Japan, Nagoya – Nanzan University Exchange

ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The Nagoya, Japan program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with Nanzan University. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbooks or materials you receive from Nanzan 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:

Center for Japanese Studies (CJS)
Nanzan University
18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku
Nagoya, 466-8673
Japan
cjs@ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp
http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/English/cjs/

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

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
Program participants are required to attend all official Center for Japanese Studies functions, including the orientation at the beginning of each semester and the closing ceremony at the end of the year. Overseas students scheduling flights to their home countries should take care to plan their departures for after the closing ceremony. More detailed program dates will be available in your MyStudyAbroad account.
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 forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website [http://travel.state.gov/passport/](http://travel.state.gov/passport/). 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 first month’s rent, 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).

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.

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).

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.

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 Nagoya. Major airports near Nagoya are Chebu Centrair International Airport (NGO) www.centrair.jp, Osaka International Airport (ITM) www.osaka-airport.co.jp, and Narita International Airport (NRT) www.narita-airport.jp.

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

NANZAN UNIVERSITY

Nanzan University, Japan’s second largest Catholic university, hosts an undergraduate population of 9,000 students. In 1946, it began as a College of Foreign Languages and has grown to a university with 7 faculties and 11 research institutes and centers. While it has maintained its Catholic orientation, there are many students who attend who do not identify with a particular faith.

Nanzan University www.ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp

CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

At Nanzan University, you will be taking courses within the Center for Japanese Studies (CJS), a department administered by the Center for International Education. CJS offers a special program especially set up for foreign students. CJS classes are taught primarily for foreign students, though some classes are comprised of a combination of foreign students and regular Nanzan University students. Taking regular university courses is not an option for students in the Center for Japanese Studies.

Nanzan University Center for Japanese Studies http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/English/cjs/index.html
ORIENTATION

UW-Madison students are required to participate in an orientation and Japanese language placement test at the beginning of your program at Nanzan University.

COURSE INFORMATION

Courses: Nanzan University publishes course information in its annual brochure, available online at their website.

Japanese Language Courses: The Japanese language courses are divided into classes of different proficiency levels. Each class level is divided into sections consisting of 12 to 13 students. Students will be assigned to an appropriate level based on the results of the Placement Test held at the beginning of each semester.

In the lower level Japanese language classes, English and Japanese are used as the media of instruction. Advanced language classes are conducted entirely in Japanese. The Japanese language courses focus on fostering reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Additional CJS Courses: In addition to required Japanese language courses, students take coursework from the following course types:

A. Japanese Seminar Courses
A high degree of proficiency in the Japanese language is required for participation in the seminars. Most of the seminars are offered in both fall and spring semesters and are conducted mainly in Japanese. Past subjects have included classical, business and university Japanese, translation, reading, and writing courses. These courses are worth 2 credits each.

B. Lecture Courses in Japanese Area Studies
All lecture courses are taught in English by scholars highly qualified in their respective fields, although assignments for some courses may include work in Japanese.

Past subjects have included Japanese business, economy, history, literature, culture and art, religion, politics, foreign policy, and comparative education. These courses are worth 3 credits each.

C. Open Courses
In addition to the lecture and seminar courses offered by the Center, students have the opportunity to study side-by-side with Japanese students in the fall semester by registering for selected courses from the regular undergraduate program at the university. Courses on offer change each academic year, with final lists available before registration each fall semester. Please note that registration for open courses is not available for the spring semester due to the differences between the Center’s academic calendar and the Japanese academic year. Past subjects have included Japanese language pedagogy, linguistics, culture, foreign relations, and comparative political development. Open courses are only available fall semester. These courses are worth 2 credits each.

D. Practical Courses in the Japanese Arts
Students are also eligible to take practical courses in various Japanese fine arts such as *ikebana* (flower arranging), *shodo* (calligraphy), *sumie* (Chinese black ink painting), *hanga* (woodblock printing), and *sado* (tea ceremony). These courses are worth 2 credits each.

**Course Equivalent Requests and My Study Abroad**

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 Requests through your My Study Abroad account. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your My Study Abroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

Please note that every course you take abroad must be awarded an equivalent UW course. There are no exceptions. It is important to start the equivalent process as soon as possible to avoid any delay in posting your study abroad courses to your UW Madison transcript.

