Japan, Sapporo – Hokkaido University Exchange
2015-2016 ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The Sapporo, Japan program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with Hokkaido University. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbooks or materials you receive from Hokkaido University as well as the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to IAP at UW-Madison.

This program handbook contains the following information:

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Contact Information

ON-SITE PROGRAM INFORMATION

Your primary contact will be:

Student Exchange Office
International Affairs Division
Hokkaido University
Kita 8, Nishi 8, Kita-ku
Sapporo, 060-0815
Japan
ryugaku@oia.hokudai.ac.jp
http://www.isc.hokudai.ac.jp/www_ISC/cms/cgi-bin/index.pl?page=index&view_category_lang=2

UW-MADISON INFORMATION

International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
106 Red Gym, 716 Langdon St.
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-265-6329 Fax: 608-262-6998
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Andy Quackenbush
Study Abroad Advisor
Phone: (608)265-6329
quackenbush@studyabroad.wisc.edu

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, contact your on-site staff first using the emergency contact information provided on-site. For IAP emergency contact, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff member on call at (608) 516-9440. If you call the main IAP number after hours, the message will direct you to call the emergency number, so it’s a good place to start if you’re not sure about the time difference.

U.S. EMBASSY REGISTRATION

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.
## Program Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 2 (Autumn)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>Early October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Recess</td>
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<td>Final Examinations</td>
<td>Late January-Early February</td>
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<td>Spring Vacation</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Semester 1 (Spring)</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>Early April - Late July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examinations</td>
<td>Late July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hokkaido University will provide a detailed program calendar prior to departure.

## Preparation Before Leaving

### IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

**Passport:** A passport is needed to travel to Japan and to obtain your visa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application materials can be found on the U.S. State Department website. If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

**Visa:** In addition to your valid passport, you must have a student visa to enter Japan. A Certificate of Eligibility for the status of resident College Student is required to obtain a student visa and must come directly from the Japanese host university. The Certificate will be mailed to you during the summer prior to the program. You will need to present the Certificate along with your passport and visa application to the nearest Japanese Consulate. More information about this is available in the Travel & Visa section of your MyStudyAbroad account.

### HANDLING MONEY ABROAD

The official currency of Japan is the yen (JPY or ¥). When you arrive in Japan, be sure to have adequate funds to cover your initial needs (including housing), pay for transportation expenses, purchase furnishings and other necessities for your room, and any other expenses that may arise. You will want to have approximately $1000 available to you for the first several weeks. You may wish to bring a small amount in cash and the rest in traveler's checks, which you may cash upon arrival. While you will likely not spend all your arrival funds, keeping your money in traveler's checks will safeguard against emergencies, and cash flow will be especially important in the first weeks as you get accustomed to the higher costs of living.
**Banks:** Unlike the United States, personal checks are not used in Japan; it is very common to do all of your banking and money transactions using cash or inter-bank transfers. To facilitate your access to money, it is recommended that you open a bank account as soon as you complete your Alien Registration (gaikokujin toroku) at your residential ward office (kuyakusho) (staff from the International Student Center can assist you).

You should open an account soon after arriving because your monthly rent will be withdrawn from your bank account if you live in Sophia subsidized housing. Once you have opened your account, be sure to take your bank book to the International Center so they can set up the rent withdrawal process.

To fund your new account, consider a wire transfer, cash, traveler’s checks, or international postal money order. International postal money orders may be purchased at certain U.S. post offices for a small fee (approximately $5) and can be cashed at any post office in Japan (cashing at a bank can take up to one month). After you open account, note that your statements and all transactions will most likely be in Japanese (CitiBank offers statements in English and as well as bank employees that speak English).

Banks in Japan are open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Post offices also offer many banking services, including cashing of International Postal Money Orders, access to ATMs, and acceptance of payments for phone, insurance, and utility bills. Post-Banks do not require any initial deposit, and do not have any minimum amount that must remain in your account. There is also no required length of the time and the account can be closed very easily, thus they are a very convenient option.

