Study Abroad

Kansai Gaidai University,
Hirakata City, Japan
2020

Program Guide
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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire study abroad exchange program with Kansai Gaidai University. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Japanese culture, yet you are going with a group of American students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
ACADEMICS

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UW-Eau Claire, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Pre-departure Planning
Please see the Kansai Gaidai academics page on our website, for details on how to plan your courses. There are details on how your courses will transfer back to UWEC.

Credits and Course Load
At Kansai Gaidai, students are required to take a minimum of four courses and may take a maximum of five. All students are required to take the five-credit, Spoken Japanese class. This means that you will be taking a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 17 credits. Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved by both the Kansai Gaidai and the UW-Eau Claire CIE.

Keep in mind:
- The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and Kansai.

Registration at Kansai Gaidai
You will register during your orientation program at Kansai Gaidai, as the program does not allow pre-registration. Available courses and short descriptions are in the Kansai Gaidai Asian Studies web site at https://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/. You will be allowed to add courses during the first two weeks of the semester and be allowed to drop any courses during the first three weeks of the semester.

Japanese Language Class
All Japanese language classes meet in the morning. Everyone takes a Japanese language placement test. Your placement test will be used to determine the appropriate level for you. The spoken Japanese class meets five days/week; the Kanji and reading meet two days/week. Both classes have regular exams, including a midterm and a final. The five-credit Japanese language course is required of all program participants. The three-credit, elective, Kanji and Readings courses are designed to accelerate your skills in writing Kanji and reading authentic Japanese. The Kanji and reading courses come back to UWEC as Japanese language elective credit.

Art & Science and Business Admin Classes
Art & science and business administration classes are taught in English and meet in the afternoons. All of these classes are three credits each; assessment varies by class: you may have papers, presentations and/or exams. The course offerings vary from year to year, but to get an idea of what might be offered, check here: http://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/academics/course-offerings/. Many of these courses are supplemented by outside field trips. Kansai subsidizes some portions of the transportation fees, but the student must pay for whatever is not subsidized.
Studio Arts Courses
You may take one art class (Japanese brush painting or pottery) per semester. No student, under any circumstances, is permitted to take these courses at the same time, nor register for an increased load of either one. There is an additional materials fee (around $100), which must be paid before you register for the class.

Grades
Kansai Gaidai uses an A-F grading scale, which translates directly in the U.S. system. The grades reported on your Kansai Gaidai transcript are the same grades that will appear on your UW-Eau Claire transcript.

Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. Grades from Kansai are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

Transcripts
Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

A Kansai Gaidai transcript will be sent roughly two-three months after the end of the semester. Because this is later than the end of the UW-Eau Claire semester, your MyBlugold CampS account will initially indicate “NR” (not reported). This will be changed once the transcript arrives. If you are a senior studying abroad for your last semester, you will need to delay your graduation by one semester following your return from Japan.

If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by Kansai Gaidai, have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address). UWEC cannot post grades that were first sent to a student.

Japanese Academic System
It is important to be prepared for some differences that you may notice between the education system in Japan and the education system in the US. Pay close attention to the guidelines set by the professor and be respectful of any rules put in place. Also, remember that the classroom behavior of the typical American student may be unacceptable in other countries.

Habits of physical posture such as putting your feet up on chairs, sitting on desks, slouching in your seat, and casual or informal ways of addressing others, especially professors, can be seen as signs of laziness or disrespect and should be avoided.

Food and drink are not allowed in Japanese university classrooms without explicit permission from the professor and are not allowed under any circumstance in Media Center classrooms. Cell phones are to be turned off and out of sight. Pay close attention to the advice provided for international students as you adjust to a new academic culture.

Service Learning
There may be opportunities to get involved in the local community. The Kansai Gaidai staff will notify you should anything come up but if you are looking for something specific, you should seek out the staff to inquire. While they cannot guarantee finding you something, they are a good place to start.
**MONEY MATTERS**

**UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook.**

**Cost Estimate**

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the Kansai Gaidai brochure page. Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to Kansai Gaidai and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Exchange Explanation**

UWEC students go to Kansai Gaidai as exchange students. On a room/board and tuition exchange program, each participant pays the costs they would normally pay at their home school – so UWEC students pay UWEC tuition costs, room and board, and Kansai Gaidai students cover tuition costs at Kansai Gaidai and they switch places. UWEC students will pay a few international student fees upon arrival at Kansai.

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive at Kansai Gaidai.

What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical Kansai Gaidai student receives, and the Kansai Gaidai student receives the benefits a typical UWEC student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in programs abroad at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university.

**Meal Costs**

Because you are on an exchange program, your tuition and room charges will be paid directly through Kansai Gaidai. However, because there is no meal plan, you will receive a stipend from Kansai Gaidai to buy meals. The stipend is for weekday lunches if you are living with a host family or for all meals if you are living in the dorms. It usually takes about a month from the beginning of the semester for you to receive your meal stipend. Until that time, each student is expected to finance living expenses by themselves. Kansai recommends students have around 40,000 yen ($375 USD) in cash to help cover these meals.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency of Japan is the yen. Coins are worth 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, or 500 yen. Bills come in denominations of 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000 yen.


**Cost of Living**

For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Osaka](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Osaka)

**Money on Arrival**

A general recommendation is to travel with the equivalent of $100-$200 dollars in your host country currency when you arrive. Obtaining Japanese Yen may be hard while in the states,
so you should find an ATM shortly after arriving to withdraw some yen.

