

## Alexander Bristow – Research report for JSPS London

I spent five months based at the Institute of Social Science, part of the University of Tokyo, conducting research on U.S.-Japan relations during the 1960s for my D.Phil. in International Relations at Oxford University. My first host researcher was Prof. Nobuhiro Hiwatari, but changed to Prof. Kaoru Iokibe after Prof. Hiwatari took up a short-term position in the United States. I worked in two archives – the Diplomatic Records Office, the official archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Roppongi; and the National Diet Library – and wrote up my findings in the main libraries on Hongo and Komaba campuses. My research was productive. I presented my findings before the Political and Diplomatic Review Project in the Tokyo Foundation and the ISS PhD group. I also have a journal article under peer review for the St Antony's International Review.

Tokyo University is a large institution, and like all large institutions, the logic of its organisation is not always apparent. This is certainly true of the Institute of Social Science (ISS). ISS is purely a research institute. It is staffed by members of other departments, most of whom seem to literally have offices in two locations, and the Institute itself appears to have no responsibility for undergraduate teaching. However, ISS offers a fairly substantial number of guest researcher positions to both domestic and foreign scholars, both at predoctoral and postdoctoral level. Essentially, these allow access to the library facilities of the University, including the sizeable book collection and data archives of the Institute itself. Normally, these also include office space on Hongo Campus, although the relocation of the Institute meant this wasn't possible during my stay. When I applied, all that was necessary to become a guest researcher was the sponsorship of an academic affiliated with the ISS. However, the guest researcher programme may have changed since I was there. There appears to be no mention of it on the current ISS website. Currently, the website only mentions academic exchanges with specific universities around the world - the only UK university mentioned is Sheffield - and three-month positions for visiting professors.

My advice to scholars of all subjects thinking about conducting research in Japan is to understand the importance of being affiliated with a prestigious institution in building networks. Without an institutional affiliation - and preferably a business card to go with it! - I think you will find academics and policymakers relatively reticent to help. But with the right introduction from your host researcher or a senior member of your department, people can be exceptionally willing to offer you their time. However, you should be aware that the person making introductions on your behalf is expending a form of professional capital, requesting a favour of one of their peers. Therefore, please allow for introductions taking some time so that the correct opportunity can be found, and offer to reciprocate by helping your host researcher in some way.

I am currently at St Antony's College, Oxford University, and expect to be here throughout 2010 while writing my D.Phil. Please feel free to contact me by email:

[alexander.bristow@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.bristow@gmail.com)