

Student Exchange Evaluation  
Host University: Keio University, Japan  
Exchange Semester: 2016 First & Second Semesters  
BA, COSC major and Japanese language minor  
While on exchange I studied towards my Japanese language minor



I enjoyed my year in Japan, and it was one the best experiences of my life. I learned a lot about Japanese culture and was able to improve my Japanese a lot. Life in Tokyo was pretty easy going and very convenient. There was plenty to do and the food was great. Also, it was fun to learn about the cultural differences between Japan and NZ. Student life there was also a lot of fun as you'll meet many interesting people at your dormitory or through club and circle activities. It was also a lot of fun travelling around Japan. Overall going on exchange was a lot of fun and I gained many fond memories along the way, and I would encourage others to try to go on exchange to Japan too, especially if you are serious about learning Japanese.

## Study at Keio University

International Students can choose from two programmes, JLP (Japanese Language Programme) and KIP (Keio International Programme).

JLP focuses on Japanese and is great for those who want to improve their Japanese. The course aims to improve students' ability in all four areas of language. Students are also split up into levels based on their level of proficiency in Japanese and take classes corresponding to their level. JLP classes are conducted in Japanese. These classes helped my Japanese a lot and are invaluable for those who are serious about learning Japanese.



KIP is for those who wish to study papers outside of Japanese language. The KIP courses are conducted in English and you can choose from a wide variety of papers from different subjects. KIP is great if your main focus isn't Japanese language.



The minimum number of papers you must take in a semester is seven. Each paper has one class a week and are 90 minutes long. This means you will likely be spending at least 10.5 hours per week in classes.

There is also a large number of clubs and circles at Keio University. These are a great way to meet people and make new friends, have a lot of fun and improve your Japanese along the way. Also, a lot of a Japanese university student's social life is centred around clubs and circles. I would strongly

recommend future students to join a circle. Circles like KOSMIC can be great to join if you are not sure which to join. KOSMIC is a circle that organises lots of fun events for both international and Japanese students.

Overall, I had a great time at Keio University, and I think you would have a great time there too!

## Accommodation

I lived in the Keio Omori student dormitory, one of Keio University's student dormitories. The Omori dormitory is located in the Ota ward, in the southern part of Tokyo. This dormitory houses about 120 residents, which included about 20 international students when I was there.

The rooms are quite small, but you have a desk, single bed, a sink, wardrobe/storage cupboard and an air conditioner. Breakfast and dinner were also provided every day except Sunday and holidays. The meals were good, healthy and they had a good variety meaning you were unlikely to see the same meal twice in a month.



Commuting to university usually took around 45 minutes by train and foot and most popular spots such as Shinjuku and Shibuya took around the same time.

I enjoyed living here and I think it was a good decision to live in a dormitory because there is a sense of community that helps you feel more at home and helps you get used to living in Japan.



## Things to Do & Places to Visit

There is probably something for everyone in Tokyo, from large shopping complexes, cat cafes, busy tourist spots, to the beautiful parks. There are quite a few sightseeing spots within Tokyo, and with the many festivals held over the year, many places to eat and drink, and the many places to shop there is never a shortage of things to see and do.

Also, travelling around Japan is very convenient because you can get to pretty much anywhere in Japan within a day with the bullet train and there are many wonderful spots to visit. Just be ready for lots of people because the popular tourist spots can get really busy and crowded at times. There were plenty of opportunities to travel thanks to there being quite a few public holidays and a long summer break.

## Food

The food in Japan was great. It was healthy, relatively cheap, and most importantly really tasty. Also with the abundance of vending machines and convenience stores you always have quick access to food & drink - things that I miss after returning to NZ. Another cool thing about Japan is that each prefecture has their own speciality foods, so if you get the chance to travel about be sure to try as many as possible.



## Some Tips for Future Students

- The more you know Japanese the better I think your exchange experience will be, you will be able to spend more time with Japanese students rather than just international students.
- Working a part-time job can be good not just for some extra money, but also great for improving your Japanese.
- Make the most of your time over there, one semester is really short and two semesters doesn't feel much longer.
- Buy a SIM card from shops like Bic Camera instead of signing up for a contract if you want to save some money on the phone bill. Just make sure your phone will work on the Japanese networks beforehand, iPhones seem to work fine over there.
- Make sure you take plenty of money over for the first couple of months.
- Beware of the different semester dates. The semesters in Japan usually last from April to July and from September to early February.