**Money in Japan**
Japan is a much more cash-oriented society than the U.S. Therefore, past participants suggest using several methods to ensure that you can access your money, including having some Yen upon arrival, opening a bank account, and having a credit and a debit card, details are given below.

**Credit Cards and ATMs**
Visa and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted credit cards abroad. In Japan, cash is usually the preferred method of payment but cards can be accepted. Most credit cards do charge a fee or percentage for the currency exchange rate. Notify your credit card company prior to departure of where you will be travelling.

Debit cards are usually the best option for withdrawing money while abroad. Be sure you know the 4-digit pin for your card and ask your bank what the withdrawal fees are. You may also want to know your daily limit. Your bank may charge transaction fees for each foreign transaction, so you should try to limit the frequency of your ATM withdrawals. Your bank may have global partners that allow you to withdraw for fewer fees, so take note if any banks are partners with your bank.

The Post Office is where you will find ATMs that you can use. There is a Post Office within walking distance of campus where students usually go to withdraw money. Some ATMs will have an English option. Something to note about ATMs in Japan:

1) ATMs are generally only accessible when the institution (post office, bank, etc...) is open. Don’t plan on having 24 hr. access to ATMs.

2) ATMs at Japanese banks are not necessarily connected to the right networks for U.S. cardholders. Therefore, the post office ATM is the best bet.

**Traveler’s Checks**
Traveler’s checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use so it is not recommended. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although in some countries, post offices also offer this service. You must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, **ASK** what the fee is.

Make sure you record your check numbers and keep the numbers separate from the checks, in case you need to get them replaced.

**Opening a Bank Account**
You will need to open a bank account upon arrival as this is how you’ll receive your meal stipend. You’ll receive assistance and more information with this process during orientation in Japan. You can expect to receive your stipend, into your Japanese account about one-one and a half months after arriving.

**Scholarships**
**Bridging Scholarship:** The Association of Teachers of Japanese Bridging Project accepts applications from American students participating in study abroad programs in Japan. Funding from private foundations and major U.S. corporations has made it possible for ATJ to award 100 scholarships annually to assist students with the travel and living expenses they will incur while studying abroad in Japan.
Undergraduate students majoring in any field of study are eligible to apply for these scholarships. Students must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and be enrolled in a college or university in the United States.

The spring applications open in the summer and are due in early October.

Bridging Scholarship recipients receive a stipend of $2,500 (for students on semester-long programs) or $4,000 (for students on academic year programs). See [http://www.aatj.org/studyabroad/japan-bridging-scholarships](http://www.aatj.org/studyabroad/japan-bridging-scholarships) for application deadlines and forms.

**Freeman-Asia Scholarship:** Freeman-ASIA accepts applications from U.S. citizens or permanent residents studying at the undergraduate level at a two-year or four-year college or university who demonstrate financial need to study abroad in East or Southeast Asia. The application system usual opens in February for all terms that following academic year. For more information visit: [http://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA](http://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA).

**Health & Safety**

*General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

**Centers for Disease Control**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to Japan. You can review the [CDC site for Japan](http://www.cdc.gov/japan).

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases worldwide, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

**Insect Bites**

Insect borne diseases, particularly from mosquitoes, are present worldwide. See the CDC recommendations on [avoiding bug bites](http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbid/avoidingbugbites.html) for detailed information.

**Medical/Mental Health Availability in Japan**

There is an on-campus first aid center at Kansai, which offers treatment for minor medical problems free of charge. The center can refer students off-campus for treatment of more serious illness. Past students recommend having someone from the Center for International Education at Kansai Gaidai accompany you to the clinic, because if you need to be referred off campus, they will drive you and they can help you understand if doctors/staff don’t speak English.

Kansai Gaidai recently began offering psychological counseling in fall 2018. An experienced, U.S. trained, native English-speaking counselor will be on campus on Mondays and also available on call. If you need to speak with a counselor, it is recommended, you reach out to this counselor first. If you would like additional support, you can also reach out to your UWEC study abroad coordinator, Jenna (kroschjm@uwec.edu) and she can assist with working with CISI to identify additional English-speaking therapists.
Restrictions on Medications in Japan

Past participants recommend that you bring your own cold medication, aspirin, etc. since over the counter medicine may not be the same or hard to find. However, some common over-the-counter medications and commonly prescribed U.S. medications are illegal in Japan. See the Consular Information Sheet for more information on traveling with over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

If you plan to bring in medications, be sure to research if you need to obtain a Yakkan Shoumei (approval from the Japanese government. This must be done BEFORE travel and shown at customs. The CIE and Kansai Gaidai are not Japanese officials so we cannot make the determination as to what requires a Yakkan Shoumei. Please contact the consulate for more information. The following information about bringing medications to Japan is posted on the Japanese Consulate-Chicago website:
(http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html)

You can bring up to one month’s supply of prescription drugs into Japan, and up to two months’ supply of non-prescription drugs without completing any paperwork. This same rule applies to mailing prescription and/or non-prescription drugs.

It is always a good idea to have a copy of the prescription and/or letter from the prescribing physician explaining the nature of the medication, the purpose of taking it, recommended dosage, and frequency of ingestion.

Most prescription drugs are permitted, including drugs that may not be available in Japan, such as birth control pills. Drugs that are hallucinogenic, narcotic, and/or psychotropic in nature will be confiscated, except in extenuating circumstances where prior approval has been obtained (e.g., a cancer patient taking a type of medication that has a high percentage of pain killer; these cases are treated on a case by case basis).

