

Exchanging at Ochanomizu University

Bachelor of International Studies (UNSW, Australia)

I remember being in shock when I realised that my exchange was coming to an end. This year has been full of surprises, rewarding challenges and once-in-a-lifetime adventures that allowed me to grow both personally and professionally.

I enjoyed a good balance of university classes, extracurricular endeavours and Japanese cultural experiences. It would be a lie to say that there was not a point in time when I felt lonely during my exchange- the first two months were particularly challenging given I didn't have as many friends to talk to. Similarly, prior to arriving at the school, I was nervous and worried whether I would fit in, or be able to keep up with some of the Japanese classes I had to take. The school workload felt overwhelming at times, but with the support of my teachers and classmates whom were all kind and understanding, it was manageable. The classes consisting of few students allowed for tailored guidance from teachers.

Being able to participate in Japanese club activities while studying abroad was an unexpected highlight of this journey. I joined Tokyo University Wind Ensemble, an intercollegiate circle, which was insightful in discovering the life of university students; the senpai-kouhai relations, the closeness of the community and the tremendous hard work they put in towards their shared vision of delivering a fulfilling performance. Furthermore, I was fortunate enough to partake in invaluable internships that allowed me to experience and understand Japanese corporate culture and practices first-hand. I was able to significantly improve my *keigo* by being actively involved in extracurricular activities, and interacting with seniors at the ensemble, teachers at the university, as well as co-workers at my internship.

To summarise what I was able to do during this year, I took:

- 17 subjects
- 12 exams + report
- 20 presentations
- 2 internships
- 300 hours spent at the wind ensemble, performed 7 times
- 2 camps
- Participated in 7 different cultural experience events (Kabuki, NHK TV recording, flower arrangement, firework festival, Cherry Blossom sightseeing, Kiriko experience, Kagurazaka Festival, sightseeing in Nikko and Kusatsu Onsen)

These figures remind me of how fortunate I was to be involved in these opportunities. I feel grateful to have met so many wonderful people, heard different stories and to have visited gorgeous sights. To all the teachers in the Liberal Arts faculty, to the staff in International Affairs Division who constantly updated international students with the latest exclusive cultural experience events, to Mrs. Sugo and Mr. Derek for their tireless effort in ensuring our exchange experience was the best it can be, to my supervising teacher Dr. Kobayashi who always provided guidance and watched over my exchange, and to all the incredible fellow international students I met here, thank you for making this journey an unforgettable one.



Inside Ochanomizu University



Tokyo University Wind Ensemble Annual Concert



Kagurazaka Festival

Nikko Shinkyō Bridge



Shibuya Blue Cave