

## Exchange at Ochanomizu University

University of Technology Sydney

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During my semester exchange in Japan, I have experienced unforgettable adventures, formed friendships, and overcame obstacles that have led to my personal growth.

During the initial months of my exchange, I focused on settling into Japanese life by attending classes, making friends, organizing my dormitory room, and learning to cook. The transition was tough, and I felt lost in the new environment which is different to Australia. However, I adapted with the support of my friends, Senpai, Otowakan staff, and Ochanomizu staff. As time passed, I found myself captivated by the exchange experience, developing a strong attachment to life in Japan.

The first week of classes were very hard and I was very nervous to speak in Japanese. I had a variety of Japanese classes covering Grammar, Comprehension, Writing, Japanese culture, and Kanji. These courses significantly enhanced my Japanese skills, boosting my confidence in speaking. The supportive teachers, especially Sasaki Sensei and Kou Sensei was engaging and patient with me. Additionally, I participated in the English and Japanese Cafe, conversing in both languages with local Japanese and International students. I also attended an English class called 'Globalization & Labor' taught by Carroll Sensei which was very interesting and broadened my understanding of work culture worldwide.



I've also joined the 'Ocha Flow Jazz Club', a student-run dance club with over 70 students. There are many styles of dance including Jazz, Hip-hop, Contemporary, Girls' Style, K-pop, Street, and more. All dancers are very dedicated to their dance training, and we are currently rehearsing for our show that will occur in September. I attend dance training 2-3 times a week and we focus on strength training, dance technique, and learning choreography. Joining this club has brought me joy, serving as a stress reliever, and significantly enhancing my Japanese language skills.



While I was in Ochanomizu, I travelled to many areas within Tokyo and to other prefectures in Japan. One of my favourite places to visit was Kamakura and Enoshima which are near the seaside. I enjoyed walking to the beach, visiting temples, and eating local foods. During Golden Week, I went to Kanazawa and explored the beautiful Kenrokuen Garden and the Kanazawa Castle. I also went to Aoshima in Miyazaki which is part of Kyushu Island. Aoshima was another beautiful coastal town, and I was able to do some surfing and eat very sweet mangoes. Travelling to different places in Japan has been the best part of my exchange, and it has boosted my confidence in speaking Japanese.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to the people of Ochadai. I would like to thank Totani Sensei, my supervisor who was very welcoming. Thank you to Hagiwara Sensei for useful information and guidance. I'm thankful for the Senpais who answered many questions that we had about living at Ochadai. Also, a big thank you to the International Affairs Division, Otowakan Staff, and the security guards of Ochadai. I am grateful for the supportive community at Ochadai, which has made my living experience easy and enjoyable.