The following over-the-counter medications are prohibited in Japan since they contain narcotic or stimulant ingredients in excess of the Japanese standard:

a) Tylenol Cold
b) Nyquil
c) Nyquil Liquicaps
d) Actifed
e) Sudafed
f) Advil Cold & Sinus
g) Dristan Cold (“No Drowsiness”) h) Dristan Sinus
i) Drixoral Sinus
j) Vicks Inhaler
k) Lomotil

CISI Insurance in Japan

If you have an accident or become ill while studying in Japan, you may have to pay the price of the medical service up front. You will then file a claim through CISI, the insurance provided through the UW System for partial or full reimbursement in accordance with plan coverages.

Services for Students with Disabilities

If you have a significant mobility or sensory disability, you should inform your study abroad coordinator right away.
It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Japan in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the "Laws and Special Circumstances" tab on the U.S. State Department Country page.

**Safety in Japan**

Information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Japan can be found in the State Department Consular Information Sheet. Safety in-and-around Japan will be discussed during orientation in Japan.

Just as you need to do in any U.S. city, you will need to take safety precautions while walking and traveling around Japan. Using your common sense at all times will aid you well. Avoid unlighted areas at night when you are walking around the city, and do not walk or take buses alone at night – especially women. Don't take any unnecessary risks!

Past participants who studied in Japan note that, although Japan has the reputation of being safe for women, they heard rumors of sexual assaults against women while in Japan leading them to believe that the reported safety may actually be an under-reporting of incidents.

**NOTE:** Both men and women should be aware of their safety at all times. In the past, men have been just as susceptible as women to potential risks. As U.S. Americans, you may stick out as "foreigners." The best advice is to be aware of your surroundings, listen to your instincts, and use your common sense.

**Pick-Pocketing:** Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces.

An iPhone is a target for pick-pocketers. If you carry a purse, make sure it is across the body and has zippers. Keep your wallet in a front pocket, not a back pocket. Only carry small amounts of cash on you to minimize loss. Using a money belt under your clothing is another way to prevent valuables from being stolen.

**Hiking:** If you decide to hike, please make sure you hike with a buddy and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. While hiking, be aware of the weather as it can turn very quickly.

**Earthquakes:** The majority of Japan is vulnerable to earthquakes, and therefore potential tsunamis. This release of energy in earthquakes sometimes results in tsunamis.

**During an earthquake:**
- Stay calm
- Do not use an elevator or try to evacuate the building
- Distance yourself from glass, bookcases, and partitions that could fall
- If you are next to a door, open it
- If it is not possible to access a secure area, try to find a corner or a firm counter under which to take shelter and cover your head
- Do not attempt to rescue any objects
- Remain alert to gas leaks, pipe breaks, and short circuits
- Do not leave the premises immediately; wait until the earthquake stops

**After an earthquake:**
- Note that after an earthquake, there will be aftershocks
- Identify evacuation routes; follow evacuation signs placed visibly in each area
• Proceed without running down hallways, stairs, and patios and head to the outside of the building
• Never use the elevator
• Do not light matches, candles, or other objects that create the risk of fire or explosion
• Pay attention to obstacles
• When leaving the building, use caution as there could be falling objects
• After evacuation, do not re-enter the building until receiving express permission from university authorities

Always follow the recommendations and instructions given by local law enforcement and the campus community.

Emergency Contacts
General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and the Kansai Gaidai international staff is available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at the Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

911 Equivalent in Japan
If you are in an emergency situation in Japan, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in Japan is 110 for police, 119 for ambulance and fire. We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.

Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs
The possession and use of marijuana is illegal. Even carrying it on your person can be considered drug trafficking. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Japan are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a Japanese law. There is NOTHING the CIE, Kansai Gaidai or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation the law.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

Required Documents
Passport information is included in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

Visa
A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country.

Although the CIE will provide information, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for Japan, and to apply for and receive a visa in a timely manner. Please read the “Visa” section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

U.S. citizens, who want to study Japan, will need to obtain a visa prior to arrival in Japan. Note that you cannot apply for your visa until you receive your Certificate of Eligibility.
from Kansai Gaidai. This typically arrives one-two months prior to departure- in July-August for fall/year students or in January-February for spring students. The Kansai program will mail your Certificate of Eligibility to your address you file with them. Make sure that you update any changes in address.

Visas generally take two weeks to obtain by mail (including mail time). Be sure to have all of your other documents ready to send and send everything immediately upon receipt of your Certificate of Eligibility.

You cannot enter Japan under a tourist visa, so you must have your student visa prior to traveling.

Once you are in Japan, the CIE at Kansai Gaidai will assist you with the process of getting an Alien Registration Card.

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**
If you plan to travel outside your host country while abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. China does require U.S. citizens to have a visa for tourist travel.

**PACKING TIPS**
There is general packing information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook, and you will get a suggested packing list for Japan at Orientation 2. In addition, you should know the following:

**Weather/Clothing**
The area around Kansai Gaidai has relatively mild weather, but you'll still want a warm coat, warm clothes, long underwear and warm slippers for winter, as few Japanese homes are centrally heated.

Summer is warm. Sandals, long shorts, and neat tops are acceptable; halter or tube tops and short shorts are not. You'll find that dress is generally more formal than in the U.S., but nice jeans and tops are acceptable for students.