Postal Savings [www.yu-cho.japanpost.jp](http://www.yu-cho.japanpost.jp)

UFJ [www.bk.mufg.jp](http://www.bk.mufg.jp)

Mizuho [www.mizuhobank.co.jp](http://www.mizuhobank.co.jp)

Sumitomo Mitsui [www.smbc.co.jp](http://www.smbc.co.jp)

**Traveler’s Checks:** Traveler’s checks in U.S. dollars and other denominations can be exchanged for yen at most banks with exchange services and at major hotels and department stores throughout Japan (a passport is required). CitiBank and American Express traveler’s checks are the most widely accepted.

**ATM/Debit cards:** If you open a Japanese bank account, a cash card for automatic teller machines will be issued to you by mail free of charge. You may withdraw yen using your cash card at any ATM run by your bank. If you use another bank’s ATM or withdraw outside of peak hours, there is a service charge of approximately ¥105. Most ATMs are open until 9:00 p.m., except on Saturdays and Sundays when many of them are closed after 5:00 p.m. Convenience stores have ATMs which support most major bank cash cards, and many have begun offering 24 hour services. There is a ¥210 service charge for weekends and holidays.

To withdraw yen using your U.S. ATM/debit card, consider visiting a Japanese post office, as ATM machines in Japanese banks accept only cards issued by Japanese banks while post offices will accept foreign bankcards operating on the Cirrus (MasterCard) or PLUS (Visa) systems. Seven Eleven ATMs also accept foreign debit cards. Machines are available only during limited hours (depending on the bank, until 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. weekdays and up to 5:00 p.m. on weekends). Besides post offices, other places
with ATMs that may accept foreign-issued cards include Citibank (which usually accepts both Visa and MasterCard and sometimes American Express as well), large department stores, and airports.

Credit cards: Japan is primarily a cash-based society, with most establishments not accepting credit cards for purchases. Credit cards may be used for obtaining cash and paying for accommodations, meals at expensive restaurants, train or air tickets, and major purchases. The most readily accepted cards are MasterCard (also called Eurocard), Visa, and the Japanese credit card JCB (Japan Credit Bank). Train passes can now be used as payment at many department stores and convenience stores. This is another way to carry money around without having to carry bills and coins.

PACKING

While most things are readily available in Japan, some items may be more expensive, difficult to be mailed internationally, or simply inconvenient to purchase there; hence, you may wish to bring particular items with you from home. Recommendations include:

Passport-size photos: 2 extra passport-size photos (for ID cards, forms, and applications)

Clothes: Temperatures in Tokyo can range from about 10 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to 100 and humid in the summer. Hence, a wide range of clothing sufficient for the entire year is necessary:

- Comfortable shoes – you will do a lot of walking.
- For men, semi-dress pants like cotton khakis.
- Women should make sure they have at least one dress or skirt.
- Collared long sleeve shirts are useful. You can wear them under sweaters in the winter and roll the sleeves up during autumn and spring.
- Jeans for casual wear.
- Shorts (comfortable to wear at home in the summer, but are seldom worn by Japanese students to school).
- Rain jacket/rain boots – Japan has a rainy season. Some past participants have found these helpful.
- Some club sports and extracurricular organizations may have events where you are required to wear a black suit.

Personal Items:

- Deodorant (it is difficult to purchase U.S.-style anti-perspirant in Japan)
- Sheets/pillow (if your dorm does not provide them)
- Any over-the-counter medicines you think you may need. While it is possible to get Japanese brands of over-the-counter medicines, if there is something you are accustomed to using often (pain relievers, cold medication, etc) you may wish to bring it with you.
- Contact lens solutions in Japan differ from American brands and American brands can be difficult to find, so you might want to bring your preferred brand.
**Prescription Medications:** A one-month supply of prescription medication is allowed. Medications must be in their original container with the prescription label. Most prescription drugs are permitted, including drugs that may not be available in Japan, such as birth control pills. Drugs that are hallucinogenic, narcotic, and/or psychotropic in nature will be confiscated, except in extenuating circumstances where prior approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. If more than one month's supply is required, prior permission from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare in Japan is required:

Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare
www.mhlw.go.jp/english/
http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html

Be sure to have a copy of the prescription and/or letter from your prescribing physician explaining the nature of the medication, the purpose of taking it, recommended dosage, and frequency of ingestion.