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 Nanzan University will convert to the same number of credits at UW-Madison. For example, 6 credits of Japanese Language will convert to 6 credits at UW-Madison.

**Limits and Load:** Full-time CJS students must take between 14 to 18 credits each semester.

**PASS/FAIL/DROP/AUDIT**

Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for Academic Policies.

**GRADERS AND GRADE CONVERSIONS**

Grades will be converted according to the following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nanzan University Grade</th>
<th>UW-Madison Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ / A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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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.

NAGOYA

Nagoya, one of the leading metropolises of international trade, industry and culture in Japan, has a population of over 2 million people and is approximately two hours from Tokyo by fast train. Be prepared for life in a large city, with long commutes, crowded conditions, very high costs, and plenty of concrete. Japanese commuters often spend 2 to 3 hours a day traveling to and from work on the city's buses and subways.

Nagoya City Information: http://www.city.nagoya.jp/en/
HOUSING
The Housing Section takes care of arrangements and can provide the following options. Please note that there are a limited number of places in each category and that it is often not possible to place all students in their first choice of accommodation. Every effort is made to accommodate students in their preferred choice, but flexibility is required. Please remember that accommodation arrangements are on a semester basis and that full-year students may be asked to change quarters after their first semester at the Center.

Homestay: All UW-Madison students are highly encouraged to choose the homestay housing option on this program. Students placed with a host family are able to enjoy experiences not available to students living in a dormitory or a rented room, such as participation in traditional Japanese celebrations like New Year, as well as the experience of acquiring the Japanese language by communicating with a Japanese family through common events in daily life.

Homestays usually include a daily breakfast and supper, and one-way commute times to the university may be between 60 to 90 minutes. Commutes of this length are not unusual in Japan, and many of the students in Nanzan University's undergraduate programs have a daily ride to and from school of over four hours. Nanzan University is located in a major metropolitan area, and host families are recruited from the entire area in order to accommodate as many students as possible. Every effort is made to place students in locations near the University, but commuting is a daily ritual for most of the students attending the Center.

A careful and sincere effort to match students and families is made by the Nanzan University Housing Section. In addition, a comprehensive orientation is held before the start of the school year for host families who will be hosting students, and workshops are held throughout the year for the host families, to help them gain a better understanding of their experiences and to improve the quality of the program.

Off-campus Housing: Off-campus dormitories affiliated with Nanzan are also available.

Meals: On campus, there are three cafeterias, all of which are inexpensive. The University Cafeteria offers a selection of set meals, short orders, noodles, sandwiches and drinks. A set meal with a drink will cost around ¥500. A number of off-campus restaurants are also available within walking distance from the university and meals, without drinks, will average around ¥700. You will need to budget accordingly as lunches are not included in your program costs.

STUDENT LIFE
CJS Activities: CJS organizes a variety of excursions throughout the year to complement the academic program. Trips will vary year to year, but often include visits to such sites such as local industries (Toyota) or Buddhist monasteries. More information about CJS sponsored activities will be available once you arrive.

Club Activities: You are encouraged, as well, to participate as members of the larger Nanzan University in student clubs, festivals and tournaments. Club activities are a great way to meet students; however, many exchange students have found clubs to have significant time commitments. There are some "circles," which are clubs on a smaller scale that involve less time commitment.
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
Commuting distances will vary depending on where you are living. The most inexpensive form of transportation to and from school is a bike—but the long commuting distance between your homestay and school may make biking impractical. 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 option is the best for you.

Buses: The charge for the Nagoya City bus is ¥200 for zone 1. Charges are paid inside the bus. There are also pre-paid “Yurika” cards that are accepted on buses and subways (¥1,000, ¥2,000, ¥5,000), which not only come with a discount, but are convenient as well because they relieve you from the hassle of looking for change.

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 (gakusei-sho) when you go to purchase the train pass. All railway tickets—bullet train or otherwise—can be purchased at Nagoya Station.

