

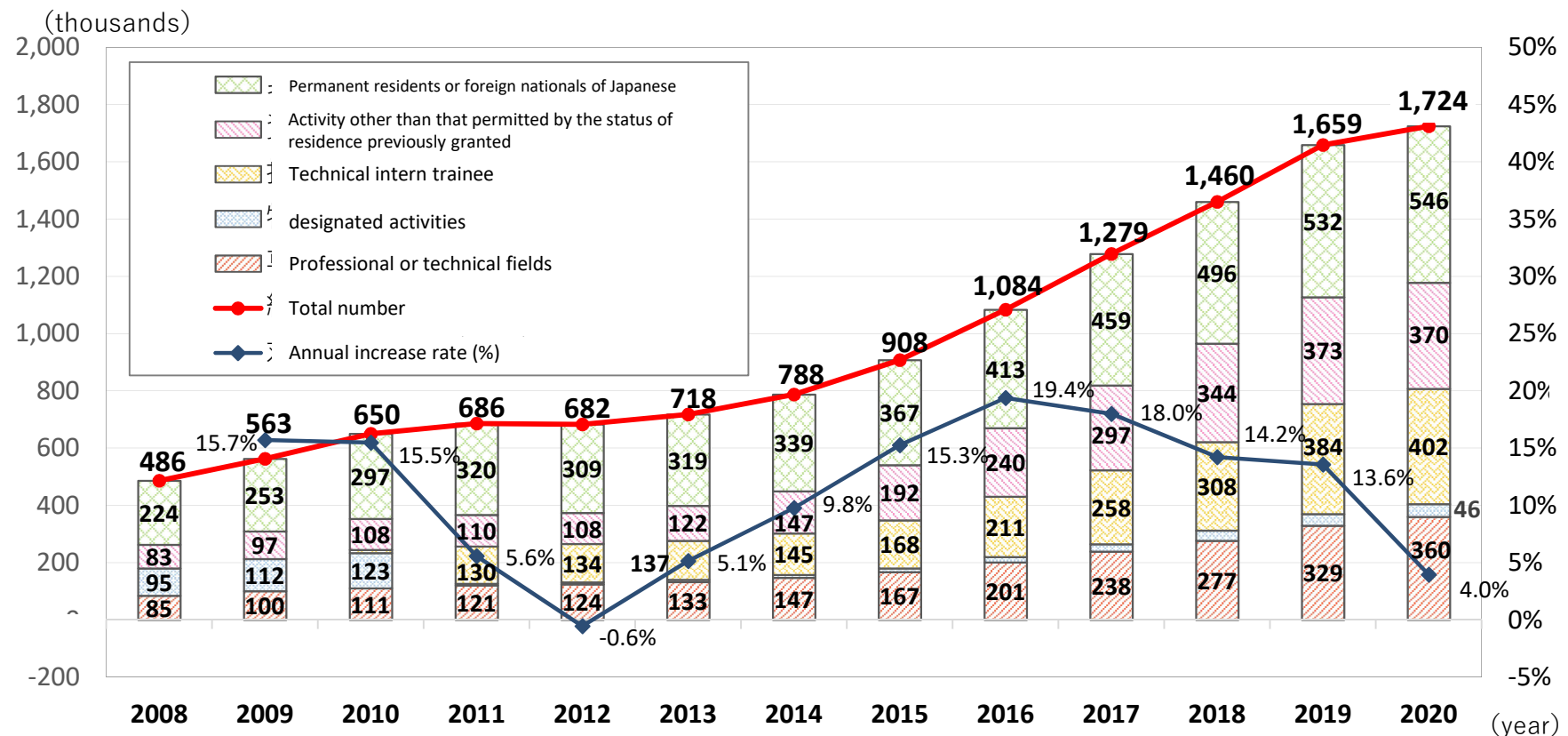
LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND POLICIES ON FOREIGN WORKERS IN JAPAN IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Recent Trend in the Number of Foreign Workers