Past participants have also had prescription medications sent to them via air mail. Check with your local post office and pharmacy for information about regulations.

### Travel and Arrival

You are responsible for arranging your own transportation to Sapporo. The major airport near Sapporo is New Chitose International Airport (CTS) [www.new-chitose-airport.jp](http://www.new-chitose-airport.jp). Most students will fly into Tokyo’s Narita International Airport (NRT) [www.narita-airport.jp](http://www.narita-airport.jp). If you need to get from Narita to central Tokyo:

**Transportation from Narita into Tokyo:**

Narita airport is located about 35 miles outside of Tokyo and there are several options for transportation with ranging costs and times:

**By Taxi:** Taxi rides are quite expensive in Japan. While taxis can be convenient, the ride from Narita airport into Tokyo has costs as high as 20,000 yen and the drive takes between an hour and a half to two hours or longer depending on the traffic situation.

**By Bus:** Buses run regularly from the airport to various stations and hotels in the Tokyo area. The Airport Limousine Bus Service is a popular choice and tickets can be bought at the airport terminals after your arrival. The buses run from every hour to up to 3 or 4 times an hour and the costs is about 3,000 yen. The buses pick passengers and their baggage up outside of terminal one and terminal two and the rides varies from an hour and a half to two hours depending on the destination and on traffic.

**By Train:** There are varying degrees of local and express trains from Narita into Tokyo. Via local train, the ride starts at around 90 minutes and the costs vary depending on the type of train. However, there is no luggage rack on the train and no seat reservations so you may end up standing in a crowded train. To avoid this there are two specialty trains running from Narita into Tokyo;
Narita Express (East Japan Railways): The Narita express train runs from Terminal one and Terminal two of Narita airport and stops in various stations within Tokyo including Tokyo station and Shinjuku station. The cost is about 3,000 yen and the ride takes about an hour. There are luggage racks in each train car and train tickets can be purchased in advance.

Narita Express: https://www.jreast.co.jp/e/nex/index.html

Keisei Skyliner (Keisei Railways): The Skyliner departs from Terminal one and Terminal two of Narita airport and reaches Ueno Station a short 40 minutes later with one stop at Nippori station. The cost is about 2,000 yen. There is an area on each train car to place luggage bags and tickets can be purchased in advance or after you arrive at the airport.


Baggage Delivery Service (takkyubin): If you are traveling with multiple large suitcases or simply don’t want to have to worry about your luggage, there are many baggage delivery services available. You can bring your bag(s) to one of the baggage service counters in the airport and they will deliver your bag to your destination. The cost per piece of luggage depends on the size and the destination, with costs from 2,000 to 4,000 yen. It is usually next day delivery so you might want to keep some necessities and a change of clothes with you. These same services also do baggage pick-up for when the time come to return to the airport. Baggage can also be dropped off at many convenience stores across Japan and be picked up from a counter in Narita Airport.

The Academic Program

HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Hokkaido University is located in the center of Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido. Founded in 1876 as Sapporo Agricultural College, the first higher educational institution for agricultural studies in Japan, Hokkaido University is now one of the major national universities in Japan. The University consists of 12 faculties, 16 graduate schools, and 24 research institutes, with 3,958 faculty members, and administrative and technical staff, 11,914 undergraduate students, 6,303 graduate students, and 397 research students, as well as 813 international students from 77 countries.

Hokkaido University www.hokudai.ac.jp

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER

The International Student Center (ISC) was established in April 1991 as a cooperative educational research facility. Japanese language teaching had previously been the responsibility of the Institute of Language and Culture Studies; three faculty members from the Institute transferred to the Center, and they were joined by two additional academic appointments.

Health and counseling services for international students were initiated in 1991 on a trial basis by medical staff from the Faculty of Medicine. A new comprehensive system was initiated in 1994, with educational and cultural guidance provided by staff of the Center forming one of three areas of
counseling offered by the University. The Center’s services cater both to overseas students and to Japanese students wishing to study abroad.

