

Founder

University Japan

Turn your startup idea into a reality

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01 OUTLINE | コース概要

Purpose

To provide the essential knowledge and practical experience for early-stage fundraising, and to enhance entrepreneurial strategy and skills through networking with angel investors.

1	Acquire the essential knowledge and skills for fundraising activities in the early stages
2	Build networks with mentors and angel investors to gain an international perspective for entrepreneurship

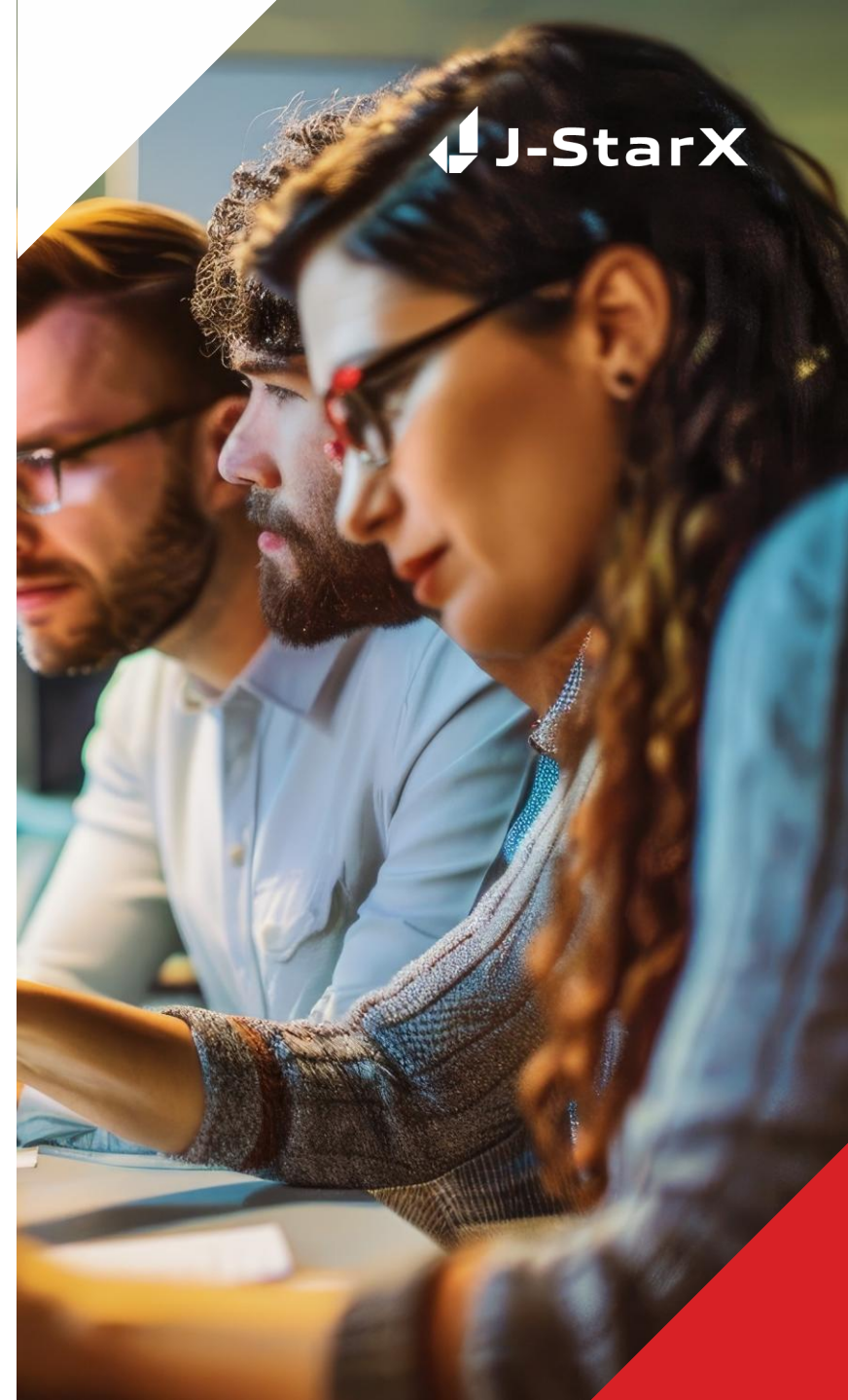
Assignment Location

Silicon Valley, USA

Recruitment Target

Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrepreneurs of startups established in Japan or those preparing to launch a startup• Japanese founders of startups aiming to raise funds, both domestically and internationally
Stage	Early-stage
Field	None
Level	Explorer

