As stated on the JET program official website, “JET participants who arrive in Japan from 2012 will receive approximately 3.36 million yen in their first year of appointment”. The JET salary operates on a sliding scale, with annual earnings increasing by a set amount each year that one re-contracts. 2nd year JETs will receive ~3.6 million yen, 3rd years ~3.9 million yen, and 4th/5th years ~3.96 million yen.

The Monthly Breakdown

Let’s have a look at what a typical Kumamoto JET salary looks like each month. When we divide 3.36 million by 12, our monthly paycheck starts off at ¥280,000. This is the base amount before certain deductions and payments are taken into consideration. Your Board of Education pays a part of your rent each month, so they will likely deduct the remaining balance from your paycheck. Next on the deductions list are National Health Insurance and Pension payments. Lastly, if you are not from a country with a prior tax agreement with Japan, you may have to pay income taxes. Below is an example pay slip based on my own 1st year paychecks. Keep in mind that rent and other categories vary between JETs in different placements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Salary (報酬)</th>
<th>¥280,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent (家賃)</td>
<td>-28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance (健康)</td>
<td>-14,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Insurance (雇用)</td>
<td>-1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Welfare/Pension (厚生年金)</td>
<td>-24,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Tax (所得税)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Salary Payable</strong></td>
<td><strong>¥212,010</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Monthly Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense (¥)</th>
<th>Balance (¥)</th>
<th>Comment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>239,000</td>
<td>(Rounded down) After pension and insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rent &amp; Utility Bills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>-30,000</td>
<td>209,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>-8,000</td>
<td>201,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>-6,000</td>
<td>195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity &amp; Gas</td>
<td>-6,000</td>
<td>189,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>-2,000</td>
<td>187,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td>167,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School lunch</td>
<td>-5,000</td>
<td>162,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure allowance</td>
<td>-30,000</td>
<td>132,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td>112,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>-42,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation fund</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remainder</strong></td>
<td><strong>¥50,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, there you have it! If you create a budget and stick to it you can live quite comfortably and still have upwards of 50,000 yen extra each month. This money can be used to pay student loans, travel outside of Japan or bolster your savings. If you plan to own a vehicle, subtract another 15,000 yen for insurance and gas. Be aware that there can be unforeseen costs, so it’s always a good idea to have some backup cash available. Don’t live paycheck to paycheck!
BANKING & BILLS

In most cases, your contracting organization will utilize a specific bank in order to pay your salary by direct deposit. Higo Bank is commonly used for this purpose along with some other banks. Your supervisor should help you set up an account with a bank a few days after arriving at your placement. When you create an account, you will receive a **bank book** to keep track of your balance and a **cash card** to withdraw/deposit money.

Regardless of which bank you start off with, it is also a good idea to open a bank account with the Japan post office. It is one of the most convenient and useful places to have an account because you can access your money at any post office throughout Japan without ATM fees, unlike many other banks, which are often regional and charge withdrawal fees on weekends or at night. JP Bank also provides other essential services such as *furikomi* money transfers or *kokusai soukin* for remitting money home.

**About Those Bills**

When it comes to monthly utility bills and whatnot there are generally two ways to pay. The first is automatic withdrawal from your bank account. For this you must fill out some paperwork which usually requires your bank account number, bank branch, and possibly your *inkan* (name stamp). Note that the inkan must be the same one you used to open your bank account, or the bank will likely deny the request because the stamps don’t match. The second option for bills is to simply pay them manually each month. Various bills will be sent to you via mail, which you will be responsible for paying before the written deadline. Most of these can be easily paid for at any given convenience store. I find the automatic withdrawal method to be the most hassle-free way of dealing with bills, as long as you remember to have an appropriate amount of money in your account each month for payments.

CREDIT CARDS

While it is true that Japan is still mainly a cash society, there are some places where you can make purchases via card. This probably isn’t the case in small local stores or restaurants, but most large department store chains accept credit card payment. Please remember that you cannot use your regular cash card like a debit/credit card. If you will be doing some online shopping with Japanese Yahoo, Amazon, etc. or you would just like to be able to buy something at the store in one easy swipe, you may want to consider getting a Japanese credit card.

There is a wide range of credit cards that you can apply for in Japan. I would recommend trying to get a card from one of the big shopping mall chains like YouMe or Aeon. They are abundant in the Kumamoto area, and you can acquire points whenever you shop at one of the affiliated stores. Other options for credit cards include convenience store cards, Tsutaya T+ card, Rakuten card, airline cards, and even a JP post credit card. You will have to fill out an application and wait about a month to see if you are approved. It may be easier to get approved for a credit card once you have lived in Japan for a few months and have a proven steady income.