Hokkaido University International Student Center www.isc.hokudai.ac.jp/www_ISC/isc-e.php

ORIENTATION
An orientation upon arrival is arranged by the Student Exchange Office, a department in the International Affairs Division. Details on the orientation program are provided to participants during the summer prior to departure.

COURSE INFORMATION
Courses: Participants will take courses through the Hokkaido University Short Term Exchange Program (HUSTEP). HUSTEP is a junior year abroad program designed to provide international students from affiliated universities with the opportunity to study for one academic year in Japan at Hokkaido University.

HUSTEP Courses: Students in this program study Japanese language and take a wide variety of courses offered in English in the fields of Language and Thought, Culture, Society, Environment, Science and Technology. There will also be an opportunity to take part in numerous traditional and contemporary Japanese cultural activities. These courses are usually 2 credits each.


Japanese Language Courses: HUSTEP participants are required to study the Japanese language each semester. Students will take a placement test to determine their language level upon arrival in Japan. Courses are offered at the Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced.

For information on Japanese language courses: http://www.oia.hokudai.ac.jp/current-students/japanese-language-support/

Japanese Studies Courses: Students also take courses taught in English related to Japanese culture. These courses are comprised of both international and Japanese students. Course topics include language and thought, culture, society, environment, and science and technology. These courses are taught for 90 minutes, once a week, and are 2 credits each.

Independent Study: Students may pursue independent study research under the guidance of a Hokkaido faculty member. Each student selects a topic after consulting with their advisor at HU. In the Hokkaido University exchange application, students are able to express their interest in this type of opportunity. Participants should pursue this option upon arrival in Japan. Students receive 2 credits for independent study.

Registration: In the Hokkaido University exchange application, students are asked to list the courses they would like to take at Hokkaido University. Participants will finalize their course selection upon arrival in Japan during orientation.
**Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request Form (CER):** Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request (CER). Detailed information on the UW-Madison course equivalent process is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

For Japanese language courses, you will receive credits for the next course(s) in the UW-Madison Japanese language sequence. Japanese literature classes may be grouped together to form one UW-Madison course equivalent. These course equivalent determinations are made by the Department of East Asian Languages & Literature in consultation with IAP. Courses that are not Japanese language or literature will be reviewed by the appropriate UW-Madison academic department to approve the course equivalent.

**CREDITS**

**Conversions:** The number of credits you receive for a given course at Hokkaido University will convert to the same number of credits at UW-Madison. For example, 2 credits of a Japanese Studies course will convert to 2 credits at UW-Madison.

**Limits and Load:** Upon arrival in Japan, Hokkaido University will advise students on the number of courses they are required to take each semester. All participants are generally recommended to take at least five courses in addition to the Japanese language courses each semester. UW-Madison students are required to follow Hokkaido University policies and transfer back a minimum of 12 equivalent UW-Madison credits each semester.

**PASS/FAIL/DROP/AUDIT**

Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

**GRADES AND GRADE CONVERSIONS**

Grades will be converted according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hokkaido Grade</th>
<th>UW Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA (90-100 pts)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (89-80 pts)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (70-79 pts)</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (60-69 pts)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (0-59 pts)</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Living Abroad

JAPAN

Japan is an archipelago comprised of four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, although thousands of smaller islands occupy the surrounding water. Its climate is temperate, with four seasons, resembling the East Coast. Unlike the East Coast, however, it rains between 40 and 120 inches a year, contributing to Japan's long growing season from early spring to early autumn. Steep hills and mountains cover over 70% of the land which divide the habitable parts of the country. Due to this, Japan is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a population of over 123.6 million people.

Japan has few natural resources, apart from some wood, fish and rivers for hydroelectric power. Unlike most industrialized nations, Japan is almost completely dependent on imports for its raw materials and is one of the world's major importers of oil, coal, iron ore, lumber, cotton, wool and even silk. And even though its farms are among the most productive in the world, Japan still imports much of its wheat and other foods. Nevertheless, no other country in the world with so few natural resources has achieved the level of economic success that Japan has. After World War II, the Japanese people built their country from virtual devastation to a leading economic power. Textile manufacturing was its first success, then shipbuilding. Today, the automobile industry is key, as well as its advancements in a variety of technological industries.

