



International Conference on Science and Technology for Sustainability 2025
“Strengthening research capability and promoting international talent mobility and circulation: a focus on early career researchers who will lead the academia of the future”

Benefits and Challenges of Cross-Border Careers: Perspectives from an Early-Career Researcher

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PhD in Kyoto, Postdoc in Boston, PI in Okinawa

- **Ph.D. in Agriculture**, Kyoto University, ~2020
- **Postdoctoral Researcher**, Boston University
 - JSPS CPD Fellow; dual appointment with Hokkaido University
- **Tenure-Track Assistant Professor**, OIST, 2025~



How did my oversea experience help my career development?

- **Intellectual Synergy**
 - Naturally unique and complementary ideas
- **Top-Level Publications**
 - High research standards
 - Open discussion through strong collaborations
- **Postdoc Training**
 - Mentoring and DEI contribution opportunities
 - Career support programs
- **Role Models**
 - Supportive environment for researchers with children



ECOLOGY
LETTERS

PNAS

nature
ecology & evolution

ScienceAdvances
MAAS

nature
COMMUNICATIONS

Global
Change
Biology

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BU Postdoc Professional Development Events



From Boston University's website

What brought me to do research abroad?

- **Fellowship Support**
- Encouragement from My Mentors in Japan
- Other Family-Related Factors...

5-year
fellowship!



JSPS

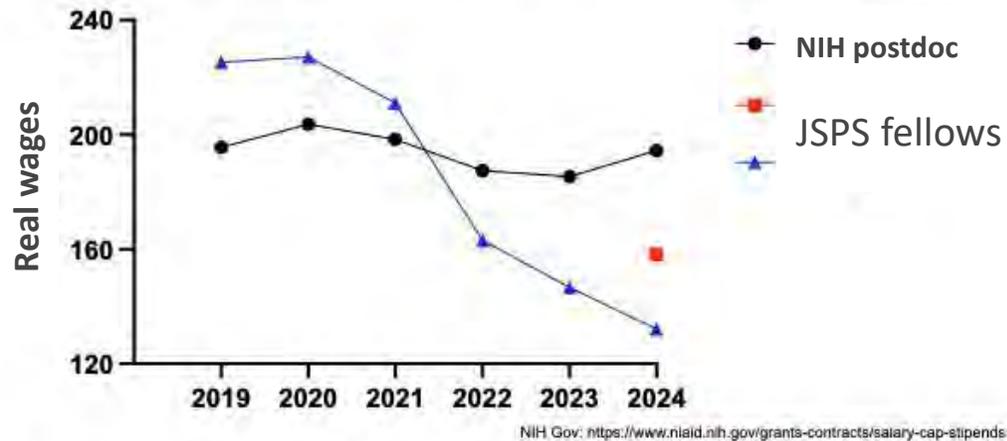
Research Fellowships for Young Scientists

特別研究員-CPD 制度

Note:

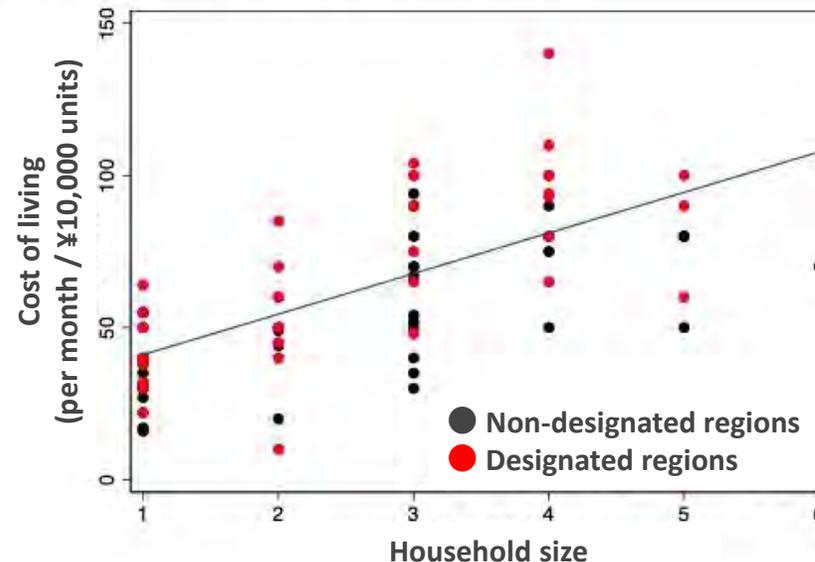
The current fellowship support is not enough for many overseas researchers, especially those with children

Real wages
(nominal wages / consumer price index)



In 2024, the real wages of JSPS fellows fall **20% / 35%** below the NIH postdoctoral pay scale.

Cost of living for overseas researchers and family composition



Each additional household member increases costs by **~¥150,000/month** (linear trend).

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Had to decline a stable job offer in an uncertain academic job market

Overwhelmed by having to restart so many things



How was I able to come back to Japan?

- **OIST's Job Opportunity**

- Tenure-track PI position
- PhD program
- Strong research support (Staff, Core facilities, RUA, etc.)

Even compared to the job offers in the US

- **OIST's Recruitment System**

- Evaluation based on global standards and diverse perspectives
- Simplified application processes
- Interview accommodations based on individual needs
- Room for negotiation



What I found unique and disadvantageous for the early-career researchers in Japan

- **Excessive Administrative Work**
- **Less Flexible Work Environment**
 - Limited remote-work options
 - Uniform accommodation
 - Long, late, and holiday-time meetings
 - Limited mutual understanding
- **Limited Parental Support**
 - Support systems that are difficult to access
 - Limited spousal-hire options
 - Critical effects of parental leave on the evaluation



Summary: Major Challenges & Potential Support

- **Leaving Japan**
 - Sufficient and long-term fellowship support
 - More equivalent training systems between Japan and other countries
 - Better safety nets that allow early-career researchers to take challenging paths
- **Coming Back to Japan**
 - Appealing job opportunities, compatible evaluation systems, and an accessible job market
- **Balancing Research with Life Events**
 - More flexible work environments, truly effective life support, and a supportive workplace culture



Thank you!