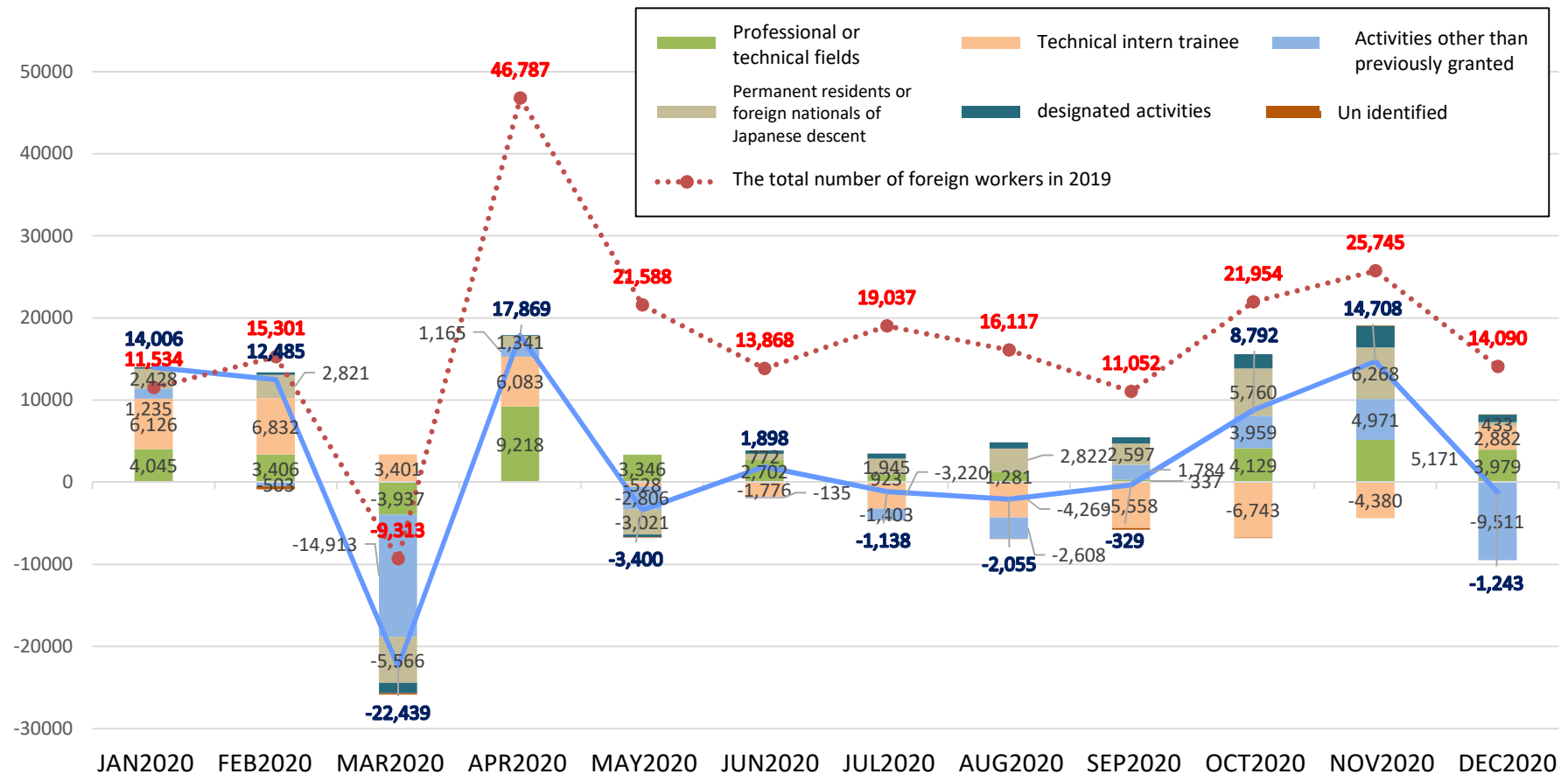
- The number of foreign workers in Japan marked a record high of **1,724,328** at the end of **Oct. 2020**.
- Focusing on the status of residence (visa category), **“designated activities”**, **“professional or technical fields”**, and **“technical intern trainee”** are among the highest growth rate (**10.9%**, **9.3%**, and **4.8%**, annual rate, respectively) .



Source: MHLW, Records of Notification of Foreign Workers' Employment Status

Monthly Increase of the Number of Foreign Workers

- The figure shows **the monthly increase** in the number of foreign workers by residence status. The total number (blue line) had been stable until Feb. 2020, before it **plunged in Mar. and stayed far below the previous year**, although **the general trend has been the same** as in 2019 (red dotted line).
- The trend **stayed negative until Sep.** and **became positive on Oct. and Nov.**, but back to negative in Dec. 2020.

