



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Hokkaido University
Semester & Year of Exchange	Summer School (Jun-July 2019)
Otago degree(s)	BSc (Hons)
Major(s)	Geology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
3D Earth Structure - from the field to the drillcore	English	-	-
Multiscale geophysical characterisation of Earth materials, and application to scientific drilling	English	-	-
Interpretation of past Earth environments from core samples	English	-	-

Any comments about these papers?

Overall the three courses together were called "Postgraduate short course in 3D Structural Geology, Paleoenvironmental and Geophysical Methods, for Scientific Drilling", and were worth 10 points at Otago.

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

The course was taught from 9 am – 6 pm with an hour break for lunch. In the morning, these were in classroom group lecture style where students were encouraged to ask questions. In the afternoon

students would generally have a practical exercise using what we had been learning that morning. The course also involved a 3-day field trip at the end of the course.

Accommodation

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

As there were two other Otago students also attending the course, we decided to split accommodation together and stayed in an Air-BnB apartment, as the Uni accommodation was further away and the same price/more expensive. The apartments in Japan are very small, and difficult to find. Three of us stayed in a one-bedroom apartment (lounge and kitchen were the same room, with a bathroom and toilet separate), and slept on couches that pulled out into beds, or on provided mattresses.

Money matters

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

From memory my flight from Auckland to Sapporo and return from Osaka to Auckland was ~ \$1300 NZD, however I still had to get connecting flights to and from Auckland and from Sapporo to Osaka which made it more expensive. Accommodation worked out to be around \$25 a night, and similar prices for backpackers. I ate out every day for dinner with my classmates, with an average meal costing maybe \$8 – \$12 NZD. The University had a cafeteria where all the students ate, and average meals were roughly \$5 NZD. Travel insurance was about \$80 NZD.

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

I used cash and took extra NZD to convert if I ran out. I would recommend getting an international debit card or something similar to save this hassle though.

Visas & Insurance

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

No visa required for Kiwis if in Japan for less than 90 days.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

We had a BBQ with the professors and students on the course. We also had a 3-day field trip at the end of the course which was quite social. Because of the short timeframe of the course and the large days, most of the socialising with classmates was done in the evenings.

What was the university/ city like?

Sapporo was a beautiful city, very well laid out and easy to get around. Everything was very clean and modern. The university was slightly older and spread out, and more difficult to navigate.

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

Go to the Sapporo beer museum, the mall street area of Sapporo, definitely go up the gondola to see the sunset, and a day trip to Otaru is a great idea. I also went to Kyoto, which was an amazing city full of temples and friendly people. The craft beer scene is big in Japan so doing a few tastings is a great idea. Foods to try: Okonomiyaki, Wagyu Beef, Ramen from Ramen Alley in Sapporo.

Any tips for future students?

Sort out a metro pass as soon as you get to the airport, and make sure you buy some extra data for your cell phone to use as navigating can be very confusing. Google maps is a saviour, change your mode of transport to bus/underground and it tells you everything to do. Also, choose accommodation close to an underground station.

Overall Experience

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

Traveling to Japan for a short course exchange was an amazing experience. Japan was a country that wasn't on my immediate bucket list, so I was very lucky to get the opportunity to go there. The course I did only had about 12 people doing it, so everyone got to know each other very well. Nearly every night during course, we would all go out for dinner with each other when class finished which was great fun. I spent most of my time on exchange in Sapporo, which is a relatively new city so is well laid out and modern. The Japanese people were always very friendly, polite and accommodating to tourists but rarely spoke much English. At the end of my exchange I spent three days and nights in Kyoto, which was a beautiful city. There are old temples literally everywhere you walk, and the city is better suited for tourists (However, major tourist attractions like Fushimi Inari Taisha can be very busy). The food in Japan is so different to anything I was used to back home (except for sushi etc), so this was also a novelty. The highlights of my trip would have been eating Beef Wagyu in Kyoto and going up Mt. Moiwa in Sapporo to see the sunset.





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