SENDING MONEY HOME

Many JETs end up sending money to accounts in their home country in order to pay off student loans, take care of bills, or build up savings. There are several methods one may use to complete a remittance transaction. Some of the more commonly used services for sending money include GoRemit, SBI Remit, or the Japan Post *Kokusai Soukin Seikyusho*. I personally use **SBI Remit** which I have found to have the cheapest fees overall. Each month I send about ¥100,000 home and lose roughly ¥2000 to fees. The total amount I receive in dollars is also reduced because of the current exchange rate, but that is another unfortunate issue in itself.

Due to the limited amount of space available I regrettably cannot go into great detail about some of these topics. I urge you to check the orientation materials uploaded on the KumaJET website at kumamotojet.com for links to more comprehensive guides and information regarding important financial matters in Japan. Good luck!
Most bank ATMs are open from 8 am to 7 pm, often with reduced hours on the weekends.

ATMs are closed on national holidays and sometimes even on Sundays. If you know that a long stretch of holidays is coming up, you should withdraw enough cash beforehand.

Some ATMs will charge you a small fee for withdrawals/deposits during certain windows of time.

Important notes

- Most bank ATMs are open from 8 am to 7 pm, often with reduced hours on the weekends.
- ATMs are closed on national holidays and sometimes even on Sundays. If you know that a long stretch of holidays is coming up, you should withdraw enough cash beforehand.
- Some ATMs will charge you a small fee for withdrawals/deposits during certain windows of time.

Words and vocabulary to know

お引出し (Ohikidashi) - Withdrawal
お預入れ (Oazukeire) – Deposit
残高照会 (Zandaka-Shoukai) - Balance Inquiry
お振込み (Ofurikomi) - Money Transfer
通帳記入 (Tsuchoukinyuu) - Bankbook Update

現代 (Genkin) - Cash
送金 (Soukin) - Remittance
口座 (Kouza) - Bank Account
暗証番号 (Anshou bangou) - PIN
通帳 (Tsuuchou) – Bankbook

円 - Yen
千 (Sen) - Thousand
万 (Man) – Ten thousand

* 3 千円 = 3,000 yen
* 3 万円 = 30,000 yen

For Deposit

1. Press お預入れ
2. Insert bank card
3. Input amount to be deposited
4. Insert cash into ATM slot

Examples of a typical ATM interface and screen
For Withdrawals

1. Menu Selection
Welcome. Please press "お引出し".

2. Insert bank card
Please insert your bank card.

3. Input your PIN
Please input your "Personal Identification Number (PIN)".

4. Input the amount of money to be withdrawn
Please press "確認" after entering the amount to be withdrawn.

5. Choose which to issue a transaction receipt
If a transaction receipt is required, please press "発行する".
If a transaction receipt is not required, please press "発行しない".

6. Remove your money and card
Please remove your money, bank card (and transaction receipt).

For Updating Your Bank Book

1. Menu Selection
Welcome. Please press "明細記入".

2. Insert bank book
Please open and insert your bank book.

3. Remove your bank book
Please remove your bank book.

For Inquiring about Your Account Balance

1. Menu Selection
Welcome. Please press "残高査読".

2. Insert bank card
Please insert your bank card.

3. Input your PIN
Please input your "Personal Identification Number (PIN)".

4. Balance inquiry
Balance will be displayed. Please press "終了".

If you make a mistake.

- to correct what you have entered.
- to start over.

You are reminded that description may sometimes vary on the display screen according to the ATM.
You can withdraw cash using your international brand credit, debit, prepaid and cash cards nationwide at ATMs of Japan Post Bank and Seven Eleven Bank. Citibank ATMs are also in service but the number of ATMs is very limited with most located in major international airports and in their branch offices. Please note that no other Japanese banks currently accept international transactions. To find ATMs near your destination, Visa provides an ATM locator on their website which you can use to locate ATMs by your nearest subway/train station.

### Japan Post Bank ATMs

Japan Post Bank has about 26,400 ATMs nationwide. Most of them are located within the Post Offices but some of them are located at train stations and super markets. As long as your card has a PIN number for verification, you can use it with a JP ATM. Service hours differ by ATM. The service is available in English.

### Seven Bank ATMs

Currently, Seven Eleven Bank’s nationwide network of more than 21,000 ATMs offers screens, receipts and voice guidance in four languages when using cards issued overseas.
Use a Bank

You can transfer money to a Japanese bank account from a bank account elsewhere in the world, as long as your bank abroad is able to transfer money to a bank account in Japan (some can't, so you'll want to check).

  a) The fees associated with doing so will depend on your bank abroad, so it’s important to ask beforehand.

  b) The amount received into your Japanese bank account will depend on the exchange rate, since the currency rate frequently changes. Your Japanese bank might charge to receive the money.

  c) The length of time it takes for the money to arrive will also depend on your bank.

