

# Japan, Tokyo – Sophia University Exchange

## ACADEMIC YEAR / SPRING SEMESTER PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison offers this program in cooperation with Sophia University. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbooks or materials you receive from Sophia 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

Exchange students will receive on-site support from the Center for Global Education and Discovery.

Sophia University  
Center for Global Education and Discovery  
7-1, Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan, 102-8554  
tel:+81-3-3238-3521

[su\\_inbound@cl.sophia.ac.jp](mailto:su_inbound@cl.sophia.ac.jp)

<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/index.html>

### UW-Madison Information

International Academic Programs (IAP)  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Red Gym, 716 Langdon St.  
Madison, WI 53706  
Tel: 608-265-6329 Fax: 608-262-6998  
Web: [www.studyabroad.wisc.edu](http://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.

## 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

Specific program dates – including orientation and arrival information - will be sent to you directly by Sophia University.

Sophia University maintains a basic academic calendar on their website at [https://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/academic\\_calendar/index.html](https://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/academic_calendar/index.html).

## 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. 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](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. 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 (Japan's main island) 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)
- 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/)

<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 Tokyo. The major airport near Tokyo is Narita International Airport (NRT) [www.narita-airport.jp](http://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.

Keisei Skyliner: [http://www.keisei.co.jp/keisei/tetudou/skyliner/us/ae\\_outline/index.html](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

### SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

Established in 1913, Sophia University is a private Jesuit university located in the heart of Tokyo. Since its founding, Sophia University and has grown to be one of Japan's foremost private universities.

Sophia University: [www.sophia.ac.jp](http://www.sophia.ac.jp)

## FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS

Program participants will attend the Faculty of Liberal Arts (formerly the Faculty of Comparative Culture) on the Yotsuya campus. The Faculty of Liberal Arts was founded in 1949 as the International Division, which in 1974 became the Department of Comparative Culture, Japan's first university-level program taught entirely in English and accredited by the Ministry of Education. In 1987 the department was expanded into the independent Faculty of Comparative Culture. Widely known for its broad and rigorous curriculum, in 2003 the Faculty of Comparative Culture received a prestigious "Good Practice" award from the Ministry of Education and Science for pioneering modes of education suited to an increasingly global society. In 2006 the Faculty of Comparative Culture became the Faculty of Liberal Arts (Kokusai Kyoyo Gakubu). Simultaneously it moved from its location in Ichigaya to new quarters on the main Yotsuya campus.

One of the Faculty's major strengths is the broad range of courses on Japan and Asia taught by a faculty recognized for expertise in this area. The teaching staff of professors and adjunct instructors represents over a dozen nationalities with graduate degrees from leading institutions around the world. Drawn from over 30 countries, the student body includes graduates of Japanese high schools and international schools, Japanese nationals educated abroad, and foreign degree and exchange students.

## ORIENTATION

Participants will attend an orientation before the start of the semester, which will go over helpful information such as obtaining train passes, available courses, and life in Japan.

## COURSE INFORMATION

**Courses:** The Faculty of Liberal Arts offers courses taught in English in the following areas: Comparative Culture, International Business and Economics, Social Studies, and Japanese Language and Studies. Faculty of Liberal Arts "core programs" courses and the modern language courses (except, of course, Japanese language) are not open to exchange students.

For course descriptions, use the following link:

<http://www.fl.sophia.ac.jp/academics>

**Japanese Language Courses:** Upon arrival in Japan, students will take a Japanese placement test to determine their proficiency level. Depending on the test results, participants take one course each semester out of the following Japanese language tracks:

- 1) Regular - There are 4 different levels within this track. Students are in class five times a week for 90 minutes each. The course is worth a total of 4 credits.
- 2) Intensive - There are 3 different levels within this track. Classes meet for three hours a day, Monday through Friday mornings. The course is worth a total of 8 credits.

The intensive track course teaches the Japanese language in the context of Japanese culture. This course is designed to meet the needs of students who are interested in acquiring a solid grounding in spoken and written Japanese.

**Other Courses:** In addition to Japanese Language, students take courses available to non-degree students within the Faculty of Liberal Arts. (Note: some courses in these departments are restricted to degree-seeking students only.) All courses besides Japanese language classes are taught in English and the class format is similar to that of UW- Madison courses. The majority of these courses are worth 4 credits each.

**Registration:** Students will finalize their course schedule with Sophia University upon arrival in Japan.

**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 Sophia University will convert to the same number of credits at UW-Madison. For example, 8 credits of Intensive Japanese Language will convert to 8 credits at UW-Madison.

