

Coming from the UK, the thought of spending two years in a country as culturally different as Japan was a very exciting prospect. Having found the JSPS postdoctoral research fellowship via the Royal Society, and having previously established contact with Professor Shu Kobayashi at the University of Tokyo, I applied for the standard length fellowship and I was thankfully successful.

Upon starting my fellowship on the 1st September 2011, I began work on our project which had the goal of developing new chemistry for making organic molecules – compounds which on a fundamental level contain mostly carbon and hydrogen atoms. From the moment I arrived in Japan everybody was very helpful and I settled into the community quite quickly. The life in a Japanese research group does take some getting used to at first – the methods, working hours and working conditions are quite different to that of my old group in UK, but in time you get used to this change and ultimately learn a lot about people from a different culture - I hope this experience is something in which I can draw upon in my future career.

Upon reflection of my experience in Japan as both a JSPS researcher and visitor, I would most certainly advise anybody with an open mind who is excited by the prospect of living and working in an amazingly unique country to apply.