

Country Report

The Japan Institute of Architects



ARCASIA ACA21 Council Meeting in Incheon, Korea
9th and 10th September, 2025

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COUNTRY REPORT 2024-2025

The Japan Institute of Architects

As of 1 August 2025

1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

The Japan Institute of Architects (JIA) is Japan's only professional organization of architects. Its principal role is to define and promote the social and legal status of professional architects in Japan.

Following seventy years of efforts on the part of our predecessors to establish the profession of architecture in Japan, the JIA was founded in May 1987. It started by unifying two formerly individual associations that shared the same ideology: The Japan Architects Association (JAA) and The Japan Federation of Professional Architects Association (JFPAA).

As an association of free and independent architects, the JIA is striving to create a greater understanding of the field of architecture within Japanese society, and to establish a firm social foundation and recognition for its members and their foreign counterparts worldwide.

2. CURRENT OFFICE BEARERS

Officers representing the JIA for 2025 are:

Mr. SATO Naomi	President
Mr. KONISHI Hikohito	Vice President
Mr. WATANABE Futomi	Vice President
Mr. MATSUO Kazuo	Vice President
Mr. TSUTSUI Nobuya	Executive Director
Mr. UENAMI Yutaka	Auditor
Mr. KASAI Takashi	Auditor



3. CURRENT MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH (as of June 24, 2025)

TYPE	NUMBER	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (x10 ³ JPY)	TOTAL(x10 ³ JPY)
Full Member	3,083	45	145,170
Associate Member	1,864	*	*
TOTAL	4,947	—	—

*Variable according to local chapters' rules

4. BUDGET OF THE INSTITUTE

Operational funding for the JIA is generated from the assessment of membership fees, admission fees, sales of JIA publications and registration fees paid by both members and non-members for participation in various activities.

In April 2005, the JIA annual membership fee was dramatically reduced by one half to encourage the acquisition of young new members. In April 2011, however, JIA raised the fee to strengthen its financial position.

5. NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

The JIA has ten regional chapters located throughout Japan: Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto-Koushinetsu, Tokai, Hokuriku, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu and Okinawa. Each regional chapter includes district organizations that develop community-based activities of architects.

6. GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND NATIONAL CONVENTION

The JIA held its 2024 General Assembly in Tokyo on June 26th, 2024.

The 2024 JIA National Convention was held in Beppu City, Oita Prefecture, Kyushu Island from November 28 to 30, 2024.

7. LEGAL STATUS OF THE JIA IN JAPAN

The JIA was incorporated on June 15, 1987 as a Japanese juridical corporation conforming to Article 34 of the Civil Code and approved by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The current legal status of JIA is an aggregate corporation for public benefit under article 34 of civil code. JIA is now supervised by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT).

The Japanese government made a radical reform of Public Interest Corporation legal framework in early 2000s, and the Public Interest Corporation laws were promulgated on June 2, 2006. All current aggregate corporations must be reorganized into a “general incorporated association” or into “authorized public benefit corporation (APBC)” by 30th November 2013. Although there are various tax benefits for APBC, there are a variety of new additional requirements for governance and information disclosure. For this reason, many current corporations have decided to become a general entity, rather than to commit as authorized public benefit. (For detail explanation and analysis of public benefit organization in Japan, refer to “Enabling Civil Society in Japan Reform of the Legal and Regulatory Framework for Public Benefit Organizations” by Karla W. Simon, Columbus school of Law).

JIA has been analyzing the pros and cons of these two legal statuses for many years since 2006. It was finally decided to become APBC at the special JIA General Assembly, held in September 2011.

This decision shows the commitment of JIA to serve the public for the promotion and provision of better built environment. JIA is now strongly promoting the concept of “community architect,” in which the architects play a major role in the quality enhancement of local built environment.

As such, JIA became new APBC in 2013.

8. LEGAL STATUS OF ARCHITECTS IN JAPAN AND

NA

9. REGISTRATION AUTHORITY OF ARCHITECTS IN JAPAN

In Japan, architects are authorized to practice under the “KENCHIKUSHI LAW” (Architect Law) which was enacted in 1950. However, the “KENCHIKUSHI LAW” is applied to both architectural and engineering design, and is fundamentally unique from common architectural regulations established outside Japan.

The Kenchikushi Law was formally amended in January 2007, providing the new additional regulations regarding the qualifications for structural engineer and building mechanical engineers. Also, regular and compulsory training system for the Kenchikushi was introduced. However, the role of an architect under this Kenchikushi law was not amended fully to meet

international standards. JIA is continuing its effort to improve the qualification system of architects in Japan.

10. INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION OF THE JIA AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The JIA represents “Japan Section” of the International Union of Architects (UIA) as a full member, and has been a member of the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA) since 1991.

Additionally, in May 1999, the JIA revised the “Accord of Professionalism” that was concluded with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1989.

The JIA has also exchanged a “Memorandum of Understanding” with the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA) in 1993.

In 2003, The JIA exchanged an “Accord on Professionalism” with the Korean Institute of Architects (KIA) and the Korea Institute of Registered Architects (KIRA) respectively.

In 2008, The JIA exchanged an “Accord on Professionalism in Architecture” with the Union of Mongolian Architects (UMA).

At the end of 2011, the JIA exchanged “Accord on Professionalism in Architecture” with the Architectural Society of China (ASC).

The JIA hosted ACA 18 in Tokyo, Japan in September 2018.