Bring slip-on shoes, as you'll be slipping them off whenever you're inside! Men's size 9 and larger, and women's size 6 and larger are hard to find, as are panty-hose for women taller than 5’5”. And note that clothes sizes, like shoe sizes, are at the small/petite end of the size spectrum.

**Packing**
Your peer advisor will give a suggested packing list at your second group meeting later in the semester prior to departure.

If you are going to be abroad during the winter months, you will want to make sure you pack accordingly. You will have heat in your accommodations, but you may find buildings to be drafty and cooler.

Because you will deal with a range of temperatures, bring clothes that you can wear or take off in layers.

**Gifts**
If you decide to live with a host family, you may want to pack some small items as gifts for your host family. A memento from Wisconsin, like a UWEC mug, might be nice. If you are unsure what, if anything, to bring, ask your Peer Advisor for suggestions.
Converters & Adapters
The electric current in Western Japan is 100 volts and the plugs used are the small, two-pronged type, the same as the kind used in North America. Since most electrical appliances are designed to operate in a range of voltages, devices designed for 100 to 120 volts seem to work fine at the Japanese 110 volts. However, devices that generate heat, such as hair dryers tend to burn out after a while.

If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor or other appliance from the US, you will need to buy both a voltage converter and a plug adapter. Another option is to buy the appliances after you arrive. It isn’t recommended that you bring these items as past students have commented on how they have over heated or stopped working and were ruined. Many students usually purchase a cheap product once they arrive in the country.

If you plan to bring your laptop abroad, check the power cord to see acceptable voltage inputs and outputs. If it includes 100-110 volts, you will only need to use a plug adapter, not a voltage converter.

If you have several US appliances you plan to use abroad, consider bringing a power strip, also. You will still need to have a voltage converter in order to plug it into the wall.

If you plan to travel, you will want to make sure you have adaptors that will work in each country as they aren’t all the same.

Do Not Bring
Do not bring expensive cell phones, jewelry, or other luxury items that can be lost or stolen. If you do decide to bring items that are expensive to replace, you may want to consider personal property insurance for your time in Japan.

GETTING TO JAPAN
There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Travel Arrangements
It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Japan. Airline tickets are not included in your program fees.

We recommend that you do not make your travel arrangements until Kansai Gaidai has accepted you to the program, dates have been confirmed and/or you have secured your visa to Japan. If you feel that you can't wait until you get your visa, we recommend that you purchase a ticket with a low cancellation and change fee.

Early Arrivals
Early arrivals are not encouraged. If you arrive in Kansai a day before the pickup service begins, you can get a hotel room near the KIX airport and then meet the staff at KIX on the day of the pickup. You will be responsible for any hotel and transportation fees. Kansai provides a list of hotels near the airport in the arrival instructions they give you.

Airport Pick-Up Service
Pick-Up Dates
Specific pick-up arrangements will be posted to Kansai’s website, when available for your term. In the past, Kansai has indicated that students who would like to be picked up must arrive at Kansai International Airport (KIX) by 6:00 PM on the designated arrival/pick-up
days. In the past, a staff member or student volunteer has met students and helped them get to campus. If you do not arrive at KIX and also want to be picked up, you would need to get to KIX on your own or see if they will be doing a pick-up at your airport. If they see enough interest in different airports, they may suggest one pick up time for you, but this is not guaranteed.

If pick up days fall over the weekend, there will be no pick-ups on Sunday.

In order to sign up for the pick-up service you must send your travel information through Kansai's online application system, K-GENESYS. If they do not receive your travel information, there is no guarantee that their staff will meet you. If your travel changes, you must notify them.

Pick-Up Fees
You may be required to pay at least 5,000 Yen in cash for the pick-up service upon your arrival at the pick-up point.

Late Arrivals-Expected and Unexpected
If you don’t arrive as scheduled, for any reason, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your transfer from the airport. Again, watch for detailed instructions in your arrival information from the Kansai Gaidai program. They will send you detailed information.

Important reminder: Write down your address or campus address, on a piece of paper, in case you need to give it to a cab driver on arrival.

Leaving Your Host City
Return airport transportation isn’t included in your program fees and you will need to find your own way to the airport on your last day.

Airport Departure Tax
When you leave Japan, you will have to pay a 1000-yen (~$10USD) airport departure tax. This will be paid at the airport while going through customs before your international departure. It is something to be prepared to pay.

SETTLING IN
Orientation
You will have an orientation upon arrival to Kansai Gaidai. During orientation, you will finalize your registration for classes, open a bank account (if needed), go over health and safety tips, etc. Past participants recommend that you make good use of this time to get to know other international students, especially if you will be living in a homestay. All students have to pay a general refundable deposit of 10,000 Yen. It will be reimbursed at the end of the semester when all outstanding obligations have been met (loan, return of library books, L.L. tapes and videos, etc.)

During orientation, you will temporarily be housed in university housing. If you are participating in a homestay, you will move to your host family’s home at the end of orientation week. When living in the university housing, during orientation, you will eat your meals at the cafeterias on campus and you will be responsible for paying for those meals.

On-Site Support
The Kansai Gaidai international office will provide support should any questions or concerns arise. They are there to assist you,
but they will not actively seek you out to make sure everything is going okay.

In addition, if any events or outings are planned, they will make you aware and you can participate in them for a small fee. They will also help you get paired with a speaking partner if that interests you.

