



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BFT
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	05/04/2024 until 12/07/2024
Exchange destination: University	Tokyo University of Agriculture NODAI
Faculty	Agriculture
Country	Japan
City	Tokyo

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to gain a wider perspective on the knowledge of the food industry whilst gaining a cultural exchange experience in a different continent.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

Japan is a culturally rich country that still preserves its heritage and practices in the scope of food and agricultural production and cultivation.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

Besides being located in the renowned capital of Japan, its focus in the agricultural sector was a strong motivation.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

There are quite some transfers that has to be done going from the airport to the university complex with the train system which can be quite tedious, tiresome, and time-consuming.

4. University and studying

a. Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Vegetable Production Technologies for	4	Cultivation practices of different crops in	3	Lectures provided are very detailed and informative

	International Cooperation		various parts of the world		
2	Planning and Design of Landscape Architecture	4	Fieldtrips to observe different landscapes in Japan from different time periods.	4	The lecture given in the fieldtrips were very informative giving the historical aspects alongside the culture.
3	Forest and Forestry	4	Learning about how the forest impacts the human mind and wellbeing	2	Can get quite repetitive, is not quite what I expected to learn from the course title.
4	Global Food Systems	4	Lectures combined with games that trains teamwork while showing how the food systems in the world work practically	4	It is a very hands-on class. Almost every class I got to work with a different set of people in the group, training my adaptability in different scenarios.
5	Food and Health 1	4	Lectures on mostly nutrition and local fermented foods (how it is produced and what it is good for).	5	There are some repetitions but most of the classes are different from each other and very in-detail and interesting.
6	Agricultural Trade	4	Making and watching presentations regarding local cultivation and trade practices of different international students.	5	I got to learn about different perspectives, comparing and contrasting different country's situations and discussing them. Very interesting.

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Yes

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): No, I wished there were more scientific courses that can be applicable and useful in extending my knowledge in food technology (a part of the options were social science rather than the hard science I prefer).

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes

f. What is it like to study there?

E.g. Study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material?

The classes were mostly lectures which are most of the times highly specific as the lecturer providing the course is usually highly specialized in the specific lecture's topic. The lectures are quite easy to follow if you are interested because again, it can get very specific.

There were no examinations for the courses I chose, grades were from attendance, assignments, and reports.

The workload is quite relaxed if you are disciplined, otherwise, the assignments from the 6 courses in 1 semester can easily pile up and get stressful.

g. What is the culture of the university?

E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?

The lecturers were very open, if you are interested in their specialty topic, you can easily ask them about it, they will even welcome you to their lab and see what they are currently working on.

Engaging with local students can be a little difficult because of their lack of English proficiency. However, some students will still try to talk with you to get to know what it is like to live in a different country.

As for differences with WU, NODAI's classes for the international students are quite small (most classes are attended by less than 20 students consisting of mostly other internationals) therefore once again, might be difficult to befriend the local students.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

There is a cafeteria in the campus offering cheap food options (~500¥) that are quite delicious.

As for sports facilities, you cannot join sport clubs, but you can join "circles".

Laundry facilities are provided in the dormitory.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?

You can sign up for room on campus which is cheap and conveniently close to the campus buildings. You can also rent from outside with higher rates and further locations (just ask the exchange coordinator from NODAI, they will help you)

b. What is the culture like?

E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?

People are very polite and kind.

Rice is almost always available everywhere and food is delicious and cheap compared to Europe.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?

The closest train station is about 15-20 minute walk to the campus (Chitose-Funabashi on Odakyu line) but you can also walk from Kyodo station which is a little further (25 minutes). There is also a busstop right in front of the campus that goes from Shibuya station.

6. Expenses

a. Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	€700
Visa - if applicable	€30
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	~€30 for 4 months
Daytrips/sight-seeing	~€30 depends where to
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	€220 (campus dormitory)
Grocery costs per month	-
Public transport costs per month	€100
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	€250

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands:

Lower

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Grocery was not filled because most of the times I eat outside to try different Japanese cuisines.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

E.g. Nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?

There is not much nearby especially in the hot summer it gets too unbearable to walk outside for long distances. However if the weather permits, the Gotokuji temple (Lucky Cat Temple) is close by and is a cute spot.

Shimokitazawa, accessible by using the Odakyu Line is also a fun place to explore.

Shinjuku is also accessible by using the Odakyu Line.

Shibuya is also well-accessible with the bus going from in front of the campus.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

In my opinion just get lost in a random Tokyo neighbourhood, walk around, follow the local crowd. If a restaurant is packed with locals, go there, even if there is a queue, most of the times it is worth it.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

It can get lonely being in a country where so little people speak English, and the pool of international students was so small. For me, I learnt a bit of Japanese (provided lessons by the university) so I can somewhat communicate with the locals.

b. Best memory?

Extending the fieldtrips with the other internationals in Kamakura to explore more than what was shown in the fieldtrip.

Going on daytrips outside the hustle and bustle of Tokyo was also very relaxing and unwinding.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)	Shannon Zeng , oliviashannonmc@gmail.com	