



Japanese

Study languages: make the world your place

“Studying Japanese at Otago gave me the foundation to follow my dream to come to Japan. It taught me that communication is about making connections, having an open mind and thinking abstractly to overcome language barriers.”

Kimberley Smith BCapSc Consumer Food
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Assistant Language Teacher, JET Programme

To learn Japanese is to gain direct access to one of the world's most sophisticated, dynamic, and fascinating cultures – and to the large and wealthy market of one of New Zealand's major trading partners. Japanese culture blends the best of East and West, of cutting-edge modernity and unique tradition, of high-tech innovation and high-cultural style. It is the culture that has given us award-winning manga and anime, the mysteries of Zen, the delectable tastes of sushi and tempura, and the great fun of karaoke – not to mention the world's shortest poems and longest novels! Japanese culture has something to interest everyone.

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Why study Japanese

Japan is one of New Zealand's major trading partners and one of the world's richest and largest markets, therefore your knowledge of Japanese language and culture will be highly valued by many New Zealand or overseas employers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, primary and secondary schools, tourism industries, research institutes, law firms and translation services, and the many New Zealand businesses that trade with Japan, all require university graduates not only proficient in Japanese language but familiar enough with Japanese customs and culture that they are able to interact successfully with Japanese people.

Your study of Japanese language and culture will also be immeasurably enriching to you on a personal level. Whether you're interested in anime cartoons or Zen meditation, in the novels of Haruki Murakami or the films of Hayao Miyazaki, in the high aesthetics of Japanese food or Tokyo fashion, in flower arrangement, rock gardens, martial arts, tea ceremony, or any of the many other fascinating aspects of Japanese culture, this culture has so much to offer. It will enrich you intellectually and spiritually for the rest of your life.

Background required

No former training is required, because we offer introductory Japanese for absolute beginners. If you have studied Japanese at secondary school for several years, you can enter our Intermediate Japanese papers directly, and study toward advanced levels.

Careers in Japanese

There are many opportunities open to students who major in Japanese. While some opt for careers in foreign relations, trade, commerce and tourism, others choose an academic path, such as teaching Japanese at schools in New Zealand or going on to MA and PhD degrees at Otago or elsewhere. A number of our graduates have also spent time in Japan under the Japanese government's JET Programme. They work as assistant language teachers at Japanese schools or as coordinators for international relations at local government offices.

Student Exchange

In order to maximize students' contacts with the language, culture and society of Japan, Otago University has established exchange relationships with seven Japanese universities. They are Bunkyo Gakuin University, Hirosaki University, Ochanomizu University, Otaru University of Commerce, Risscho University, University of Tokyo, and Yokohama National University. If your marks average B or better, you may qualify to attend one of these institutions for one or two semesters. You pay only your New Zealand fees, and complete your qualification within the same time-frame as if you had never been away. Competitive scholarships from the Japanese government, the Japanese universities and Otago University are also available to support students on exchange.

Japanese at Otago

Japanese is a major of the Bachelor of Arts, a three-year degree programme. BA Honours in Japanese requires an extra year, and students are usually required to complete an 'in-country study' programme in Japan. We also offer the Diploma in Language or the Diploma in Language and Culture for students who major in other subjects. Minors in Japanese Language or Japanese Culture are available too. Students who are interested in conducting further research on Japanese language and culture can join our MA or PhD programmes.

Teaching style

We teach Japanese with communicative methods and simultaneously develop students' skills in speaking, reading, listening and writing. Frequent tutorials are provided to help students practice in small groups with native speakers. The core papers aim to develop students' competency in the language to a level which enables them to read and converse without serious difficulty.

We teach Japanese culture through Japanese film, literature, history and society. There is a good balance between lectures taught by teachers and seminars involving students' discussions and presentations. Training in critical thinking, research, and academic writing is provided in all our culture papers.

Double major / degree options

Many students not only choose to study Japanese as a major subject for the BA or BA Honours, but also like to combine it with other major subjects such as Anthropology, Asian Studies, Chinese, Commerce, Education, English, Film and Media Studies, Geography, History, Information Science, Law, Linguistics, Politics, Religious Studies, Sociology, and Tourism.

Professional options

Combining another BA major or degree with Japanese certainly increases students' options in the job market. Those who want to teach Japanese at primary or secondary schools need to have a BA in Japanese and a teaching qualification. Those wishing to serve as diplomats might combine Japanese with subjects such as Law or Political Studies. Those interested in teaching English in Japan usually find English or Linguistics a useful subject to go along with Japanese. Another attractive combination is a Japanese major with a degree in Commerce or Science, which opens up students' employment opportunities in Japan-related firms.

PROFILE

Kimberley Smith

BCApSc Consumer Food Science and Marketing, DipLangC Japanese
Assistant Language Teacher, JET Programme

I enjoyed the challenge of learning Japanese at high school so deciding to study it at the University of Otago was an easy choice for me. The flexibility of the Diploma in Language and Culture allowed me to study Japanese while undertaking my degree.

A couple of years ago I was accepted into the JET programme as an assistant language teacher, and moved to a rural fishing village in northern Japan. Living in a small community certainly has its challenges, but the experience of living and working here is amazing. It's been a great opportunity to improve my Japanese and I've loved becoming part of the community. Being in the countryside, not many of my students are exposed to the wider world and I can act as that link, encouraging students to think beyond their own experiences.

Language learning is more than acquiring a set of knowledge; it is about discovering a different perspective and culture. The Japanese programme staff at Otago encouraged us to think critically in order to deepen our

understanding of both language and culture. The course included relevant and current content, which made language learning really accessible. I still remember the first time I understood a Japanese newspaper article and the sense of achievement this gave me! The small class sizes created a relaxed and open environment where we could ask questions and receive one on one attention. The staff members were all approachable outside of class and willing to go the extra mile to help us. This support was one of the things I loved most about my time at Otago.

Studying Japanese at Otago gave me the foundation to follow my dream to come to Japan. It taught me that communication is about making connections, having an open mind and thinking abstractly to overcome language barriers. It prepared me well for life in Japan, and I know that these skills will also be useful in whatever path I choose to follow next.



For questions about
Japanese
otago.ac.nz/japanese

