxieties.

Please also refer to the Contracting Organisation Manual (*Keiyaku Dantai Manyuaru*) for procedural and technical matters.



### CLAIR News

CLAIR News is published bi-monthly by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations.

It provides information and updates about the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme to current programme participants, Host Prefectures, and Contracting Organisations.

Participants receive either the English-language version or the Japanese-language version, based on their native language or requests.

E-mail and address changes, as well as requests to receive CLAIR News by e-mail should be sent to CLAIR at:

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