**Local Transportation**
Taxis are also plentiful and relatively inexpensive. Be sure to watch the meter to make sure it is being used properly. Many taxis wait at taxi stands around the city, but you can also hail one if it drives by.

**Getting Involved**
The Asian Studies program follows the traditional northern hemisphere academic calendar (like what you are used to at UWEC. This means that the local students may not be around from February – March as that is a traditional Japanese education break. But there will still be plenty of ways to meet local students as many stay around.

**Speaking Partner Program:** This is a great opportunity for you to meet local students and have informal language lessons. What you do during your time with your partner is basically up to you, but activities range from free conversation to talking about aspects of Japanese culture. Though the students are neither teachers nor experts on Japanese grammar, they may be able to help you with questions you might have concerning your Japanese studies. In addition, Kansai students may want to show you around the city, invite you to events, etc.

**Home visit program:** This is designed for students who decide to live in the dormitories.

On some weekends, you will have the opportunity to meet a local family and participate in local events with them. To see more, [click here.](#)

**Experience Japan:** This allows another opportunity for you to meet local Kansai students. All activities are designed by local students and international students are welcome to participate. Things like day trips, cooking, sport events, cultural activities, etc. are what they plan. There may be small fees for some events, but this is a great way to meet more people and learn more about Japan.

**Extracurriculars:** There are many clubs and circles at Kansai Gaidai that you can join. They range from sports to traditional Japanese cultural activities such as tea ceremonies or flower arranging. Clubs are very serious organizations; members are expected to be at every meeting. Circles are more laid back, just a chance to have fun with Japanese students.

**Housing**
You have two choices of accommodations at Kansai Gaidai: living in the dormitories or living with a host family.

During orientation, all international students will be accommodated in Global Commons, you will be given your assignment prior to your arrival. After orientation, students will be placed in the semester long accommodations, whether they be dormitories or homestays.

Please note that **those who live in the dormitories must pay a 30,000 Yen refundable security deposit during orientation.** The amount must be paid in Yen. If there are no damages, you will receive your
deposit back approximately two months after the completion of the semester.

All students (no matter where they live) must also pay a mandatory liability insurance fee of 1,000 Yen (~$10). In order to protect students from a possible high compensation for damages, all international students are now required to join a mandatory liability insurance plan which will cover up to JPY 100,000,000 (approx. U.S. $870,000) with a one-time JPY 1,000 premium per semester. This fee is paid at orientation.

**Housing over Break**

If you are staying for the academic year, you will live in Global Commons. Homestay arrangements are not made during winter break; therefore, you will have to move out and possibly move to a new family when spring semester starts.

The fee to stay over winter break is 50,000 Yen and is not included in the exchange. All students are responsible for paying this fee directly to Kansai.

**Dormitory – Global Commons**

In deciding what type of housing is best for you, you may want to consider on-campus housing if:

1) You have a restricted diet. It is often difficult to find families for students who are vegetarians.
2) You wish to live with English-speakers.
3) You are staying the full academic year and do not wish to have to move or find housing over break. (Homestays are arranged for one semester at a time. The break between semesters is not included in either semester.)
4) You wish to be close to your classrooms. The dorm is about a 15-minute walk from classroom buildings. A homestay often requires using public transportation or a bicycle. Transportation costs can add up to 70,000 Yen (~$878) per semester.
5) You do not wish to have the household and family responsibilities/rules expected in a homestay.

Newly opened in March 2018, students now live in the **Global Commons**, an international student dormitory. It holds about 650 students (½ international, ½ local) and will allow a chance for you to meet people from all over the world.

All rooms are barrier free single rooms equipped with a desk, bed, closet, bookshelves, small refrigerator and air conditioner. Internet access and linen service are available. There will be shared spaces such as a living room and kitchen facilities. There is also a fitness room and karaoke room on site.

Students in Global Commons have to adhere to the housing policies. Some of the policies that American students struggle with are adhering to the noise (zero tolerance quiet hours after 10pm, both in and outside the building) and visitor policies (no visitors between 9:30pm-9:00am). Failure to comply will result in dismissal from the Global Commons and a homestay will not be an alternative. If you are dismissed from Kansai housing, you will be responsible for finding and paying for your own housing.

**Homestay**

Host families are in high demand and cannot be guaranteed. Placements are finalized the week prior to your arrival, no matches are made until
students actually arrive, so you will not have information about your family before orientation at Kansai Gaidai. You will meet your host family the last day of orientation, in a meeting with an international office staff member, you, and your family.

A host family may look different for each student. Some past students have been placed with families with small children, families with grown children, single females, elderly couples, widowed females, etc. Some families may have some English background, but don’t expect to have English spoken to you. Kansai puts a lot of effort into finding good host families, so if you run into any concerns, please reach out to the international office to see how those concerns can be addressed.

Because of the work involved in finding good host families, Kansai asks that you are truly motivated to participate in family life if you choose this option. You should be prepared to accept curfews set by your host parents, do chores along with other family members, and generally accept the restrictions and responsibilities that come along with being part of a Japanese family. Consider the following points in deciding whether you would like a homestay:

1) You will be expected to obey the family curfew, which will very likely be much earlier than at home.
2) You may not work.
3) You may be expected to assist family members with learning English. (An exchange of Japanese/English lessons can be fun.)
4) You must limit your use of the telephone. Please be aware that all calls, even local, have charges.

