

My Study Program

I wasn't in a program, I was an ordinary exchange student. I managed to go to Osaka University through the international office of the Law department. I went through the procedures there and I was accepted to attend Osaka University.

The Language.

When it comes to the language in Japan, don't expect people to speak English. Outside of the University there aren't a lot of people who speak English that well, if a couple of words. It's the exception to find people with whom you can communicate with in English. This includes public workers, like Conductors or the police so communicating with People can be rather difficult at times if you don't speak Japanese. On the other hand, when it comes to navigation and public signs, there's usually a lot of support. A lot of the signs in Japanese have an Latin alphabet equivalence, so you can navigate your way around the city. A lot of places that are aimed towards foreigners/tourists do naturally have English translations and restaurants advertise when they have an English menu to help. So, in conclusion while it's a boon to speak Japanese, you can definitely survive on only English since a lot of Japanese people do try to help you out even if you can barely communicate with them.

Finance and other conditions,

When it came to my financing I was rather fortunate to be helped by my family to pay for some of the costs that were involved. But I would recommend looking into scholarships besides the Marco Polo Fund. There are multiple websites that are easily found through Google which list a lot of the scholarships that are given out in the Netherlands and the requirements that you need to fulfill to get the scholarship. There's also a scholarship from the Japanese government called the JASSO. When I tried to apply for the scholarship through Osaka University, I was informed that at the time they couldn't apply me for the scholarship. Though this might change in the future, so I would recommend trying to apply for the JASSO. Another thing that you should keep in mind is your visa for Japan. Since there are couple of things that you need to do for your Visa. The first thing is that you need documents from Osaka University to apply for your Visa in the Netherlands, these arrive somewhere in late October/Early September. Once you receive these documents you need to go to the Japanese Embassy in The Hague to deliver your passport and the required documents, then you need to wait a day before you can return to pick up your passport again with the Visa, for me this meant travelling to The Hague twice in 3 days. Something that happened to me is that the documents for my Visa arrived later than expected, because of an issue with the mailing company. This could have caused issues, since I left in early September, since I wanted to go on a vacation in Japan before I started going to the University. So do keep that in mind when you are planning your trip to Japan. If you leave late in September this should pose no issue for you.

Preparations and contacts with the faculty before, during and after.

When it comes to communication with Osaka University, there were two people that were responsible for communication with all the foreign law students at Osaka University. The communication before I left was very responsive and usually only took a day or two to respond,

and they helped me with any questions I had for the preparation. During the stay, there were multiple offices where you could go to when there was anything that you needed and there was a place for international Law students specifically to go to. The communication afterwards was once again perfectly fine with a response time of a couple of days.

Housing

Osaka University has multiple dormitories where international students can reside for their stay. And they will apply you for one of the dormitories automatically, though it's recommended that you also take a look yourself and apply for one just in case. As a Law student most of your classes will be held at the Toyonaka Campus, so I would recommend going for one of the dormitories around there. I personally went to the Tonoyama dorm, which a lot of people saw as the best one, mainly because it was relatively clean in comparison to the others and our dormitory was in a really good location, since it was close to the main train station to Osaka. The dormitory rooms aren't too big, but the rent is cheap, and the living conditions aren't bad and in the case of Tonoyama Dorm we had really sweet manager who helped us if we had any trouble.

Culture

Japanese Culture is very different from western culture, and while I won't go too much into it if you're interested in going I would recommend studying the culture, so you can understand the meaning behind gestures and certain words. But don't worry too much about accidentally breaking a couple of cultural rules on your first time, since the Japanese are very forgiving in that aspect, since you don't know the culture. But do try to mend your ways if it happens a bit too much, since even the Japanese only have so much patience.

Free Time

I had 7 classes during my stay at Osaka University, which is the minimum required number of classes to take. My busiest day was on Monday, during which I had three classes and I had to go to a different campus. Outside of that most days weren't that long, and I even had every Friday off. So there's more than enough Free Time to enjoy your time in Japan, even with doing the assigned homework.

Travelling

When it comes to travelling, you will certainly have your chances. Personally, what I did was I left early in September and travelled around three weeks early before Osaka university started. It's something I highly recommend as it gives you some time to experience Japan, before jumping into the university life. And during University there really isn't an opportunity to travel outside of a short weekend. But there is a small new years vacation of a week during which you can travel. And something which I didn't realize at the start is that the last two months you don't have any classes so that time is open to do whatever you want including travelling and that is when I did most my travelling.

Other

I think I mostly covered what I wanted to talk about in this report. But if you do decide to go to Japan, I hope you truly enjoy your exchange at Osaka University since I certainly did. And if you ever find yourself in Ishibashi there's a little bar called Moooh!! And if you keep an eye out you might spot me in one of the pictures.