The government in Japan is democratic, with a constitution that guarantees representation and individual rights. Japan has one of the world's oldest unbroken monarchies. And while the Emperor has no governmental power, he performs many state functions.

While most Japanese people do not practice religion on a regular basis, Japan has been influenced by two major religions: Shinto and Buddhism. The basic Shinto belief is that people should live in harmony with all living things. Shinto established a set of ethics that guide the relationships between human beings and nature, and between the individual and society. Buddhism taught that salvation was possible by purging oneself of personal desires and attachment to worldly things. In practice, millions of Japanese are both Shinto and Buddhist, for example, using Shinto rites when they marry and Buddhist funeral rites when they die. The two beliefs are not incompatible. In everyday life, also, the Japanese perspective on morality and ethics has been influenced by Confucianism, which is not a religion but a philosophy of personal behavior. Most Japanese do not consider themselves to be Confucianists, but its concepts of a rational approach to life and society strongly influence the culture.

SAPPORO

Located on the northern island of Hokkaido, Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, is known for its unique history, striking natural beauty, and relaxed character. In a little over a century, Sapporo has grown into one of the main pillars of the nation’s economic prominence. With a population of 1.8 million, Sapporo is Japan’s fifth largest city, and is consistently cited by Japanese as one of the most desirable places to visit and live in Japan. With extraordinary natural surroundings within easy proximity to the city center, Sapporo annually welcomes visitors to a wide range of seasonal events including the celebrated Sapporo Snow Festival, which features large snow and ice sculptures of all designs.
Sapporo provides an excellent quality of life and a cost of living that is thought of as more reasonable as compared to other major cities in Japan. Hokkaido University and the student dormitory are located in the center of Sapporo. Sapporo has a wide variety of attractions including museums, art galleries, shopping and entertainment areas and many parks. Sapporo has a convenient public transportation system so it is easy to get around the city on foot, by subway, bus or train. Chitose International Airport is easily accessible from downtown by train.

Despite its location in a cold climate zone, Sapporo offers four beautiful seasons. Spring is a time of blossoms and lush greenery; pleasant weather from May through June leads into a cool and comfortable summer, with an average temperature of 20 degrees Celsius and average humidity of 77%. In fall, students enjoy rich burning colors of foliage throughout the campus and the Botanical garden of Hokkaido University. In winter, ski enthusiasts visiting Sapporo head straight for the city’s nearby slopes with excellent snow conditions and facilities. Because of the seasonal northwesterly wind, however, the temperature remains moderate at 5 degrees Celsius and average humidity of 71%. On a very cold day, the temperature will drop to -15 degrees Celsius. Snowfall is often heavy, and students should be prepared for these extremes.

Sapporo City Information  www.city.sapporo.jp/city/english/

**HOUSING**

Hokkaido University will provide space in the dormitories for program participants.

Students are responsible for paying for their housing and food. Heat and electricity are included in the rent. Rooms are furnished with a bed, desk and chair. Lounges, common laundry rooms, shower rooms, and kitchens are also provided. The dorms and ISC have computer labs, but many students found it easiest to bring their own laptop. The dorms are open over the holidays.

In addition to dormitories, private apartments near the university are also available, though these are more expensive than the dormitory option.

**Meals:** There are inexpensive cafeterias on campus and several communal kitchens in the dormitories. There are international food shops are in the Tokyu basement and Sony Shop at Sapporo Station.

**STUDENT LIFE**

**Club Activities:** Hokkaido University has a number of clubs that foreign students are able to join during their stay and the International Students Center has information about all of the different student clubs. There is a co-op bar called Apatrida which is run by students. It is a popular place for students to socialize.