5) You should get permission from your family to miss a meal, be late for a meal, or be gone overnight.
6) Utility charges are very high in Japan. Turn off gas, water, etc., when not in use.
7) Your room should be clean at all times.
8) You should share in family chores.
9) You will provide your own shampoo, soap, towels, etc.
10) You are expected to spend time with the family. This is not a "hotel" situation.
11) Women may have more restrictions than men.

Your homestay may be located a long distance from campus, and transportation fees are your responsibility. We cannot guarantee that your placement will be within walking or biking distance.

That said, students who choose homestays at Kansai have had an excellent experience, precisely because it is not a "boarding" situation. You will be included in family life and introduced to Japanese culture in a way that you will not experience in the dormitories, where you will primarily have contact with other international students. To learn more about homestays, click here.

Homestay Bathroom

Most families prefer that you shower at night; they will tell you when you first move in. The shower is a bit different from what you are used to, you sit down and use a bowl of water to rinse off. You will often hear the water being turned on and off many times. This is because they are saving water (and money!) by only using water when they need to wash soap off. You will want to do this, too! Also remember that you should not take a long shower/bath, because other family members may be waiting.
Japanese homes also have a bath called an "ofuro," where you can dip and relax for a bit AFTER you have showered and gotten clean. They reuse the water for everyone each night, so don’t drain the tub unless everyone else has already bathed!

Laundry
There are pay machines in the Kansai Gaidai dorms for both washing and drying. The washing machines in Japan are generally smaller and less effective than the ones you may be used to in the U.S. Past participants report that the dryers, if one exists in your living arrangement, are even worse. However, the dorms and most host families will have a clothesline to hang and dry your clothes. Hanging your clothes to dry is very common, so planning in advance is a must.

Shopping
If you forgot to pack something, don’t worry. You can find everything you need fairly close to campus. Places students recommend are:
- K’s Denki: little electronics
- Hyaku-En Store (Y100 stores):
  everything is around Y100 ($1)
- Top World: grocery store

Living with a Family
Get involved as much as you can with your family. They are an important resource for you to learn from and a great resource to help you experience the culture of Japan! For example, you may have an interest in cooking. By taking some mixes or recipes from home, you may easily gain entry into the kitchen, and your host mom may be thrilled if you show an interest in Japan cuisine.

Conversation is important in Japanese culture. You can spend hours after a meal chatting and watching television or learning to play Japanese card games.

Remember that you are a guest in your family’s home. Offer to do some things around the house, like helping with meals or dishes. Keep your room and other areas of the house that you use tidy. And be aware of noise levels, particularly if you are coming home later at night.

Keep in mind that any relationship is a two-way street. It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to include you in their daily life. The more you put into the relationship, the more you will receive!

Changing Families
If you discover that you absolutely cannot get along with your host family, talk with the Kansai Gaidai staff about it so that changes can be made, if appropriate. (UW-Eau Claire is not involved in the actual family placements, and changes must be done through Kansai.) But remember to give the situation some time and to be flexible and open-minded.

Financial Arrangements
While Kansai Gaidai screens families carefully to ensure that they have cultural interests for participating, most households participating do so at least partially for economic reasons. This is only logical, given the disruption that hosting a student causes to family life. It is not easy to welcome a stranger into your home for several months. The entire family needs to adjust schedules and habits to accommodate a new person. In addition, there are very real costs associated with having another person in the home. Receiving some monetary compensation for this is only fair, and most families would not consider hosting otherwise.
If you stay after the program ends and request to remain at your host family's house, you must pay your family for room and board. You should not expect your host family to provide room and board for free. The families need your contribution in order to take care of you.

**What's Provided?**
In both housing options, you will need to provide your own towels. Basic bedding will be provided.

**Meals & Snacks**

**Dormitory:**
Students in the dorms will receive a meal allowance from Kansai Gaidai. This money will be deposited into your Japanese bank account, about 1-2 months after you arrive. It is important to have enough fund to cover your meals until you receive this allowance.

Students will buy their own food and will have access to shared kitchens to cook their food. There is no meal plan.

**Homestay:**
In the Japanese home, you will have seven breakfasts and seven evening meals each week. On weekends, three meals a day are included. No refund is available for meals that you don’t eat with your family.

Keep in mind that it is impolite when eating with your host family not to eat everything on your plate. You serve yourself, so take small portions of things to start with; you can always have a second helping!

**Chopsticks/Dining Tips:**
You will learn to eat with chopsticks, if you have not already. A few things to know:

- Chopsticks are called "ohashi." When you need to set them down, set them across your rice bowl, on the side of your plate, or back on your chopstick rest, called a "hashioki." Never stick your chopsticks vertically into your rice bowl; this is only done when offering rice to the dead.
- It is considered very rude to point at people or stab your food with your chopsticks.

A few other dining tips:
- Wait until someone directs you where to sit at the table.
- When you begin a meal, put your hands together and say "etadakimau" (I humbly receive this.)
- When you are done, say "gochisosamadesita" (something like, "I humbly accepted; it was good.")

**Internet Access**
There is an internet connection at Kansai Gaidai, but you will need to register your laptop or tablet to the campus network, free of charge. Instructions will be given at orientation in Japan, but you will be responsible for registering your devices.