*For detailed eligibility requirements for travel participants, please refer to "04|Eligibility & Application Requirements"



1 Domestic Program



Tokyo Bootcamp (Up to 30 participants)

Provides 4 days of lectures, workshops and networking in Tokyo. Lectures cover fundamentals of Go-to-Market (GTM) strategy and business models, with additional sessions on specialized topics like international legal regulations.

2 Online Acceleration Program



Online Program (Up to 30 participants)

Progress is managed through weekly 1-2 hour live sessions and mentoring, along with weekly surveys. The online acceleration curriculum is structured in stages, covering entrepreneurial mindset, MVP development, business model design, market validation, TAM analysis, and competitive assessment.

3 Travel Program



Networking & Demo Day (10 participants)

In Silicon Valley, the mecca of startups, we conduct workshops on scaling strategies, market entry approaches, and pitch coaching. Through Jason Calacanis' network, participants gain direct exposure to the U.S. startup ecosystem, build connections, and explore collaboration opportunities.

1 Japan-based Programs ※Details updated as needed

A four-day lecture and workshop in Tokyo, plus online discussions and mentoring. Lectures cover the fundamentals of entrepreneurial mindset and business models.

Capacity Up to 35 participants

Schedule In-person Bootcamp @Tokyo: July 21 (Tue) - July 24 (Fri) / Online Sessions: July - October

Overview

In-Person Bootcamp:

- Learn about entrepreneurial mindset, customer discovery, and more
- Planned speed networking and discussions between entrepreneurs and investors

Online Sessions:

- Held weekly (approximately 60-90 minutes) as online discussions
- Small pod sessions with 3-5 startups + 1-2 mentors
- Lectures on competitive analysis in overseas markets and opportunities to evaluate startups from an investor's perspective

※ Language of instruction: English

3 Travel Program | Lectures, Networking, Demo Day

Capacity 10 participants (selected through program screening)

Schedule October 12 (Mon) - October 16 (Fri) @San Francisco

**Overview
(Tentative)**

- Through Jason's network, participants will visit several U.S. venture capital firms and gain opportunities to have their startups evaluated from an investor's perspective (VC Road Show).
- Pitching opportunities at large-scale events with strong investor attendance(LAUNCH FEST)
- Office tours of startups.

※ Language of instruction: English

4 Testimonials from Founder University Japan cohort1



What stood out about the Founder University Tokyo/Japan was **how quickly it connected us to the right people**. Through the Immersion Program, we built real relationships with leading VCs and angels from Jason's syndicate, which is the access

that's incredibly hard to get on your own. The community was just as impactful: the LAUNCH team and alumni consistently opened doors, from warm intros to experienced founders to even helping us secure critical resources for our robotics development. It's a network that keeps delivering value long after the program ends.



The Founder University Japan program was high quality from minute one to its very last moment.

The team was incredibly engaging and supportive, and the level of mentors and fellow

entrepreneurs was outstanding. Everything we learned in the ten-week program has been invaluable in our startup journey and I'd recommend anyone to join Jason and his program.

03 SCHEDULE | スケジュール



Support Organization

LAUNCH

LAUNCH

URL: <https://www.launch.co/>

LAUNCH is a startup support and investment organization based in San Francisco, USA, operating under the philosophy "We Back Builders." Its CEO is renowned angel investor Jason Calacanis, known as an early investor in companies like Uber and Robinhood. It operates the Founder University education program for entrepreneurs and the LAUNCH Accelerator, which provides investment and growth support. With investments in over 300 companies, it boasts a strong track record, including eight companies becoming unicorns. Its integrated support model combining education, media, and investment provides comprehensive assistance from entrepreneur development to fundraising.



Jason Calacanis

Technology entrepreneur and fund manager. Host of the podcast "This Week in Startups" and known as co-host and executive producer of the All-In Podcast. He began his career as a scout at Sequoia Capital, a top Silicon Valley venture capital firm, and later invested as an angel investor in over 550 early-stage startups, including Uber.