You will need the details of your Japanese bank account such as bank name, branch name/number, account number, etc. If you have online banking you may be able to complete the process online, but if not you may have to call your bank in person.

Withdraw from your overseas account

If you have a bank account still open in your home country and there is money in it, you can use your debit or cash card to access this money from Japan. It is possible to withdraw from either Japan Post Bank ATMs or Seven Eleven ATMs.

This may not be the most cost effective method, as banks will often charge fees for international transactions. Be sure to check the policies of your bank before you withdraw. If you are part of a credit union, it is likely they do not charge high fees or any fees for international transactions. Contact your bank and let them know you will be living in Japan so they do not freeze your card when you try to use it.

Use PayPal

If you create a Japanese account you can transfer funds between your foreign Paypal and Japanese Paypal

  1. You'll need to connect your Japanese PayPal account to your bank account in Japan in order to transfer funds from PayPal to the bank.

  2. Log in to your foreign account.

  3. Enter the email address used for your Japanese account, as well as the amount.

  4. Check the details of the transaction, and if everything is OK, press send.

Of course, there are some conditions:

  a) There will be a fee if you're sending money internationally. The sender usually decides if they or the receiver pays this fee. In general, the fees depend both on where your account is registered, and where you’re sending money. Furthermore, there is a currency conversion fee for PayPal too.

  b) If you haven’t verified your PayPal account, the most you can send is USD$2000. However, this limit is lifted if you verify your account.
Use Japan Post Bank (ゆうちょ銀行)

Japan Post is a well-known (and seemingly quite affordable) way to transfer money out of Japan. To use this service, you have two options:

1) A paper money order (住所あて送金, じゅうしょあてそうきん, juusho ate soukin). This means the funds (in your target currency) will be sent in an envelope to either a bank or address. This is neither fast nor secure.

2) An electronic transfer (口座あて送金, こうざあてそうきん, kouza ate soukin), in which case the money is transferred direct to an overseas bank account (in your target currency.) This can be done with cash or via your Japan Post Bank account, if you have one.

To do so costs 2500 yen in most cases. Sending money to a US bank account costs just 2000 yen, excluding receiving fees. What's more, the exchange rates are meant to be very competitive.

To transfer money from the post office, you'll need your Residence Card or passport and you will need to fill out the appropriate form (the forms have English on them). You can tell the staff which type of transfer you want to do.

Use GoRemit

You can open an account with GoRemit, a service specializing in expat remittance.

You must send in an application by mail, and wait about a week to receive your account details. Each time you would like to send money home, you do a furikomi transfer from an ATM to your GoRemit account. Once GoRemit receives the money it wires it to the account that you registered for remittances.

Sending money with GoRemit costs 2000 yen, not including the transfer fee from your Japanese bank account to your GoRemit account. On the other hand, most banks charge a Y2500-3000 fee to receive the funds, so the total for using GoRemit could be more.

In addition, unlike the post office, if you send before 3pm, the money is meant to be remitted same day. That's a major plus over other methods.

Use SBI Remit

SBI Remit is web-based, which is an advantage. However, funds are not transferred to a bank account, but a physical location, via Moneygram. Someone (such as parents or a relative) must receive the money at a pick-up point, and then deposit it into your bank account for you.

You must first sign up online for an account with SBI and input the details of who and where you will send money to. They will send you an instruction packet via mail, as well as a remittance card that can be used at JP bank ATMs to send money.

The basic fees add up to about 1800 yen total. There is a remittance limit of 100,000 yen per transaction.

Your Bank Account in Japan

Lastly, it's possible to transfer money overseas from many banks in Japan, although the specifics and costs of each varies. Some banks may require you to sign up for overseas remittance as a separate service. Also, some may only be able to remit to certain countries.

Fees will depend on the bank, although it will likely be more expensive than some of the other options mentioned above (3500 yen and up seems to be common). Unless you use a bank that provides these services in English, you'll have to navigate the process in Japanese.
**Guides:**

Opening a Japan Post bank account


ATMs

[https://shikibook.wordpress.com/tips/atms/](https://shikibook.wordpress.com/tips/atms/)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsunICxKOUA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsunICxKOUA)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl7FmWNMoiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl7FmWNMoiQ)

Remitting money home:


[https://www.jpremit.com/images/How_to_use_JRFs_Remittance_Card.pdf](https://www.jpremit.com/images/How_to_use_JRFs_Remittance_Card.pdf)

How to do a money transfer (furikomi)


Getting a Japanese credit card


**Vocabulary:**

Japanese at the bank