

## Exchange at Ochanomizu

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My half-year exchange has been full of exciting experiences, making new friends, overcoming challenges, and going on adventures around Japan.



During my exchange at Ochanomizu, I had a good mix between university classes and enjoying my free time exploring Japan. I still remember the anxiety and stress I felt about my big move to Tokyo for my 6-month exchange at Ochanomizu. However, I was welcomed with friendly faces and soon settled in here in Tokyo. However, the first month in Tokyo was the most challenging time for me. I found it quite hard to meet other exchange students or make Japanese friends since my classes were different to most exchange students. However, I was able to make two very good friends after going to different social events and talking together after my Japanese culture seminar with Matsuda sensei.

After arriving on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, classes started that coming week which was quite hard for me. It was very difficult and nerve-wracking to find my classrooms and navigate the school. I thoroughly enjoyed my classes at Ochanomizu! Due to my home university policy, I was only able to receive credits for non-language courses, so I chose to undertake English courses. I learnt about very interesting topics in Professor Carroll's classes 'Labour and Globalisation' and 'Regional Development', all of which relate back to my degree of International Studies. My favourite part of those classes was the discussion time with a partner on the content we had learnt. I had regular discussion partners in both classes, and we were able to share knowledge and personal opinions about relevant issues in our international society right now. I was nervous about my difficulty to communicate when I first arrived in Japan. However, my weekly Japanese classes really helped. I would like to thank Kou sensei and Sasaki sensei for making the classroom feel so comfortable and fun! I had a great time

learning Japanese and I feel like my Japanese skills have improved since I came in October.

Before coming to Tokyo, I was most worried about getting accustomed to the lifestyle here and living by myself in the dorm. I found that the most challenging part of my time in Japan was managing my time. Since the beginning of the year, I've been struggling with bad migraines and a weak immune system. With all the stress and chaos of getting accustomed to my new schedule at Ochanomizu, I often became sick and fatigued. The transition into colder weather was also quite tough since the winters in Australia are nothing compared to the winters in Japan.



During my time in Ochanomizu, I explored many parts of Tokyo with my friends over the weekend. My favorite places are Harajuku, Omotesando, Shimokitazawa and Shibuya. I enjoyed my winter vacation very much. During the first week of winter vacation, I went to Hakuba and skied. Hakuba was all covered with snow. It was so beautiful and dreamy. Skiing was a lot of fun, but it was very difficult. On the last day of skiing, I accidentally left the course and fell off the mountain.



Finally, I would like to thank the people of Ochadai. Thank you very much for checking the monthly throwback sheet, Mr. Carol, my supervisor. Thank you to Hagiwara-sensei for working so hard to keep us all on track and providing the information we needed. Thank you to everyone at the International Affairs Division. I would like to thank the Otowa administrative office for always helping me when I had questions, and especially to Nina-san for taking such good care of me during my first few months in the dormitory.