

Title:

Recruiter Scams and Teaching in Japan

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Summary:

Let's look at some common methods recruiters use to lure unsuspecting teachers into unfair contracts, bad working conditions and poor living conditions.

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Article Body:

Teaching English in Japan truly can be the opportunity and experience of a lifetime. The chance to make life long friends, learn a new language and start your international career off. It can be all this and it can be none of this. Along with the skyrocketing popularity of those hungry to experience Japan has also come the unscrupulous recruiters and job placement organizations who promise the naive teacher the world and give them nothing.

Let's look at some common methods recruiters use to lure unsuspecting teachers into unfair contracts, bad working conditions and poor living conditions.

Often you'll see adds that seem simply too good to be true. You may see adds that will promise or guarantee placement, personal apartments, free language lessons, piles of paid vacation all with the added allure of the chance to experience the unique culture of Japan.

Basically, if it sounds too good to be true it is. Because of the competitive nature of running English schools in Japan any one school can't afford to give 10 times what another does. It flat-out doesn't make sense.

Having said this, here is a short list of tell-tale signs that something is "fishy" or a scam.

1. The recruiter asks for fees up front for placing you. The company that employs you will pay any legitimate recruiting firm.

2. They ask for "visa processing fees" or some other administrative fee.

Payment of these fees is the responsibility of your employer and not you.

3. They don't use a legitimate street address. Instead they rely on a post office box address.

4. Any company that charges you for job leads claiming that they have an inside track on 'great jobs' that never make it to the paper or internet. The truth about getting good job leads is actually learning about them from other teachers who have worked those jobs and now are headed home.

5. Be suspicious of overly prestigious sounding names.

6. Get everything in writing. Look at the contract carefully and make sure everything is in line with accepted labor practices. Ask in Japan ESL forums if something you find in your contract is accepted or is typical of other schools' contracts. (You'll be surprised at how much you can learn in a short period of time.

7. Never fall for the "We'll get you a working visa after you arrive" line. (It's illegal to teach in Japan without a working visa or other proper visas like a spousal visa.)

8. Don't cave into a pressure pitch like "there are only 2 more positions available, so we need a firm commitment from you now" sort of a thing. Haven't you seen enough of this in T.V. commercials telling you to "call while supplies last" or "hurry supplies are limited." Same thing.

9. Never give out personal information like credit card or bank information.

10. Don't even consider a company that won't issue you a working contract or one that will bill you per job lead.

Following this simple advice and using a little common sense will go along way towards making sure you never get caught in a recruiter's scam.