



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<i>Host University</i>	<b>Kyoto University</b>
<i>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</i>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester 2018</b>
<i>Otago degree(s)</i>	<b>Bachelor of Science</b>
<i>Major(s)</i>	<b>Zoology</b>

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>	<b>Otago credit value</b>
ILAS Seminar-E2: Methods in Ecology and Natural History	English	-	9
Introduction to Hydrology-E2	English	-	9
Introduction to General Astronomy-E2	English	-	9
Sustainable Forest Environment-E2	English	-	9
Insect-human Interactions-E2	English	-	9
ILAS Seminar-E2: Urban Pest Management	English	-	9

*Any comments about these papers?*

They were all taught in English but class may be a little slow as the Japanese students in the class do not have such a good command of the language.

*How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?*

It was less intensive per paper. Instead there were more papers to take to acquire broader knowledge on many different topics.

### Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

I stayed on the student hostel on campus so it was very convenient to go to classes. It was ensuite and fully furnished. The room was a little small, but the rental was about 39000 yen a month. Similar to that in otago but more privacy.

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

Accommodation: 39000 yen a month

Electricity and water bill: 2000-3000 yen a month

Flights: I flew from Singapore to kansai international airport so it would definitely be cheaper than flying from new Zealand. Cost me about 800 dollars return.

Visa: About 50 dollars

Food: There's a school cafeteria that serves at really affordable prices at about 500 yen per meal. I spent about 10000 yen a week on food.

Insurance: There was mandatory insurance of about 4000 yen by the school and an additional 5000 yen for national health insurance.



*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

I recommend changing money to cash before going over as it is a very tedious process to even set up a bank account there if you are staying for only 6 months. Most banks would not allow you to set up a bank account there.

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

Yes. As a Singaporean, I did it in my home country by going to the Japanese embassy there with the relevant documents.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes. At about 4000 yen but at the end of the semester I could collect it back.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

The university would at times organise events for exchange students. I went for one, which taught us how to make shichimi (Japanese spice). Also there are many clubs and circles to join but some of them may turn down exchange students from joining. I joined the university futsal club. The training was quite intense, but it was enjoyable. I got to mix and interact with the local students that way.



*What was the university/ city like?*

The university was very huge with several campuses spread out throughout Kyoto. Locals were extremely kind and polite.

Kyoto was a very bustling city due to the high amount of human traffic from tourism. It has the most cultural sites in Japan with many famous temples and shrines. There were less shops to visit as the downtown area was smaller than bigger cities like Osaka and Tokyo.

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

Visit the shrines and temples. Also look up the timetable for the different festivals and enjoy their atmosphere.

*Any tips for future students?*

Buy a bicycle and cycle everywhere. Transport cost is pretty expensive at 230 yen per bus ride.

## **Overall Experience**

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

One thing I did not fancy was the amount of paper work I had to do there. I had to go to the ward office to sign up for insurances and register my address which took about half a day. And when I was leaving Kyoto I had to go back to the ward office again to cancel all of that. It was a pretty inefficient system but well it was Japan and they are still pretty backward when it comes to this sort of things. I loved my time in Kyoto and would definitely recommend this to other students. I am a pretty outdoorsy type so I cycled almost everywhere around Kyoto, including to parts of Osaka and Lake Biwa. I also travelled to various places in Japan like Nagano where the northern alps are and Toyama to see the firefly squid fishery. The food in Japan was exceptional as well, especially the beef and seafood. And that is what I loved most about Japan - the nature and food.