02 PROGRAM STRUCTURE | プログラム構成 – 支援機関の紹介



Support Organization



Jacqui Deegan

Partner



Rikki Jump

SVP of Growth + Partnerships



Bianca Veltri

Associate



Lukas Durand

Analyst

Capacity

Up to 30 participants

(Domestic Program 30, Travel Program 10)

Eligibility

Eligible Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurs of startups established in Japan or those preparing to launch a startup Japanese founders of startups aiming to raise funds, both domestically and internationally
Stage	Early-stage
Field	None
Level	Explorer
Others	Participants should be individuals who are able to make decisions regarding global expansion (e.g., CXO-level executives) and can actively engage throughout the program.

Application Requirements

Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

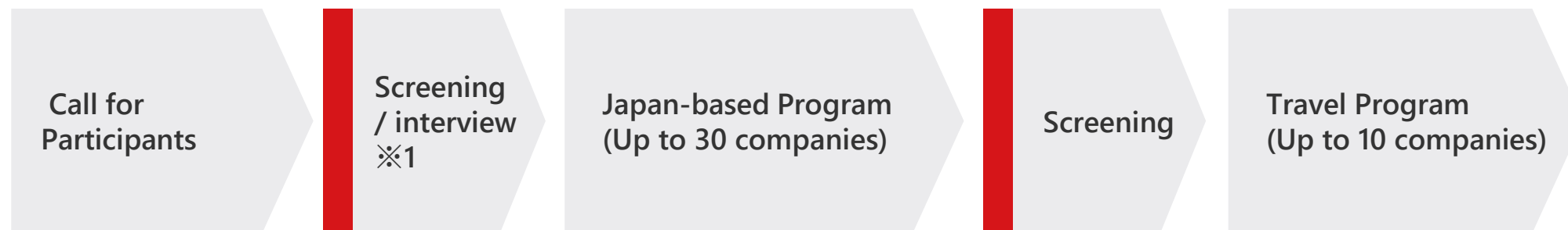
- Be a Japan-based startup with operations in Japan
- Possess sufficient English proficiency to prepare pitch materials and conduct business discussions
- Have a prototype that can be presented to potential partners
- **Have responded to past program surveys and interviews (during and after participation), and be willing to continue cooperating in future follow-ups**
- Be an early-stage startup aiming to raise funds overseas, or a pre-launch startup preparing to expand internationally
- Have a clear path to monetization and demonstrated progress in market validation
- Be able to secure the necessary equipment and environment to participate in program services (e.g., online mentoring)
- Acknowledge that this program is jointly conducted by Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and JETRO, and that participants will be required to respond to follow-up surveys and interviews throughout the program

Expenses borne by participants

- Other expenses incurred overseas, such as transportation, meals, communication fees, visa fees, insurance fees, etc.
- (For in-person events only) Domestic transportation and accommodation expenses for the domestic program and follow-up sessions
- International airfare
- Accommodation expenses during overseas stay
- All expenses other than those covered by JETRO as listed on the right

Costs covered by JETRO

- Program tuition fee



Note: The schedule for the online interview screening will be communicated to applicants, as needed.

Selection Criteria

- The significance of participation, taking into account the applicant's involvement in other JETRO programs, application details, and objectives/status of global expansion (*see next page for details)
- Whether the mentors and JETRO are able to provide appropriate support
- The potential for the startup to scale through participation in the program
- Clarity of the idea/prototype and its contribution to solving societal challenges
- The future potential and feasibility of the business idea
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial motivation and willingness to learn
- Clarity of the reason for applying to the program
- Interest in founding or expanding a business overseas in the future
- Sufficient English proficiency to participate in lectures conducted in English
- In principle, applicants should not have participated in overseas travel programs under other J-StarX programs in the current fiscal year

Key Guidelines when preparing an English pitch deck:

Please note that failure to comply with the following guidelines may result in your application being excluded from the screening process.