Since the network speed within Kansai Gaidai is somewhat limited, and some students who want internet in their homestay (where no Wi-Fi is available, or they want a stronger connection to watch streaming videos) may want to purchase a mobile Wi-Fi router for personal use. **Remember, Wi-Fi in homestays is not guaranteed.**

**Housing Costs**
The majority of housing costs are included in the fees you pay directly to UWEC. However, there will be some deposits that students must
pay for that go directly to Kansai Gaidai. These deposits are due when students arrive in Japan.

**COMMUNICATION**

*Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What’s App, Facetime, etc) is in the [Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook](https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/japan).*

**Time Difference**

Japan is generally 15 hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 8:00 AM on a Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 11:00 PM on Thursday in Japan. However, Japan does not participate in “daylight savings time” system. Therefore, sometimes Japan is only 14 hours ahead of Eau Claire. https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/japan

**Email/Internet Access**

You will have access to internet. You will need to register your laptop/devices once you arrive at Kansai. They will go over this at orientation in Japan.

**Cell Phone Information**

Cell phones are just as common in Japan as they are in the U.S. If you want to bring your U.S. cellphone, you will need to check with your carrier to see if there are international plans and to have your phone unlocked.

Cell phones are affordable and can also be purchased once you arrive. Most plans allow for pay-as-you-go so it can be more affordable and easier to do this.

**Calling from the U.S.**

*From the U.S. to Japan.* First dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you must dial the country code for your host country. Country codes can be found in the front of phone books or online at [http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/). Then you dial the rest of the number.

**Courteous Communication**

If Skyping/using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, speak softly, and end the conversation immediately if it is time for a meal (if living in a homestay).

**Snail Mail**

International airmail typically takes 7-10 days (or longer) to reach most locations. It is not recommended to send or receive anything of real value, as customs may put a hefty customs fee on it. Know that anything you send or receive is subject to being searched by customs.

**Japanese Language**

Communication, for Americans, can be challenging, in a country where the language is not English. Many international students studying at Kansai have not had any Japanese and some have studied it for a few semesters. Here are some tips from past students:

**Using your Japanese**

“It is important to make friends from countries other than the U.S. That way, Japanese, not English, can be your common language.”

“Talk with the many Japanese students hanging around the lounge of the International Education buildings (where your classes will be).”
Getting Around
“Lucky for English speakers, many of the forms of transportation in Japan, such as trains, have English translations on the signs. So, when you are going to major places you can somewhat orient yourself.”

“The country of Japan is full of extremely nice and helpful people who will do their best to help you out if you are lost. Don’t be afraid to ask.”

“Be polite. The two most important words to know in Japan are I’m sorry and thank you. (Sumimasen and Arigatoo).”

“Many Japanese students like to practice their English. Invite a Japanese friend to travel with you!”

“After you have traveled around a bit, you will begin to know how to get places even if you can’t read the signs.”

Ordering food:
“Learn some basic vocab for food- that way you can say some of those to your waiter/waitress, and they can show you some of the dishes that contain those items.”

“Some of the bigger restaurants will have English menus.”

“Many restaurants have displays of food in front, so you can point to what you want.”

Homestay Families: It is very likely that your family has been hosting American students for a number of years. This means that even when you say the wrong thing, chances are they will understand you. Many of your families won’t know English, even if they’ve had past students. Don’t be afraid to speak with your family at meals, after meals, during down time, at any possibility.

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**

See additional information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Tourist Information**
The Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) has three regional offices in the United States. Contact them for FREE brochures, maps, info on affordable accommodations, restaurants, etc. You can find info on their Web site at [http://www.jnto.go.jp](http://www.jnto.go.jp).

**Train Travel**
Students travel most frequently by train in Japan. The train lines are easy to navigate once you get the hang of it. The boards display the times and type of train in English, and everything is color coded. There is often a trip to Kyoto that is offered at the beginning of the semester; this is a good introduction to the train system.

**Stations:**
**Makino** is close to the Kansai Gaidai, about a 15-minute walk. Since this is a smaller station only local trains will stop here so you will make a transfer at a larger station if you are going a long distance.

**Gotenyama** is the closest to Kansai Gaidai University in general, but it is not as big as Hirakata station so it is used less.

**Hirakata** is the largest station in the area. It has express trains that stop regularly and is basically the middle stop between Kyoto and
Osaka. It is about a 20-minute walk from campus and a 40-minute walk from the seminar houses.

You can get anywhere in Japan from any of these stations. All of the train lines throughout the country are connected so it is just a matter of finding out where to transfer.

**Tickets**

Tickets can be bought at machines right before the turnstiles. You look up at the board to see the price and then push that amount on the machine.

Train stations only accept cash so Kansai recommends that you carry 10,000 Yen ($100) on you for emergencies. Also, transportation is the cheapest in big cities and gets more expensive as you get to more rural areas.

Once you're in Japan, ask about a Japan Railway bargain, the *seishun ju-hachi kippu*. This is a booklet of six coupons that allows unlimited travel for a 24-hour period. The booklets are only available when Japanese students are on vacation. They may be split among travelers in a group. The Center for International Education at Gaidai sometimes has student discount coupons available, also.

Your main train line will be the Kansai one; however, you have easy access to the Osaka and Kyoto train stations that have trains going all over Japan.

**Shinkansen**

There is an express train called *Shinkansen*. Shinkansen (bullet train) lines are found only at major stations. The cost varies, but it is not as expensive as flying. You can do quick search of *Shinkansen* fares at [http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/charge/index.html](http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/charge/index.html).

