

Japan, Sapporo – Hokkaido University Exchange

ACADEMIC YEAR / SPRING SEMESTER PROGRAM HANDBOOK

International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison offers this program in cooperation 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, UW grades, etc.) can be directed to IAP at UW-Madison.

Contact Information

ON-SITE PROGRAM INFORMATION

Student Exchange Division
Academic Affairs Department
Hokkaido University
Kita 15, Nishi 8, Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-0815 Japan
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<https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/>

<https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/admissions/exchange-student-admissions/exchange-programs-in-english-hustep/>

UW-MADISON INFORMATION

International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
3rd Floor Red Gym, 716 Langdon St.
Madison, WI 53706
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Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Your assigned IAP Study Abroad Advisor, Enrollment Specialist Advisor, and Financial Specialist are listed in the *Contacts* tile of MyStudyAbroad.

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.

Program Dates

Semester 2 (Autumn)

Classes Begin	Early October
Winter Recess	Late December-Early January
Final Examinations	Late January-Early February
Spring Vacation	Early February-Late March

Semester 1 (Spring)

Classes	Early April - Late July
Final Examinations	Late July

Hokkaido University will provide a detailed program calendar prior to departure. You will also receive more information from HU about the specifics of arrival and orientation closer to the start of your program.

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 first month's rent, pay for transportation expenses, purchase furnishings and other necessities for your room, and any other expenses that may arise. Generally, we recommend that students take a small amount of US dollars with them and plan to withdraw money on a regular basis using a debit card from ATMs. Japan is still a very cash-based society, so consider the following:

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, you may want to open a bank account after your arrival.

To fund your new account, consider a wire transfer, cash, 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 an 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 <http://www.jp-bank.japanpost.jp/>

UFJ www.bk.mufg.jp

Mizuho www.mizuhobank.co.jp

Sumitomo Mitsui 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. Traveler's checks are becoming rare, but if you plan to carry a larger amount of money to Japan to make a deposit, it is much safer than carrying it all in cash.

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 often a small service charge. Not all ATMs are available 24 hours a day. Convenience stores have ATMs which support most major bank cash cards, and many have begun offering 24 hour services.

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. 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 on Honshu can range from about 10 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to 100 and humid in the summer. Hokkaido is cooler and gets a great deal more snow in the winter. 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)
- 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.

Travel and Arrival

You are responsible for arranging your own transportation to Sapporo. The major airport near Sapporo is New Chitose (Shin-Chitose) International Airport (CTS) www.new-chitose-airport.jp. Chitose Airport has a railway link with downtown Sapporo. Tokyo's Narita International Airport (NRT) www.narita-airport.jp is Japan's biggest international airport. 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.

Keisei Skyliner: http://www.keisei.co.jp/keisei/tetudou/skyliner/us/ae_outline/index.html

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 comes 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.

Hokkaido University www.hokudai.ac.jp

HU's English page for current students <https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/university-life/>

ORIENTATION

The Center for International Education and Research provides an orientation for newly arrived international students covering what to expect in your daily life and information to help you adjust to Japanese society. This session provides an array of advice from professionals both within the Office of International Affairs and outside.

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. There will also be an opportunity to take part in numerous traditional and contemporary Japanese cultural activities. These courses are usually 2 credits each.

For information on English-language courses:

<https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/admissions/exchange-student-admissions/exchange-programs-in-english-hustep/hustep-course-curriculum-1st-semester/>

<https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/admissions/exchange-student-admissions/exchange-programs-in-english-hustep/hustep-course-curriculum-2nd-semester/>

Japanese Language Courses: HUSTEP participants are encouraged (but not 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 Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced.

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 course equivalent process is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and in your MyStudyAbroad account.

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.

If you are abroad for a single semester, you will receive credit for the next course in the UW-Madison Japanese language sequence. If you are abroad for two semesters, you will receive credit for the next two courses in your Japanese language sequence. Some Japanese courses abroad are low in credit (1 or 2 credits apiece). These courses can be “bundled” together to form one UW-Madison course equivalent.

If you plan on bundling multiple small language courses together into one UW course, please submit only **one** CER using the “Japanese language courses (various)” pre-approved equivalent and indicate this. Your course equivalent determinations are made by the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures (ALC) in consultation with IAP. Courses that are offered in other academic areas can be reviewed by the appropriate UW-Madison academic department to determine 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: UW-Madison students are required to follow Hokkaido University policies and also bring back a minimum of 12 equivalent UW-Madison credits each semester. Students may bring back a maximum of 18 UW-Madison credits each semester.

GRADES AND GRADE CONVERSIONS

Grades will be converted according to the following scale:

Hokkaido Grade	UW Grade
A+/A	A
A-/B+	AB
B	B
B-/C+	BC
C	C
D	D
D-/F	F

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. 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 120 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 with an emperor that, while possessing no governmental power, continues to perform many ceremonial 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, 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 one of Japan's largest cities, 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 dormitories 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. New 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. Learn more about the HU dormitories here: <https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/university-life/housing/student-dormitories/>

In addition to dormitories, private apartments near the university are also available, though these are more expensive than the dormitory option. UW students generally stay in HU dormitories.

Meals: There are inexpensive cafeterias on campus and several communal kitchens in the dormitories. There are international food shops 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 Office of International Affairs has information about all of the different student clubs.

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. 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, such as groping (particularly on trains) and harassment. Report any crimes immediately to the local police box (*Koban*).

HEALTH

The Health Administration Center provides general health care for students. 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.

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.