■ Key Guidelines for Preparing Your English Pitch Deck

- Please ensure your deck includes the required information listed in the right-hand column
- No cover page is needed; limit your deck to a maximum of 6 slides
- Create the file in PowerPoint and submit it in PDF format (file size must be 3MB or less)
- Name the file as follows: *Founder University_Company Name_Your Name.pdf* (please include your name in the "Your Name" section)
- Submit your materials by **June 7, 2026 (Sun), 23:59 (JST)**

■ Required Content for the English Pitch Deck

Please include the following four items related to your prototype in your slides. Also, make sure to include your name in the top-left corner of the first slide:

1. The social issue you aim to solve and your proposed solution
2. Overview and technology of the prototype (use images, diagrams, and/or text)
3. Business scaling strategy
4. Key strengths and unique selling points of the prototype

Notes:

- Please prepare all materials in English
- There is no restriction on slide design or format

Points to Note When Creating and Submitting Pitch Videos

Please note that submissions not adhering to the following points may be excluded from review.

Pitch Video Guidelines

Topic: "Your current business, business idea, or what you aim to achieve through this program"

Duration: Within 3 minutes

Language: English

*The pitch deck used in the video must also be submitted

Submission Method: Via the application form

Video → Submit as a public link within the application form

Pitch Deck → Submit as a link (e.g., Google Drive, Canva)

Deadline: By 23:59 (JST) on Sunday, June 7, 2026

*If you cannot submit your video via the application form, please send it to the following address.

Use the subject line "Founder University_Pitch Submission_Your Name" and include your name in the email body.

【Submission Address】

JETRO Startup Division, Attn: Satsuki Ibaraki, Erika Suzuki,

IVD@jetro.go.jp

Application Form

Deadline: Sunday, June 7, 2026, 23:59 PM (JST)

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- Applications will be reviewed based on the submitted information, and applicants will be notified of the selection results.
 - In addition to the document screening, an online interview will also be conducted.
 - Please note that we are unable to respond to any inquiries regarding the evaluation results.
 - Applicants are required to submit **both a pitch video and pitch deck**. Please have these prepared before completing the application form (refer to the previous page for format and submission details).
 - All application fields must be completed in **English**.

Appropriate selection of the course as part of the evaluation criteria

To ensure that participating companies achieve the maximum possible outcomes, we place strong emphasis on selecting the most appropriate course and having a clear purpose for joining the program.

There have been cases where startups participated in multiple acceleration programs consecutively without a clear objective, which did not necessarily lead to business growth and instead resulted in the dispersion of valuable time and resources. Given that time is one of the most critical resources for startups, we ask that you carefully consider the following points before applying.

■ Basic Approach to Program Selection

We strongly recommend selecting a program by working backward from the specific goals your company aims to achieve at this stage.

The needs for global expansion vary from company to company. For example:

- Validating product-market fit (PMF) in overseas markets
- Refining your go-to-market strategy
- Gaining initial traction in international markets
- Building an overseas network

The most suitable program will differ significantly depending on your objectives.

■ Pre-Application Consultation (Recommended)

The JETRO Startup team is available to support you in selecting the most suitable program based on your business stage and goals.

- If you have already been accepted into another acceleration program this year, we encourage you to consult with a JETRO Startup team member (Startup Division) before applying.
- Even if you have not yet been accepted into any program, please feel free to reach out if you are unsure which course would be the best fit for you.

1. As a general rule, financial support for participation in this program is limited to one person per company (accompanying participants at your own expense are permitted).
2. As needed, mentors and JETRO staff may accompany participants to meetings with local partners or stakeholders. We also ask for your cooperation in post-program follow-ups, including reporting outcomes and tracking progress.
3. Please note that, after selection, information about your participation and results may be publicly shared for the purpose of promoting JETRO's programs. Any content to be disclosed will be confirmed with you in advance.
4. In principle, applicants should not have participated in overseas travel programs under other J-StarX programs.
However, you may apply to more advanced J-StarX programs (e.g., higher-level or mid-/later-stage programs). JETRO will determine whether participation in multiple programs is permitted.

Disclaimer

Please carefully read the [J-StarX 利用規約・免責事項](#) before applying

Cancellation Policy

- Cancellations are not permitted for any reason after travel dates have been confirmed.
- If cancellation or change fees for accommodation are incurred by JETRO, these costs must be borne by the participating company.
- The date from which cancellation fees will apply will be announced to participants at a later date.

08 CONTACT | お問い合わせ



Course Name : Founder University Japan

Affiliation : JETRO Innovation Department, Startup Division

Contact : Satsuki Ibaraki, Erika Suzuki

Inquiry : [Please contact us via the form.](#)