11. MAJOR PROGRAMS OF THE JIA (2024-2025)

- 1) General Assembly: June 24, 2025 in Tokyo.
- 2) “JIA Young Architect Award” of 2024 (refer to item 13)
- 3) “JIA Sustainable Architecture Award” of 2024 (refer to item 13)
- 4) “JIA Architect of 2024,” “JIA Grand Prix” and “JIA Award” (refer to item 13)
- 5) “JIA 25 Years Award (2024)” (refer to item 13)

12. OUTREACH PROGRAM OF THE JIA

The JIA publishes the periodical “JIA Magazine” on a monthly basis.



13. ARCHITETURAL COMPETITIONS / AWARDS FOR JAPANESE ARCHITECTS

The JIA annually presents the following awards: the “JIA Grand Prix,” “JIA Award,” “JIA Young Architect Award,” “100 Selected Works,” “JIA Sustainable Architecture Award,” and the “JIA Twenty-Five Year Award.” The winners of each award are as follows:

JIA Grand Prix 2024

Kumamoto Earthquake Museum KIOKU

by Maki ONISHI/Yuki HYAKUDA (onishimaki+hyakudayuki / o+h)



Photo By Takumi OTA

JIA Award 2024

Hanaju Renovation by Yohei TAKANO/Sachiko MORITA (MARU。architecture)



Photo By Seki Takuya

JIA Award 2024

Toranomon Hills Station Tower by Akikuni ARAI/Kenjiro TAO/ Shogo AMEDA/ Yuko MORIMURA/ Shohei NISHIZAKI (Mori Building), Shohei SHIGEMATSU (OMA), Sunao ANDO/ Akihiro SUZUKI/ Yukihiro HAYASE/ Sunao YOKOTA (KUME SEKKEI)



Photo By Tomoyuki Kusunose

JIA Award 2024

Tenjincho place by Hiroyuki ITO/ Junko UEHARA (Hiroyuki Ito Architects)



Photo By Masao Nishikawa

For more information, please refer to <https://www.jia.or.jp/jia-awards/>

14. KEY ISSUES FACING ARCHITECTS AND THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

- 1/ Effectuation of Act on the Rational Use of Energy
- 2/ Architects are obligated to conform the above law and obtain a permit by the authority
- 3/ JIA submitted opinions to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's Council for Social Infrastructure Development on environmental and energy issues toward achieving "2050 carbon neutrality. We exchanged opinions with the Japan Patent Office on the "Revised Design Law" and sorted out issues.

14-1. REGISTERED ARCHITECTS

The Qualification System for JIA Registered Architects was approved by JIA at its general assembly in May 2003, as a certification system that meets or exceeds the standards stipulated by the UIA Accord. The Council of Architect Certification was established soon afterward. Currently 1,289 architects are registered as of March 2024.

To be certified as a JIA registered architect under this system, current certification as a *First Class Kenchikushi* in combination with five years of practical experience is required. For a new architect, completion of the JIA practical training program is required for certification.

A JIA registered architect who intends to renew his/her registration must acquire a minimum of 108 CPD (Continuing Professional Development) credits over three years. In Japan, there are some other architectural institutions in addition to the JIA, and the JIA's intention is to establish commonality by having these other institutions adopt the Qualification System for Architects as well.

14-2. JIA CPD

The JIA established the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system for JIA members in April 2002. All JIA members are requested to acquire 108 CPD credits for 3 years. One credit is approximately equal to one hour of training. Currently, there are two ways to acquire credits: (1) participate in a program accredited by the JIA CPD Council, or (2) obtain credits through self-motivating training programs. Since JIA members are dispersed across Japan, the JIA places particular importance on self-motivating training.

Generally speaking, training can be categorized into four categories: (1) the social role of an architect, (2) improved practical ability as an architect, (3) improvement in the ability to manage a project, and (4) management of an architectural firm.

Because the JIA established the Qualification System for JIA Registered Architects in 2003 and acquiring CPD credits is mandatory for all registered architects, CPD for JIA members is recommended now.

Since the pandemic situation, there are 1,600 online programs available in Japan in 2024 for ease of taking classes.

15. QBS (QUALIFICATION BASED SELECTION) IN JAPAN

In Japan, competitive bidding remains the accepted practice for selecting an architect for public works projects. This is especially true among local governments, where architects selected through a bidding process design more than 80% of all public buildings. The reason for this is that bidding is a comparatively easy selection process. Other selection practices, such as design competitions, place an additional burden on clients in terms of time and cost. However, there is growing concern over the quality of public buildings in Japan, and the JIA believes that improvements in quality cannot be achieved through the practice of bidding.

The JIA has been actively encouraging local governments to adopt Qualification Based

Selection (QBS), a system that has been adopted by many countries, as a measure of an architect's ability. The JIA is willing to dispatch experts in building design to act as QBS judges when required to explain the procedures of QBS. Consequently, the JIA is confident in its ability to provide practical examples of selecting an architect through QBS.

16. RESOURCES OF THE JIA

Although established in 1987, the JIA has not yet accumulated significant assets. However, the JIA is striving to further develop the "JIA Architects International Fund" (established in 1992) with the goal of improving international communications among architects in the future.

17. OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

Major activities in 2025

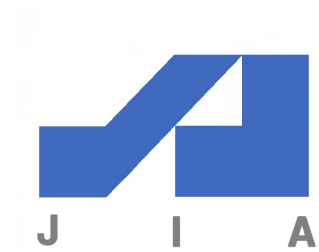
1/ April, Attendance to ASA National Convention in Bangkok

2/ June, Attendance to AIA Conference on Architecture 2025 in Boston

3/ September, Attendance to ACA21 in Incheon

4/ November, Attendance to the 2025 Korean Institute of Architects Festival at Nodeul Island

5/ November, JIA Convention in Chiba



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