**Social Life:** Coffee shops, family restaurants, and bars are nice places to meet with friends. The biggest drawback, however, is that they are quite expensive by U.S. standards. Also be careful when you go out for just a drink, because many bars will require you to eat something along with your drink order, and some may ask for a "table charge". Nightclubs are more expensive than regular bars, so they are seldom frequented by college students except for special occasions and dates. Cover charges are around ¥1000 per person, and you are often expected to order a steady stream of drinks and food for as long as you
remain there. At other clubs, you may pay ¥5000 to ¥10,000 to get in the door, but are treated to a
gourmet dinner and open bar while the band performs.

It is frequently the custom that the bill is divided equally among everyone, regardless of who ordered
what. Thus, a person who ordered only an iced tea winds up being socially pressured into paying his or
her share of a bill when others were drinking beer. Many people do not like this custom, but it is
considered impolite to not pay an equal share of the bill.

SHOPPING
Most stores are open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with most convenience stores open 24 hours. Past
participants recommend ¥100 Shops for buying things you may need for your dorm, including cheap
snacks and drinks. For clothes, past participants recommend Gap and UNIQLO.

TRANSPORTATION
The dormitories are located next to the university, so it is easy to travel between these two facilities by
bike or on foot. A bike is the best means of transportation, with the exception of winter, and most
students are rarely seen without their bikes. Most of the sights of the city are accessible by bike as well.
Otherwise, most students use trains or buses. You will be given the necessary papers for commuter
passes (teikiken) during orientation. Ask your host family, dorm advisors or exchange student friends to
determine which is the best option for you.

Trains: You can purchase a train pass (teikiken) for one, three or six month periods, with six-month
passes being the most economical. To receive the student discount, be sure to show your Japanese
university I.D. card (gakuseisho) when you go to purchase the train pass.

Taxis: Taxis are available at taxi stands, as well as on the street (raise your hand to flag a taxi). Taxi
charges are based on the meter system and are very expensive, costing about ¥650-700 just to get into
one, and then the meter goes up exponentially as distance is covered. There are also “night rates” so be
careful when taking taxis late at night.

SAFETY
Crimes are uncommon, and those that do occur usually involve petty theft or vandalism. However, as in
any new situation, it is better to be somewhat conservative until you are more familiar with the city.
Common sense is the best way to avoid bad situations. Women should be aware of safety issues,
especially on trains. Report any crimes immediately to the local police box (Koban).

HEALTH
The Health Administration Center provides general health care for students. It is open Monday through
Friday from 1:00 to 3:30 pm. There is a free physical checkup offered to students every April at the
Center. Students requiring a health certificate can receive them at this time.
**Insurance:** You are required to join the Japanese National Health Insurance. The rate varies by residential ward, but is relatively low (¥1,300-3,000/month). Most ordinary medical treatments (including dental) are covered by the National Health Insurance.

Full-time international students can also apply for Student Medical Care Assistance (provided by the Japan Student Service Organization). You only need to apply for this after receiving medical care. Forms are available in the International Center. Utilizing these two types of assistance, you can cover a majority of medical fees.

Japanese health facilities will generally not accept foreign insurance policies in lieu of payment. Be prepared to pay all fees for treatment and hospitalization in cash immediately after services are rendered. You will then have to submit the required documents for reimbursement to CISI.

**Student Testimonials**

The quotes below are comments from past participants; they reflect various students' experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

**HANDLING MONEY ABROAD**

Japan has a lack of foreign ATMs, so I’d really recommend opening a bank account in Japan. The Post Office ATMs are virtually the only machines that accept foreign cards. On top of that, their hours are very limited on weekends and the ATMs are CLOSED on holidays, the very times you’ll need money the most. Also, be sure to keep a good chunk of cash on you at all times. Most places do not accept credit cards, and you don’t want to find yourself stuck. It’s relatively safe to carry a lot of money on you.

There are ATMs all over the place, but only some of them take US bank cards. The ISC staff helps you set up a Japanese bank account at the beginning so I mainly dealt in all yen through that account.

**PACKING**

If you’re intending on leaving during the summer, take those summer clothes you feel you will need, and send your winter clothes later on. Take a fall jacket and some long sleeve shirts just in case, but leave your sweaters and winter coat for a later package. At the same time...for guys at least... you don’t need to take as many clothes as you might otherwise think.