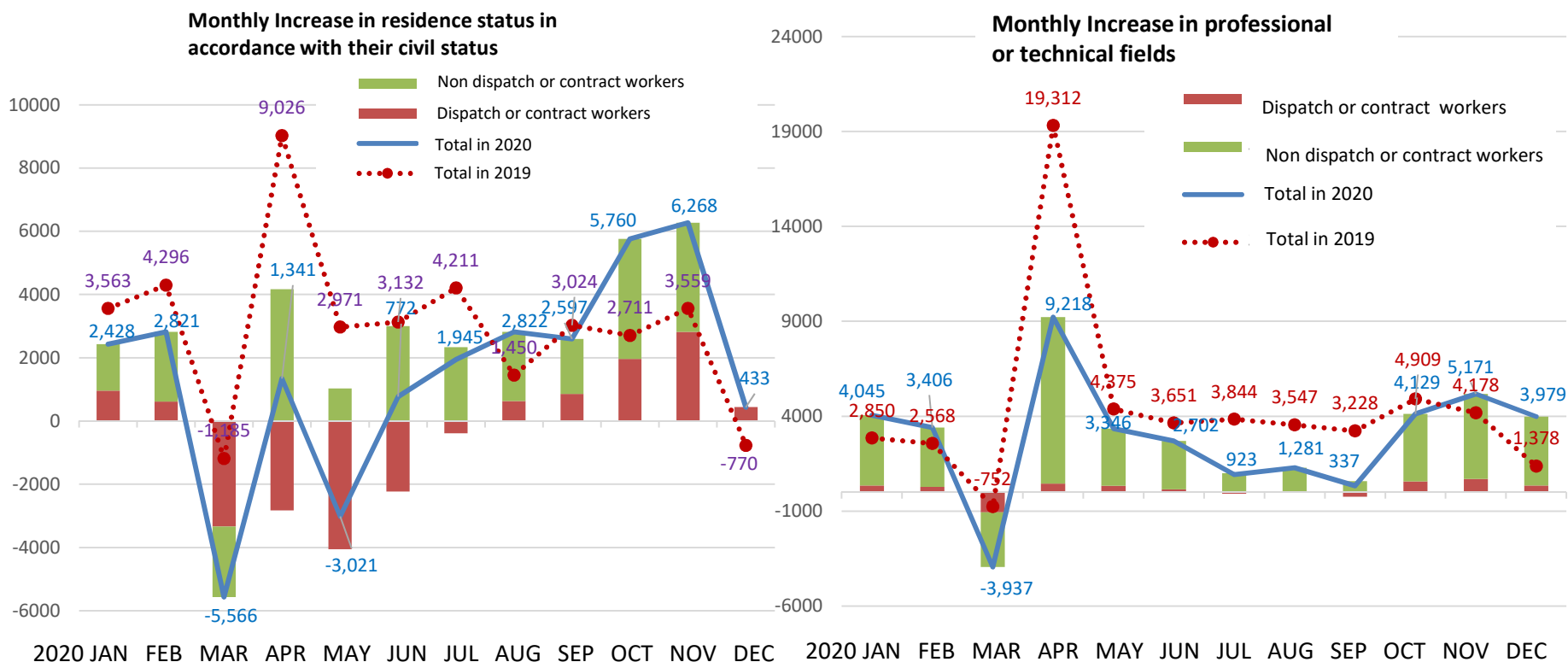


Source: MHLW, Records of Notification of Foreign Workers' Employment Status

Monthly Increase of the Number of Foreign Workers

(Residence status in accordance with civil status, and Professional/technical)

- The monthly increase in the number of foreign workers with residence status in accordance with their civil status stayed **far below the previous year**. However, the general trend was almost the same. **Since Aug.**, the number has **been exceeding the last year**.
- The monthly increase in **professional and technical fields** had stayed below the previous year from March through September before it went up again and exceeded the last year from **Nov.**.

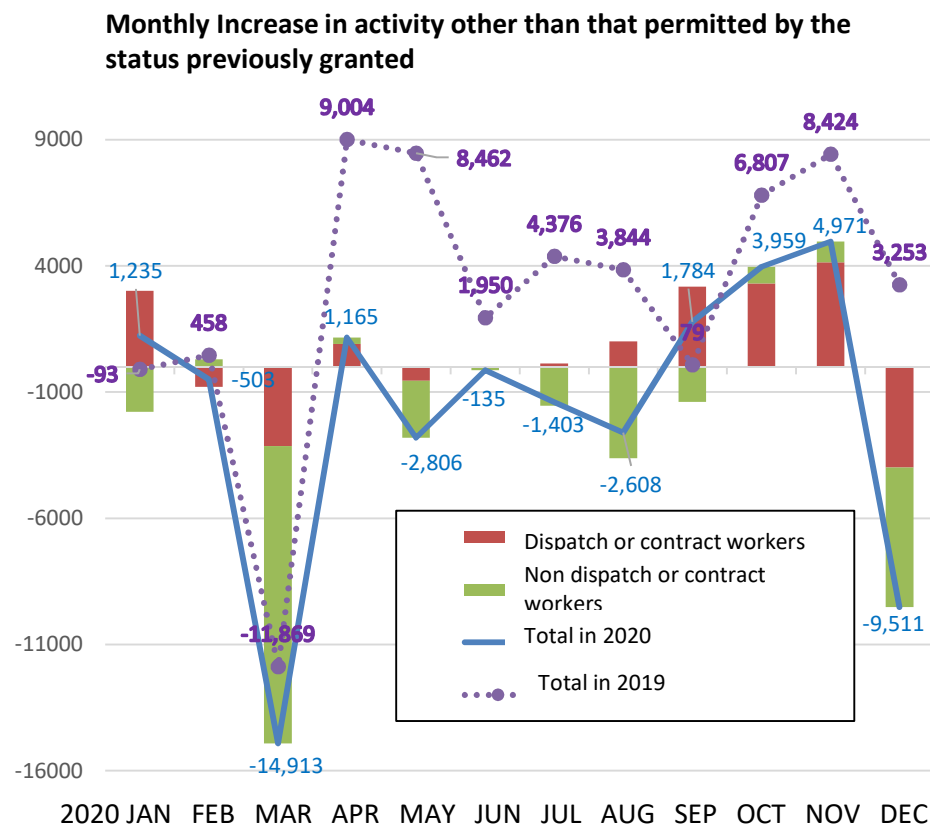
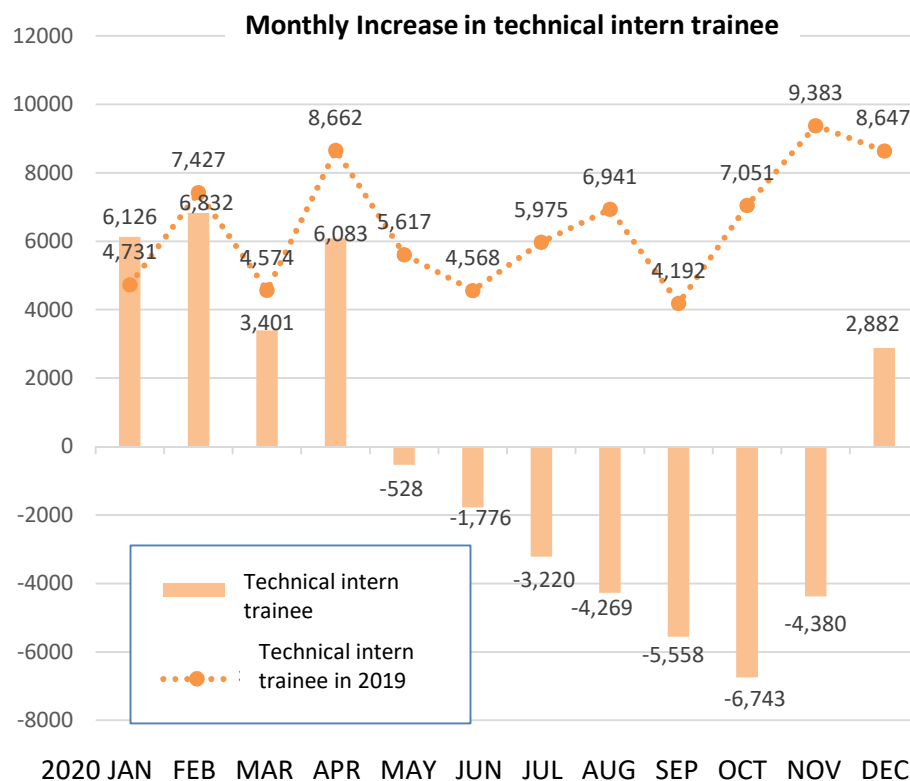


