

Study Abroad Experience

University of Technology Sydney

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April 2023 was when I landed in Japan. Whilst I will still be living in Japan until next year, it feels like time is going by so quickly as I am enjoying my exchange life very much. I was very nervous when I first arrived because all the classes were taught in Japanese. However, thankfully the teachers were very kind, making it easy to understand the contents of the class. As all the classes are taught in Japanese, I have to constantly only listen and speak in Japanese each time, making my Japanese improve a lot more compared to if I were still living in Australia. It was very interesting to learn about the Japanese language and Japanese culture and history in class. Likewise, since there are many other international students from various countries in the class, I was able to learn not only about Japanese culture, but also the cultures from students of a different country.

Studies aside, whenever I have free time, I am always out and about exploring Tokyo or places outside of it. It is my first time in Japan so everything here feels so foreign, making even the mundane strolls feel like an exciting adventure. One of my favourite places to visit here in Tokyo is Shimokitazawa. As my major is Fashion Design, I am quite interested in the Japanese scene. Shimokitazawa is a place famous for its vintage thrift shops which feels like a shopping heaven, and also has a lot of delicious restaurants and cafes.

Something difficult I found was the transport system in Japan. When I first landed, I had zero idea how to take myself to Ochanomizu university from Haneda airport as there were so many different stations and lines for both the metro and JR. The map on the station did not help either as since there were so many different train lines, the map looked like a bunch of lines scribbled everywhere. However, as I am living

here now, I have become accustomed and once I understood the system, the transport actually seemed a lot easier to catch than how it looks.

One of the many things that I love about exchange is that I get to meet many people. I have made a lot of Japanese friends and since Ochanomizu University has many language and cultural exchange events, I have more opportunities to converse with Japanese people than in Australia. The Japanese friends I have met took me to many nice places in Japan and restaurants that only the local people knew about which guaranteed its authenticity. Furthermore, since I am studying in Japan as an exchange student, I have met many international students from other countries. The international students I met were not Australian, so I was able to learn about other cultures and languages , allowing cultural exchange. Studying abroad is an extremely precious opportunity which enables me to meet so many lovely people and experience Japan not from a tourist's perspective, thus I am enjoying every day.

Finally, I would like to thank my advisor, Umetada Sensei. Thank you for always checking and taking the time out of your day to read my monthly reflection sheets and replying with such nice comments. I would also like to thank my teachers in class. Thank you for teaching me new content for each class and for always being so patient in answering my questions and explaining things. Because of my teachers, I feel that I have improved my Japanese a lot since arriving in Japan. Thank you to my tutor Yuka, for taking me to Asakusa and the Yukata rental shop to experience my first Yukata. Thanks to all of you, I am enjoying my life in Japan very much and appreciate it a lot.