



Photos from left: Alex Maciulaitis, the JET Program Coordinator; JET Information Forum with UTSA students

UTSA's East Asia Institute hosts a JET Program Information Forum

On September 23, 2010 the East Asia Institute welcomed the JET Program Coordinator Mr. Alex Maciulaitis and Consul Atsushi Yonezawa from the Consulate General of Japan at Houston. Mr. Maciulaitis gave an informative presentation outlining the JET Program to a group of 50 students at UTSA.

JET Program stands for Japan Exchange and Teaching Program. This 23-year-old program gives native speakers of English the opportunity to teach the English language and their country's customs and culture in Japan while learning about Japan and its society. The program's goal is to promote international exchange at a local level. The JET Program offers two types of positions: Assistant Language Teachers (also known as ALTs) and Coordinators for International Relations (also known as CIRs).

Most JETs work as ALTs. An ALT is usually placed at a specific school or will



visit many schools by working from a board of education. ALTs do not need to be fluent in Japanese since they will be assisting the Japanese teacher of English. They may have to design lessons and activities or grade exams. They may also be asked to help with foreign language clubs, school festivals, or speech contests. They could even be asked to teach adult or community English classes. ALTs' mission is to motivate their students to study English and other countries.

According to Mr. Maciulaitis, only about 10% of JETs are CIRs. CIRs work in prefectural or municipal offices and are required to speak Japanese fluently to do their work. They have many duties, including translating documents, interpreting for overseas visitors or local officials, giving presentations, and coordinating sister-city relations. However, similar to ALTs, CIRs still teach. They might teach English in schools or they might provide language instruction for employees and residents.

Candidates that are interested in applying must be adaptable, have an outgoing personality, a sense of humor, creativity, patience, humility, initiative, a desire to teach, and a desire to learn about Japan. Understanding Japanese would be helpful, but is not required unless it is for a CIR position. Having a teaching certificate also looks good, but is not mandatory.

“The JET Program is a job,” said Mr. Maciulaitis. “It is a one-year contract and can be renewed up to four times.” Qualified candidates will be employed by a contracting organization/ school- not the JET Program. The JET program only manages and facilitates in the hiring process. The annual salary of JETs is approximately 3,600,000 yen (\$42,000) a year. JETs are covered by health, accident, pension, and employment insurance. Their flights to and from Japan (upon fulfillment of their contract) are also remunerated for them. Generally, JETs work 35 hours a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, Monday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday are usually holidays. JETs get at least 10 days of paid holidays and 15 days of paid national holidays per year.

To be eligible for either position candidates must possess the following qualifications:

- Have a strong interest in Japan and Japanese Culture
- Have at least a bachelor’s degree by July 1 in the year before being dispatched to Japan
- Have excellent verbal and written English ability
- Be healthy physically and mentally
- Be a U.S citizen (Non U.S. citizens must apply through their home nation’s Japanese embassy)
- Be under 40 years of age
- Not have lived in Japan for more than 6 of the past 10 years
- Not have participated in the JET program in the last 3 years
- And not have declined a position in the program in the last year

For more information please see the official JET Program website at <http://jetprogramme.org/> or visit the homepage for the Japanese Embassy to the United States at <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jet/index.html>



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