Source: MHLW, Records of Notification of Foreign Workers' Employment Status

Monthly Increase of the Number of Foreign Workers

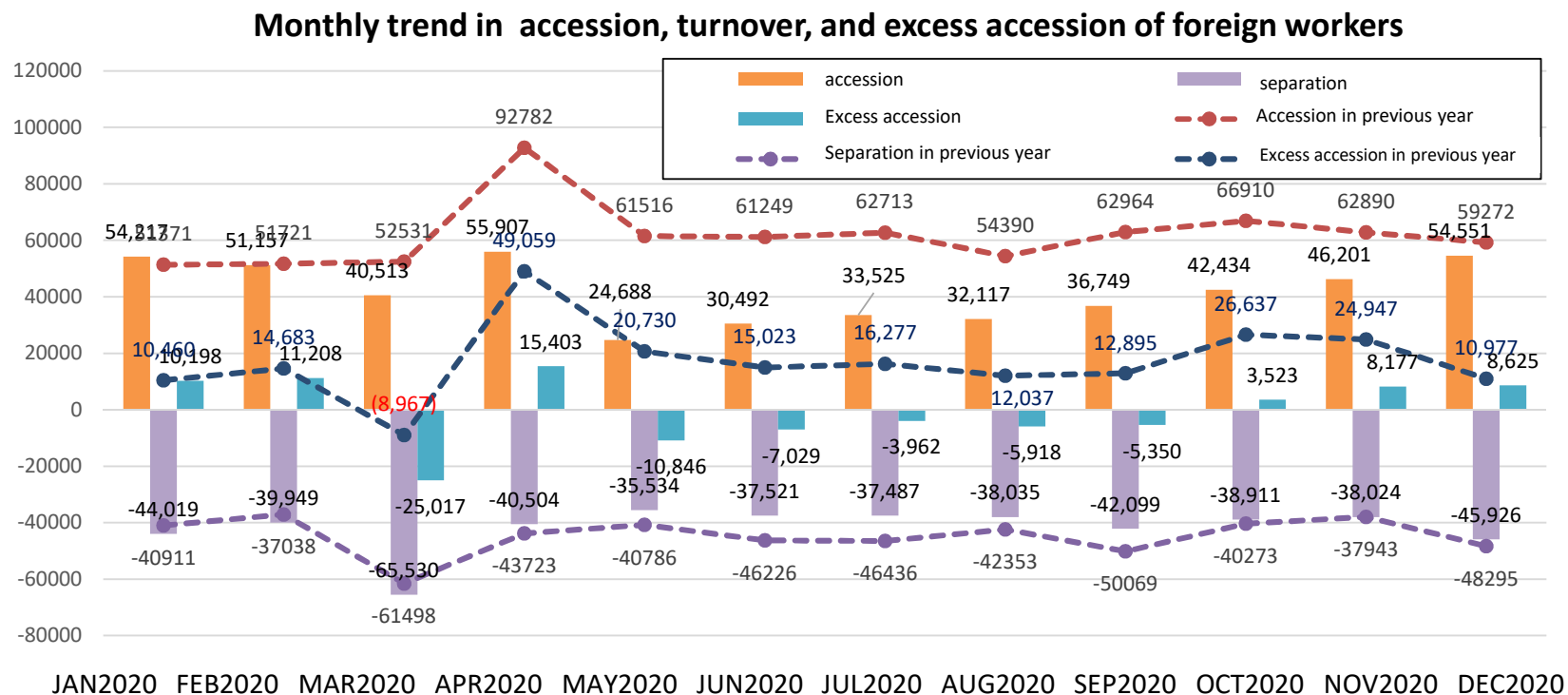
(Technical intern trainee, and Activities other than previously granted)

- The monthly increase in **technical intern trainees** had stayed **negative** from May until **Nov.** It turned **positive** in **Dec.**, although it was **far below** the last year.
- The monthly increase in **activities other than that permitted by the status previously granted** has been **far less than the last year** and **kept negative** from May through Aug.. The growth turned **positive** in **September** and **stayed positive** until **Nov.** but **plunged** in **Dec.**



Monthly Job Accessions and Turnovers of Foreign Workers

- The number of **turnovers** (purple bar) stayed **slightly fewer than the previous year** (purple dotted line) from **Apr. through Oct.**. It has recovered the level of the last year since **Nov.**
- The number of **accessions** (orange bar) dropped in May and **stayed far below the previous year** (orange dotted line) before turning upward and **recovered the same level** as the last year in **Dec.**
- Excess **accession** (accession subtracted by turnover) (blue bar) dropped in May and **stayed negative** until it **turned positive in Oct.**