**Limits and Load:** UW-Madison students are required to follow Sophia University policies and enroll in a minimum of 12 UW credits each semester. You may bring back no more than the equivalent of 18 UW credits each semester.

## GRADES AND GRADE CONVERSIONS

Grades will be converted according to the following scale:

Sophia University Grade	UW-Madison Grade
A (90-100 pts)	A
B (80-89 pts)	B
C (70-79 pts)	C
D (60-69 pts)	D

F (59 or below)	F
K (failure)	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.

### TOKYO

About 10% of Japanese people live in Japan's three major cities: Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka. Located on the largest island of Honshu, Tokyo has over 38 million people living in and around the metropolitan area. Tokyo is densely packed and is broken down into 23 administrative wards, known as *ku*. You should prepare yourself for life in a large city, with long commutes, extremely crowded conditions, high costs, and plenty of concrete. Given that land and apartments in the center of Tokyo are so expensive, it is not unusual for commuters to spend 2 to 3 hours a day traveling to and from work on the city's trains.



and subways. Tokyo enjoys a relatively mild winter with low humidity and occasional snow, in contrast to high temperatures and humidity in the summer months.

Tokyo: [www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/index.htm](http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/index.htm)

## HOUSING

Since Sophia University campus is located in the heart of Tokyo, the cost of living near campus is very high and there is no on-campus dormitory. Instead, most housing is located in suburbs and students should expect a 45-90 minute commuting time to campus.

Students note housing preferences on their Sophia University exchange application, but final arrangements will be subject to availability of accommodations. Students should consult carefully the housing information on the Sophia University website and in their program materials for more information before selecting their dormitory preferences.

For all housing options, students are required to submit a housing payment at least one month prior to their arrival. Sophia University has advised that the best way to submit payments is via wire transfer.

[http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/housingInfo\\_costs/housing\\_info](http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/housingInfo_costs/housing_info)

Sophia University assists exchange students with securing furnished single rooms in privately-run off-campus dormitories, most of which are located within a 30-60 commute from campus. Exchange students will receive a housing preference form as part of their application materials. Most dormitories house Japanese and international students from other universities in addition to Sophia University.

**Meals:** Lunch is not included in any of the housing plans. The campus has cafeterias offering food ranging from ¥300 to ¥700. You can also purchase lunch at convenience stores near campus for approximately ¥300 to ¥700.

Students wishing to make other living arrangements are free to do so. When finding these housing opportunities students should take care to ensure they understand the financial obligations, how utilities and rent are paid, and the duration of the lease. Sophia University does not have any resources available to students interested in homestay options.

## STUDENT LIFE

**Club Activities:** Former students have stated that the best way to meet Japanese students is to join a club. There are bulletin boards in the main thoroughfare for club postings that are almost always filled with flyers. This is a great place to check meeting times for a variety of clubs and circles. There is also a sports information event for the university teams held in the Fall.

Students have joined choirs, the swim team and various other clubs. Past participants have recommended joining the following clubs:

- An international club (like Amity) that has weekly meetings. It's comprised of both Japanese and other exchange students and can be a good way to meet other people. It arranges parties and other activities, as well as trips to places such as the Tokyo Stock Exchange, Kyoto, and Disneyland.
- CPP (Conversation Partners Program).
- The Aikido Club, which teaches the Japanese martial arts. A past participant said the club was very friendly to foreigners. Clubs will vary on how interested they are in accommodating exchange students.
- The "Foreign Student Partner Program" aims to support foreign students in their study of the Japanese Language. Japanese students will be willing to help you with your study in the Japanese Language.

**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. When frequenting bars, be aware that if you order only drinks 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 a 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. It is common to find it difficult to fit into Japanese clothing sizes. In this case, the best bet for clothing is to shop at "American" department stores (like Forever 21, GAP, etc) because the smaller boutiques do not often carry large sizes. A good location for these stores is in Harajuku. Past participants have also recommended UNIQLO.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Faculty of Liberal Arts is located in the heart of Tokyo only minutes by rail from Shibuya, Shinjuku and Tokyo stations. The campus is served by the Yotsuya station and by the JR Chuo-Sobu line and the Marunouchi, Namboku, Toei Shinjuku, and Yurakucho subway lines.

## 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, and might want to utilize options such as the women's-only train car. Report any crimes immediately to the local police box (*koban*).

## HEALTH

The health clinic at Sophia University mainly provides suggestions for students to go to an off-campus clinic or hospital. Past participants have received recommendations for doctors who have a degree of English ability.

**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.