

The 2021 Survey on Postdoctoral Fellows Regarding Employment and Careers in Japan

1st Policy-Oriented Research Group

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ABSTRACT

This survey aims to clarify the employment status and career path of postdoctoral fellows (PDs)^{*1} who work in Japanese universities and public research institutions, being contributed to making policy for fostering and supporting Human Resources in Science, Technology and Innovation. We conducted this survey in FY2021 at 1,187 universities and public research institutes in Japan. The response rate for this survey is 100%.

The total number of PDs in FY2021 was 13,657 slightly declining relative to FY2018 (i.e., 15,590). The ratio of male and female PDs was 7:3. The average age was 38.0 years old. The proportion of Japanese to foreigners was 7 to 3. Concerning backgrounds fields, the highest percentage was 40% from science, following 20% from engineering. Before employed as PDs in FY2021, the PDs were the most common, with 25.5%. Almost 70% of PDs continues to work as PDs next year.

^{*1} In this study, we defined Postdoctoral fellows (PDs) as follows:

Individuals who obtained a doctor's degree or have completed the doctoral program without a doctoral degree (acquired predetermined credits and dropped out or fixed-term employees).

- i. Individuals engaged in research work at a university or a university intermediation organization and are not in a position to engage in education/research based on Article 92 of the School Education Law, such as professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant professor, and assistant.
- ii. Individuals engaged in research work at public research institutes and are not in a position to manage the research group, such as PI, director, and senior researcher.