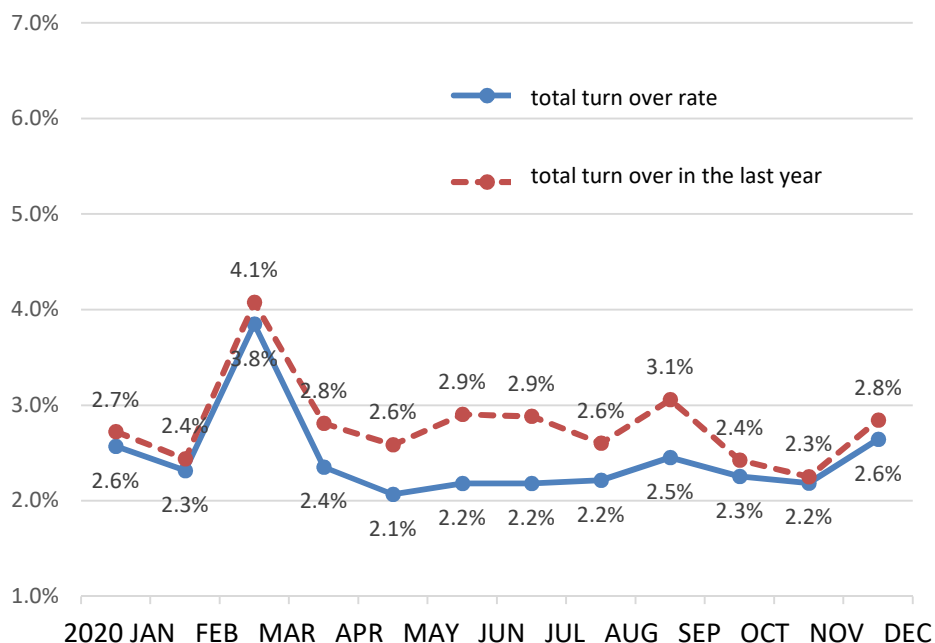


Source: MHLW, Records of Notification of Foreign Workers' Employment Status

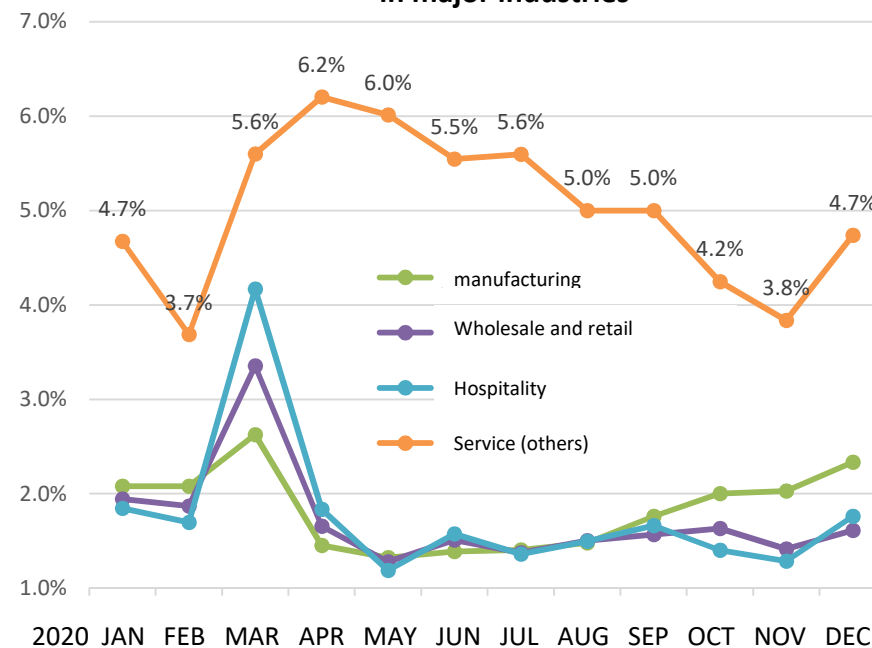
Trend in Monthly Turnover Rate in Major Industries

- Monthly **turnover rates** among foreign workers in major industries have a significant discrepancy.
- The turnover rate among foreign workers in the service industry (others) (mostly dispatch businesses) went up to **6.2% in Apr. 2020**. After that, it **slowly declined** before going up again in Nov., and increase to **4.7% in Dec..**

