



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information: Sakura Aoki-Danielson 1090982

Otago degree(s)	Law & Commerce	Major(s) International Business (Japanese)
Host University	Keio University, Tokyo Japan	Semester & Year of Exchange 1,2018

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Essential Japanese K4	Japanese		1
Written Communication K4	Japanese		1
Daily Communication K5	Japanese	300 level	1
Business Communication K5	Japanese	300 level	1
Management Strategy of MNE in East/ Southeast Asia	English		2
Adaptation to Japanese Cutlure	English		2
Japanese understanding through cross-cultural comparison	English		2
Policy Implications of Globalisation in Asia			

Any comments about these papers?

The Japanese language classes are abit more demanding in terms of work load and the teaching speed in comparison to Otago. Don't let the 1 credit fool you, you need to be prepared to put in abit of work for these papers.

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

The classes tend to be small and so classes are more similar to a tutorial rather than a lecture, they are 1 hour and 30 minutes long, however unlike Otago they are only once a week.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Motosumiyoshi International Dormitory which was a mix of exchange students and local students. The room itself was built in 2018 and it was incredibly clean and the facilities were great, it came with your own bath tub and shower, toilet, desk, large closet space and bed. At this dorm you have the option of purchasing breakfast and/or dinner in the cafeteria, as well as having the option to cook in the kitchenettes attached on each floor. The floors were divided by gender, and the opposite gender did not have access to that floor and vice versa. Keep in mind all the dormitories are closer to the Hiyoshi campus, than the Mita campus which is where the majority of classes for the exchange students take place, via train it takes 35mins and a 10min walk to campus from there. Be prepared to commute if you stay in one of the dorms! Overall most students stayed in a dorm due to the difficulties of renting in Japan as a non-japanese, they are accessible, great amenities and it is a great place to make friends as well! In terms of the 'partying' life-style my dorm it was the antithesis to the experience I had in my Otago dorm, and so if you are seeking more of this experience I suggest you apply for Shimoda Student Village.

Money matters

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

Motosumiyoshi International Dormitory was one of the more expensive dormitories due to its new amenities, rent was around 75,000 yen per month which also includes electricity, water etc. Air New Zealand has some great deals to Japan at the moment and those who plan ahead can purchase return tickets for \$1200. National Insurance in Japan is compulsory and costs 1,600 yen per month which you pay at the convenience stores. In terms of food I found it much cheaper to eat out than cook for yourself, vegetable and fruit prices are almost triple what we pay in New Zealand where as the cost of eating out is almost half of what we would pay in New Zealand.

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

Japan is a cash based society! Cash is a necessity as not all places offer the option to pay by card. Although it is recommended that exchange students open up a bank account at a bank recommended by the university, however due to international transfer fees being high, I instead chose to withdraw cash from the 7-11 ATM machines which accept international cards and is in english, each transaction cost \$7.50NZD however this was cheaper in comparison to international transfers.

Visas & Insurance

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

Warning, Japan LOVES paperwork! However applying for a visa was relatively straight forward and quick, as soon as the COE (which is sent from Japan) arrives in NZ the process was fast.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, Japanese national insurance is mandatory for all exchange students. This will be explained to you upon signing into your nearest ward office.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Join a circle! A circle is where the majority of Japanese students befriend one another and form close relationships based on similar interests. I joined KOSMIC which is a circle aimed at integrating local and international students. We went on a trip to Mt Fuji at a traditional styled backpackers, and this was definitely one of my highlights during the exchange!

What was the university/ city like?

It's Tokyo, what's not to love! The hustle and bustle of Tokyo is on another level in comparison to NZ, however I can assure you you will never ever get bored of it. The university itself was great, Mita campus is relatively small tucked away among skyscrapers, and the daily view of the Tokyo Tower made commuting to university that more pleasant.

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

Check out the main hubs in Tokyo such as Shibuya, Shinjuku, Harajuku, Asakusa, Ginza but I definitely recommend checking out Daikanyama, Omotesando, Aoyama which are my three favourite areas in Tokyo. In terms of places to eat, try everything, but if you are anything like me and appreciate a bowl of broth, head to the infamous Jiro Ramen! Please do not hesitate to reach out to me on Instagram for more tips or things to do in Tokyo @sakuraaoki.

Any tips for future students?

Be open minded! Ask why? Don't resist things that you don't understand or are different from what you may otherwise be used to. Japan is Japan, it is not New Zealand.

Overall Experience

First and foremost I would like to thank Otago University for providing us with the opportunity to study abroad, as cliché as this may sound, my time studying at Keio University in Tokyo, Japan was truly a life changing experience, and it is one I will never forget. As a half Japanese student raised in New Zealand, to be given the opportunity to experience daily life in Japan was a core shaker to say the least, and for those of you who are seeking a deep cultural experience should look no further. Japan is completely unique, and it is true when people say there is nowhere else in the world quite like Japan.

Japan is one of those countries whose culture is so highly contextualised that it's beyond fascinating to experience on a daily basis. Everyday I learnt something new, whether it was how to tuck myself

away into a safe corner on the morning rush hour train, or the continuous emphasis on being considerate to those around you, skills and knowledge you can only learn through first hand experience. You can go from the world's renowned bustling Shibuya crossing to a shrine tucked away in a side street less than 250m down the road, and the food, wow! Even if you do not speak the language, do not let this dissuade you from considering Japan, the Japanese are all incredibly willing to help and the hospitality I received both within my dorm as well as from the university was outstanding. I also believe it can be a humbling experience to not be fluent in the native tongue, and although at times I felt like I was lost in translation, this experience was one of personal growth, perseverance and all the while I was able to create life-long friendships with both exchange and Japanese students. In other words, I have had the time of my life.