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
Nanzan University has a student health clinic equipped to deal with simple illnesses and services are free of charge. If a full examination and hospitalization are necessary, you will be sent to a nearby hospital where you can get a thorough check-up and medication. Very often, a member of Nanzan University’s staff accompanies international students to facilitate the communication with non-English speaking doctors.

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.

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 to be aware that they run smaller than in the US.

It’s good to have a few gifts for host families and 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.

COURSES
Japanese classes in all honesty, are very similar to those taught at UW. The teachers try to speak solely in Japanese depending on your level. Classes (Japanese language courses) encourage you to speak up and ask questions. This usually factors into your grade. They will continue to give you interview tests and have you conduct role plays.

The majority of my time was taken up with Japanese-class work. They will throw a few others into your schedule like Japanese History 101 or Japan in World Politics etc. Typically, these courses will focus on Japan in some way shape or form.

They will test your language ability the first few days at school, thereby determining where you fall into the general scheme of language classes (they do this with a multiple choice/written exam). I myself was put into 600, but asked to drop down a level as I personally felt that my kanji needed improvement. I encourage you to move up or down should you feel the need.

HOUSING
Definitely bring gifts for your host family when you arrive. Be careful not to buy something that says MADE IN CHINA in very small letters on the back. They will notice this. Try to find something that's representative of the area where you live, or America.

Remember that your host family may have had a bad experience with previous students, and they may be somewhat cold or held-back at first. Just be yourself, and always offer to help with everything. Do not use the family as a hotel by going to parties and coming back late at night around 12 or 1 all the time.

Many children in Japan don't help with chores, so if you feel a need to help, do so with the realization that you may create hard feelings with other siblings in the household. At the same time, many students find that when they help out, the children in the house actually start to chip in too! So don't take my word for it. Whatever you do, make sure that you express your appreciation for your family's efforts, and try to help.

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.
Clubs are really expensive, and some require you to have a drink in your hand at all times. Izakayas are fun to eat and drink at, and you can find all you can drink, nomihoudai, or all you can eat, tabehoudai, specials at lots of places. Utilize this, it will save you money. Karaoke is really fun, even if you are not a professional singer. They have a wide selection of Western songs, including some of the newest hits, and its fun to sing Japanese songs too.

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!

I spent time in the cafeteria type area which was generally open for extended hours, and spoke with friends there while also using the free internet service the school had set up. I would occasionally go to sing karaoke at a spot in downtown Nagoya called Onchichi with many of the other exchange students.

If possible, make your own food or eat the food your host family provides. Eating out can add up very quickly. It's fun though, so don't deny yourself any outings just because I said so. Have fun, but in moderation.

Don’t shrug off friendships with other international students. They are valuable friends and understand your frustrations. Welcome the new international students second semester – remember how lost you felt!

Family restaurants (Skylark, Saizeriya, Jonathan’s) are the best places to hang out for very little money. The food may not be very good, but you can stay as long as you like and enjoy the cheap (¥200) drink bar.

Japan is expensive, but it is easy to live frugally. Family restaurants and the cafeterias at Keio are the cheapest places to eat. You can do a lot of shopping for everyday things in the ¥100 shops. Shop at used book stores (Book Off, etc).

If you go out with large groups of Japanese people, be aware that they often split the bill evenly no matter who got what. Sometimes they will take notice of someone who really didn’t eat or drink much and offer to pay that person’s share. This happened to me a lot because I do not drink and can’t eat seafood.

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.

It’s a lot of fun to just get on the trains and see where you end up. Ride to the end of a line you use every day and see what there is to do there.

Spring break is long and you have a lot of time. Sapporo, Kyoto, and Nikko are popular destinations. But be creative! There are lots of fun non-traditional locations to visit.

I found places to travel within Nagoya. I traveled to several castles in the area, including one out in the country called 'Inuyama.' I’d also gone to visit a friend in Osaka a few times during my time abroad. There are chances to go to the Toyota motor plant and Kabuki via school trips etc. Take advantage of them. They’re once in a lifetime chances!
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**

The most popular job for exchange students is being an English conversation partner.

I did not work, though the option existed. I had to focus on my studies, though some people were able to work it into their schedules.