Monthly turnover rate among foreign workers

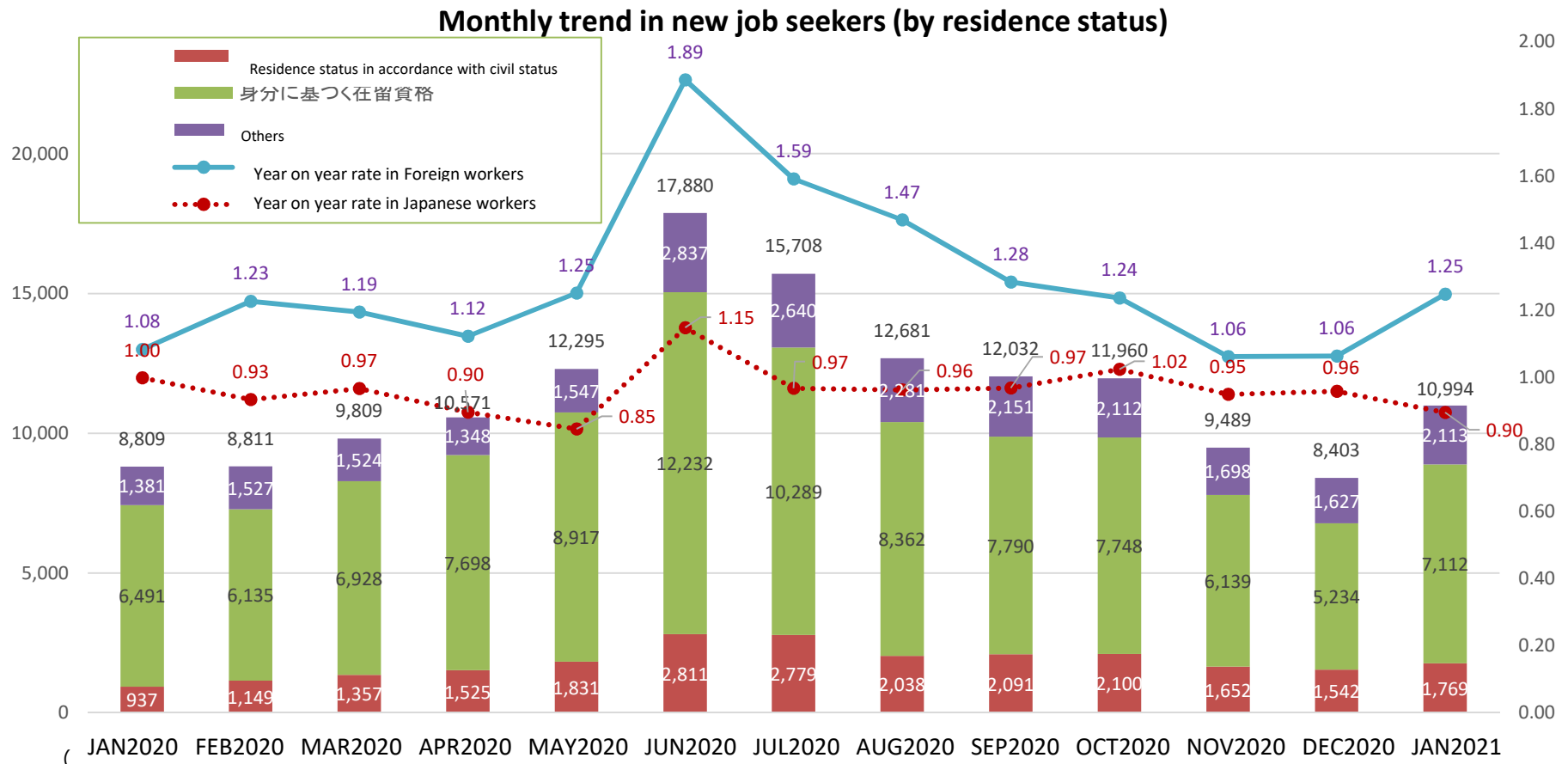


Monthly turnover rate among foreign workers in major industries



Trend in New Job Seekers in Hello-work

- The monthly trend in **foreign new job seekers** to Hello-work (public employment security offices) **jumped to 1.9 times higher** than the last year in Jun.. It then went down to **1.06 times** before going up again to **1.24 times higher in Dec..**
- In contrast, **Japanese new job seekers** remained almost at **the same level as the last year.**
- Most of the job seekers are **residence status in accordance with civil status** (permanent residents, spouses of Japanese, and Japanese descent).



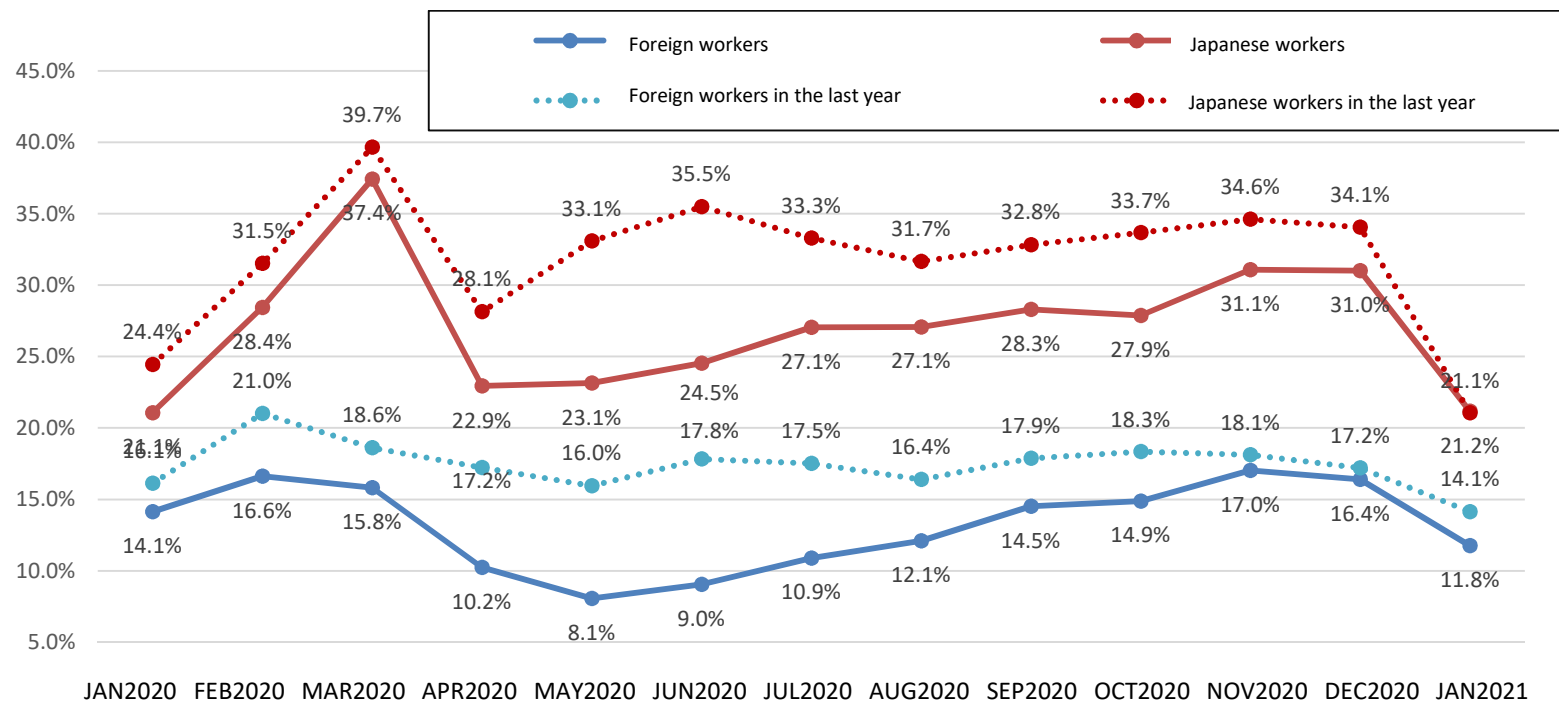
Source: MHLW, Database of Hello-Work Data System