Bring DVDs and English novels. You may not think you need them, but one night when you’re bored and missing home you will be thankful you brought them! I ended up lending out DVDs and books to a lot of my friends. Everyone appreciates the familiar TV shows and movies.

Bring enough shoes and clothes for the whole year, especially if you are not petite. Japanese women’s shoes only go up to size 25 (US 8) so you may not be able to find any. UNIQLO and GAP are the cheapest places to shop and offer a wider range of sizes than some other stores, but do be aware that they run smaller than in the US.
If you don’t have a suit, you might want to think about getting one. I ended up needing one for several dorm and club events, for job interviews, and at my part time job as an English teacher.

It’s good to have a few small gifts for teachers who help you out a lot, but don’t overload yourself with little trinkets and gifts or you will end up scrambling to find people to give them to before you go home. WI T-shirts make great gifts because they are cheap, light, and American university apparel is popular in Japan.

Bring winter clothes. Lots of layers are the best way to keep warm. You will not be able to find larger sized clothing and shoes easily. The Gap and Uniqlo are the two places where Americans did their shopping. Make sure to bring at least one or two dressy outfits for the school ceremonies and official functions.

Bringing a laptop is a big help.

**COURSES**
The classes are full of students from all over the world. Japanese classes are in the morning and all the other classes taught in English are in the afternoon. The English-taught courses are much easier than UW courses! The Japanese classes are hard, but not nearly as demanding as the ones at UW.

Make sure you keep up with the work. Don’t flake out for weeks at a time or skip classes on a regular basis.

**STUDENT LIFE**
Joining a student club is a great way to meet Japanese students who share your interests. It's also an excellent opportunity to practice your Japanese. While not all clubs place an emphasis on drinking, many do. Just ask around about clubs' reputations before expressing too strong an interest in joining a particular one. Go to your first club activity saying your study schedule is very hectic and you're worried about being able to participate fully in all social activities. It's always better to be suddenly able to take part in more activities than you thought you could, than to lose face by having to back out of something after you've already committed yourself.

The International Student's Center has all kinds of info on Student clubs. Apatrida is a co-op bar run by a student club and many students hung out and "worked" there.

While club activities at Japanese universities can be very exciting and fun and a great way to make friends and meet new people, they take their club activities very, very seriously, and at times this can get in the way of studies. The key is balance!

There are clubs all over Susukino (the entertainment district) and a huge movie theatre at Sapporo Station. The connecting underground malls are where lots of people spend most of their time shopping. There’s also a gigantic new Kinokuniya Bookstore right outside Sapporo Station.
Fruit and most western foods are really expensive ($1 per apple, for example). But eating out is surprisingly cheap! The prices in Sapporo are roughly equivalent to Chicago or New York in most cases. It just depends on what you want and where you buy it.

**SHOPPING**

There are several CanDo or 100 Yen shops around that are great for buying stuff you need to outfit your room. The best international food shops are Tokyu basement and Sony Shop at Sapporo Station. The Sapporo Factor has a cheap shop for all your ski/snowboarding gear.

**TRAVEL**

Get a SUICA card for JR! You can withdraw money from it as you travel outside of your pass area. It will save you so much time if you don’t have to buy tickets and do fare adjustment all the time.

The Co-op grocery/bookstore on campus has a travel agent in it and you can get all kinds of good deals if you are flexible in your plans. Spring break is a great time to travel because you get almost a month off. Tokyo is of course a cool place to go, but I have to say that Nara and Kyoto are almost otherworldly when you get into the historic site and temple grounds.

Some people went to China and Australia. You HAVE to get a reentry visa! This is extremely important and takes some time to arrange. Plan ahead!

[www.hyperdia.com](http://www.hyperdia.com). Get travel itineraries to and from anywhere in Japan, great when you want to go somewhere new!

**EMPLOYMENT**

You’re not really supposed to work. Talk to the ISC folks about it before you do. Working at Apatrida is about the only kind of thing they like you to do.