

Post Study Abroad Evaluation

THE BASICS			
Your Name	[REDACTED]		
Your Program of Study/Year	JAS Program		
Host Country	Japan		
Host School/Agency	Ryukoku University		
Participation Dates	March-August 2012		
Type of Study Abroad	<input type="checkbox"/> Exchange		
Section 1			
GENERAL EVALUATION			
Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (one being poor and 10 being exceptional)			7
In a couple of sentences, explain why you rated your experience the way you did.	My experience in Japan in general was amazing and definitely a 10/10, however my experience in the dorm was quite the opposite.		
Section 2			
ARRIVAL			
How difficult was it for you to obtain your travel documents (visa, etc.)? *Always verify immigration regulations with the consulate or embassy of your host country*	It was very straightforward once I had been accepted to Ryukoku. All I had to do was to visit the Japanese consulate downtown.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you change any part of those arrangements?	Since I was doing an exchange in Kyoto, the nearest International airport was in Osaka only an hour or two away. Unfortunately, there are no direct flights from Vancouver, so transferring is required.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	Customs went quite well except for a huge lineup!		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	I was greeted at the airport by tutors who spoke a bit of English and were able to help direct me to my dorm.		
Section 3			
ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE			

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to at your host school/agency.	I wished the school had done more to integrate me into day to day life at the school. I wish there had been more activities for us to meet regular students.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office? What was your impression of the international staff or office?	Only a few of the staff even spoke English and usually every time we had a concern they would direct us to our dormitory tutor who seemed to care less about helping us.
What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one? How well did it suit your needs?	I felt the orientation was very thorough unfortunately it happened so early that it was hard to keep track of everything that was being said. In that sense it wasn't very helpful.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site? Were there people you could talk to about what you were experiencing?	Japanese culture was very different but I enjoyed every aspect of it and embraced it with an open mind. There were other foreigners who I met that I could relate with.
How receptive were the local people in providing assistance?	The local people spoke almost no English whatsoever but were super helpful if approached.

Section 4

HOUSING

Describe your accommodation arrangements.	Very large dormitory room, shared living room and kitchen with 1 other person.
How early could you move into housing before term and how long after the end of term were you allowed to stay?	I believe around 1.5 weeks before and after school?
How comfortable were you with your accommodation?	Very comfortable, although the dormitory itself was very isolated and lonely.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	I did a lot of cooking during the week and ate out most weekend! Food in Japan is the best food in the world. No complaints whatsoever!
How close was your accommodation to where you had to study?	10 minute walk to bus + 15 min bus ride. Or you could walk about 1 hour uphill or 20 min bike ride uphill.

Section 5

COURSE REGISTRATION

Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What	The courses were described quite well and you had the option of taking as many classes as you wanted to since I was registered as a fulltime student. However, my options were limited as only a
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assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	handful of classes were taught in English.
How successful were you in registering for classes? What advice would you offer to another exchange student about how to register at your host institution?	The registration process was really easy.
How many courses did you take per semester? What course load would you recommend for future students? What particular courses would you recommend to other students?	I was required to take 8 courses to receive credit for the JAS program so that's what I took. All of the courses were interesting except for 1 of my classes that was a course on New Zealand. I was forced to take that class as I only had 7 classes and was required to take 8. I came to Japan to study about Japan not New Zealand.

Section 6

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	The Japanese language classes themselves were excellent, although the other elective classes that I took were taught at a kindergarten level since many of the Japanese students in the class couldn't speak English at all.
How did the style of teaching compare with that in Canada? How did the workload compare to what you would expect in Canada?	The workload of 8 classes there was pretty similar to a work load of about 4-5 classes here (basically fulltime). Although back at home I worked fulltime while going to school, so over here I had lots of free time.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad?	8
What impact did the language barrier have on your learning?	I wished I had studied Japanese prior to visiting Japan, although it didn't hinder me in my studies as most of the classes were taught in English.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	The facilities were spectacular. Very new campus, 5 cafeterias, lots of sports facilities, and even a tour bus to shuttle people from campus to campus.

Section 7

COSTS

Books and Supplies – per term	Less than \$200
Flight	\$1300
Accommodation – per month	\$400
Meals – per month	\$1000

Local transportation – per month	\$200
Health insurance – per term	\$200
Communications (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	\$150
Travel documents (passport, entry visa, etc.)	
Vaccinations	
Personal Spending (eg. entertainment and extra travel) – per term	LOTS
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than you expected?	Fruit and other specific food items were surprisingly expensive. I went out and spent a lot more money than I expected though!

Section 8

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your host site?	I met a lot of friends outside of the university and spent most of my free time with them
What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to you while in your host country? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?	If I could have spoken Japanese I would have joined lots of clubs.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer. Did you require special permits to do this?	I was hoping to work at a restaurant but apparently the only job I can do in Japan while on exchange is to be a language teacher?
What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?	Leave the dorm as much as possible and do as much as you can in the given time!

Section 9

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Describe any safety concerns you had during your experience.	
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Section 10

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making	I made a whole lot more Japanese friends than I did international
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friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) people?	friends! Just get out there and don't be shy! Japanese people are great!
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your host site?	Japan was like a different planet. Seriously. But a great planet!
What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?	none
What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?	Strong work ethic, strong family ties, very positive energetic people!
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	Everyone in Japan is very busy and therefore seems very unfriendly, but the opposite is true! Just try to speak to them and they are wonderful.
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	Very difficult. The buses are hard to ride being an able bodied person, and the campus is up a huge hill.
For students who are visible minorities in your host country?	I was a visible minority there and yes you do feel discrimination at times, but for the most part they will welcome you!
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	Unfortunately, you will likely face extreme discrimination in Japan

Section 11

TAKING STOCK

What are the 5 most important things one should take with them when going to your host country or region?

1 Money

2 Passport

3 Running Shoes

4 Plane ticket

5 Money

What are the 10 most important things you would tell another student who is going to your host facility/agency:

1 Setup prior arrangements for Skyping or contacting family back home

2 Save enough money and then some!

3 Go with a open mind and positive attitude

4 Learn Japanese or at least a bit!

5 Research things you want to do when you get there!

6 Get out of your dorm and do and experience things!

7 Save money	
8 Bring money	
9 Earn money	
10 Save more money!	
What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	Getting to experience day to day life in Japan firsthand and feeling like I was actually living in Japan and not just as a tourist in a foreign land.
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	Language barrier, making friends, and missing family and friends.
As a result of your study abroad experience, how has your perspective changed?	I have a better appreciation for the great people of Japan and the way they live life in a very different way than western style.
What else do you want to say about your study abroad experience?	I can't wait to go back to Japan