Trends in the Employment Rate in Hello-work

- The **employment rate*** of foreign workers in Hello-work (public employment security offices) gained about **15 percentage points lower than that of Japanese workers**.
- Hello-work's analysis attributed the difference in the rate to **communication** barriers at workplaces or job-constrain by resident status.

* The **employment rate** is calculated by dividing the monthly successful job placement cases by the number of monthly new job seekers.

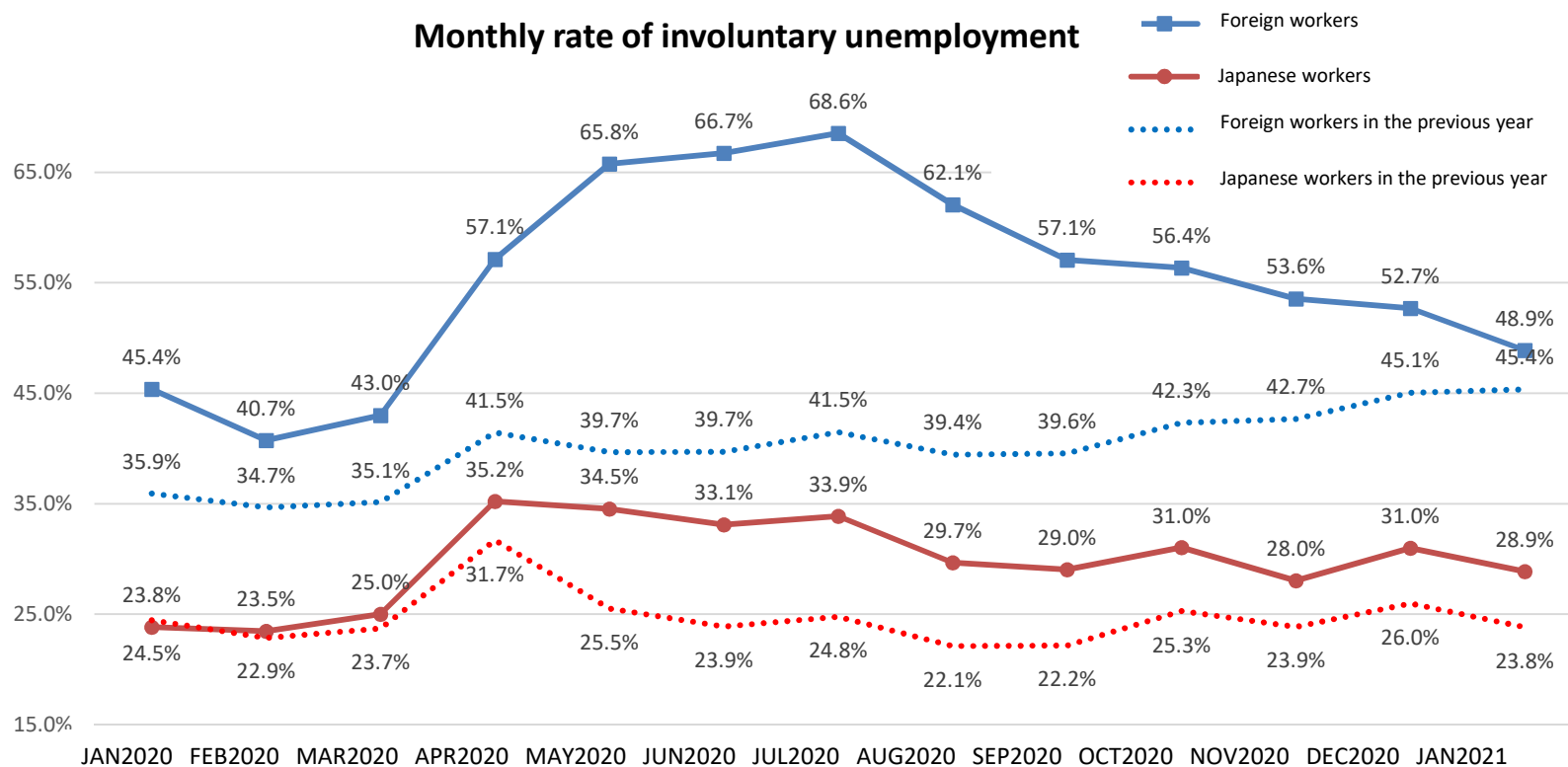
Monthly employment rates of foreign workers and Japanese workers



Source: MHLW, Database of Hello-Work Data System

Trend in the Involuntary Unemployment Rate in Hello-work

- The figure shows the **rate of involuntary unemployment** among new job-seekers (excluding those still in work) on Hello Work (public employment security offices) registration data.
- The **rate of foreign workers jumped in Apr. 2020 and reached 68.6% in Jul.** before slowly going down to the recent **48.9%.**
- In contrast, the **rate of Japanese workers** remains between **35% and 28%** after Apr. 2020.



Source: MHLW, Database of Hello-Work Data System

Emergency Support Services for Foreign Residents in Need through Hello-work

- Provided **comprehensive support** to foreign residents in need, including support for making ad hoc residence status applications and employment services, in collaboration with Hello-work and regional immigration service bureaus.
- Increased Hello-work's capacity **of interpreter services** in English or in other languages to make them feel comfortable to visit HW offices, and **provided attentive employment services** in collaborating with NPOs that have experience and expertise in supporting international students or other foreign residents in need.
- Organized **job fairs** to help foreign residents to find part-time jobs in Hello-work offices in areas with a large population of foreign residents with thorough information dissemination efforts.
- Disseminated information about Hello-work employment services through channels of foreign embassies and NPOs, including NPOs for supporting Vietnamese and private companies such as international money transfer service providers.

Ad hoc residence status in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (excerpted)

(Information from the Immigration Service Agency)

Foreign residents in needs

International students with difficulties returning home.

Technical intern trainees with difficulties to return home who have job offers in accordance with requirements.

- Fired **technical intern trainees**,
 - **Technical intern trainees** with difficulty to go home,
 - Fired **vocational residence status holders**,
 - **Technical intern trainees** who are canceled a job offer,
- during the pandemic, and who has job offers which fulfill certain requirements.

Technical intern trainees with difficulty to return home who do not have job offers as mentioned above and need to work part-time to make a living.

Temporary visitors who do not fit into the categories mentioned above.

Ad Hoc Residence Status

Designated Activity valid for six months with work permit within 28 hours a week.

Target: Former holders of “international student” status with difficulty going home regardless of the graduation timing or leaving the school.

Designated **Activity valid for six months with work permit**

Target: Former “technical intern trainees” who have job offers related to the area they are trained.

Designated Activity valid for 1year with work permit

Target: Former “technical intern trainee,” etc., with difficulty to go home who have job offers listed among 14 specific industries.

Designated Activity valid for six months without a work permit (In case of satisfying the following conditions*, work within 28 hours a week are permitted.)

Temporary visit visa for additional 90 days (In case of satisfying the following conditions*, work within 28 hours a week are permitted.)

*Condition: those who (a) are not permitted to work in the current residence status, (b) with difficulties to go home, (c) in need because no support is expected.

(FYI) **Rolls and Responsibilities of Hello-work (public employment security offices)**

- **Hello-work** is the system of public employment security offices operated by the national government (MHLW).
- **Hello-work** has 500 offices all over Japan and provides various employment services for free.
- **Hello-work's service** is available to anyone regardless of nationality. Some offices frequently used by foreign workers can provide job consulting in multiple languages via interpretation services.
- In response to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, through the **Hello-work system**, the MHLW collected the labour market information, including the trend of job seekers and employment rate of foreign workers, and strengthened **the employment service for foreign workers**.

(FYI) Strengthening Employment Service for Foreign workers

Budget for FY 2020 :
3.1 billion JPY

1. Three pillars of strengthening employment service (initial and first supplementary budget)

(1) Consultation service for employers of foreign workers

- Based on reported information from employers, provided guidance and assistance to improve employment management for foreign workers.
⇒ **By increasing staff, strengthened active consultation and other services to provide information on job retention support programs including subsidies.**

(2) Consultation service for foreign job-seekers

- Provided personalized consultation and information service that considers preference and experience of foreign job seekers by qualified counsellors.
⇒ **By increasing staff, strengthened consultation and other services to support early re-employment of foreign workers who had to leave their previous.**

(3) Multilingual consultation and information services

- Provided Multilingual service through an interpreter, telephone interpretation and multilingual translation device with 14 languages.
⇒ **By increasing interpreters and multilingual translation devices, reinforced multilingual services.**
- Translated leaflet to provide information on various support measures for employers and employees into 14 languages and simple Japanese. Disseminated information through website and SNS.

2. Additional support measures (second supplementary budget)

Further enhancement of multilingual consultation and information services

- Disseminated necessary information for unemployed workers such as procedures to obtain employment benefits via leaflet, short internet videos, and official website in an easy-to-understand manner.
- Expanded the capacity of Hello-work call center to provide multilingual service in order to support foreign workers who cannot visit Hello-work offices in person.
※The third supplementary budget will help increase the number of interpreters further .

Facilitate job matching by improving the operation of consultation services

- Enhanced job matchings by strengthening job counseling service including collecting job offers that fit the preference and skills of foreign workers.