Make sure you choose *Tokaido Shinkansen (where Osaka is)* for *Shinkansen Line* and Shin-Osaka for *Original station*.

**Buses**

If a train can't get you there, a bus can. In bigger cities, the train will often be enough, but in more rural areas, buses are needed. Reading the bus map can be more confusing at the beginning but have patience.

**Air Travel**


**CULTURE**

**Religion**

Religion is important to the Japanese, but people typically follow traditions from a wide variety of practices. The primary religions are Buddhism and Shinto (the primarily animist religion of ancient Japan), with from 84 to 96 percent officially following a combination of both religions. Estimates state that only 30% of the population actually follows strict religious practices.

**Cultural Concepts**

Personal space is wider in Japan. When you meet someone, you stand a few feet apart and bow, rather than shake hands.

People rarely smile at passersby on the street and eye contact is typically minimal. Often, the trains are very crowded, and, in this situation, it is acceptable to break personal space rules. On trains, it is also advisable to keep from talking loudly and speaking on a cell phone is frowned upon.
Treatment of foreigners is an often-misunderstood area of Japanese culture. Stereotypically, the Japanese are standoffish to those not from Japan (called gaijin in slang). In practice, the Japanese are friendly and tolerant of foreigners, especially in places where many foreigners usually live (e.g. in international college areas). One should not expect Japanese people to go out of their way to interact with a foreigner, but civility and friendliness are very common.

That said, foreign visitors should be aware of Japanese customs of communication and interaction and should follow those reasonably closely. For example, the Japanese disapprove of excessive rowdiness or loud talking.

Politeness and hierarchy are very important in Japan. Japanese people apologize for almost everything, even if it’s not their fault. Japanese people are also very aware of who “out-ranks” them in society; for example, a teacher ranks above a student, a parent ranks above a child, a boss ranks above an employee.

For foreigners in the country, following the “polite language rules” is not completely necessary, but an awareness of it is helpful for understanding the culture.

Gender roles in Japan may still be considered relatively old-fashioned by U.S. standards, although this is rapidly changing. Men are the primary income winners and are expected to work long hours at their jobs. Women are increasingly joining the workforce, but whether they work or not, women are also expected to take care of the house and children.

An important contemporary social issue in Japan is a lowered birthrate; this is, in part, because women are choosing to have a career instead of children.

**Customs and Etiquette**

**On the train:**
- The cardinal rule of train-riding is "Quiet!" Keep your voice down and do not talk on a cell phone (texting is okay).
- Do not block the train doors. Try not to use the fold-down seats near the doors if the train is crowded; if you are on the folding seats when the train stops, stand up to let others through.
- Do not stare at others on the train. Keep your belongings close to you and out of the way of others.
- Sleeping is okay on the train, but do not fall asleep on other people.

**When riding a bike:**
- It is okay to ride in the road, but watch out for cars, as roads are very narrow. Don’t make unpredictable movements, especially around cars.
- Lock your bike whenever you leave it. Do not leave your bike in places that are not bike parking lots.

**Eating:**
- Before you begin to eat, it is customary to say “Itadakimasu” (ee-ta-da-kee-mah-s). When finished eating, say “Gouchisousama deshita” (Go-chee-sew-sah-mah de-shee-ta).
- Slurping soup is okay; it is even encouraged as a sign that you like the food. You may also pick your rice or miso bowl up to keep from spilling.
- It is rude to drink or eat messy foods while walking around. This rule is tricky, but generally, if you can’t eat something discreetly, don’t eat it while walking. (e.g.
open containers of beverage; foods like hamburger, bagged snacks, etc."

- Drinking alcohol in public is severely frowned upon. There are beer vending machines around, but the Japanese will buy from them and bring the unopened beer home with them.
- If you need more drinks or food at a karaoke bar and it is not self-serve, use the phone near the door.
- Tipping does not exist in Japan.

**General tips:**

- Be quiet when walking around outside, especially at night. The walls of Japanese houses are thin, and the Japanese do not enjoy being woken up in the middle of the night.
- If people are staring at you, don’t get angry and don’t stare back. Remember that as a foreigner, you are an unusual sight in Japan!
- When it is raining, if you have an umbrella, look for a little fixture near the door that wraps your umbrella in plastic. Not all places have them, but it’s best to look just the same. If there is no plastic-wrapper thing, there will likely be a wire rack to leave your umbrella on. Make sure you take your umbrella when you leave!
## Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kansai Gaidai Univ</th>
<th>Japanese Consulate in U.S.</th>
<th>UW-Eau Claire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mr. Yoshihisa Nishimura  
Director of International Programs  
Center for International Education  
Kansai Gaidai University  
16-1 Nakamiyahigashino-cho  
Hirakata City, Osaka, 573-1001  
JAPAN  
Ph: 011-81-72-805-2831  
Fax: 011-81-72-805-2830  
General inquiry: kgu-in01@kansaigaidai.ac.jp  
Admissions/Arrival: aspgenes@kansaigaidai.ac.jp  
Housing: housing@kansaigaidai.ac.jp  
Web: [http://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/](http://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/) | Consulate General of Japan at Chicago  
737 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 1100  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Tel.: (312) 280 0400  
Fax: (312) 280-9568  
(715)577-9045 |
| YOUR ADDRESS IN KANSAI GAIDAI  
(Your Name)  
c/o Center for International Education  
Kansai Gaidai  
16-1 Nakamiyahigashino-cho  
Hirakata City, Osaka 573-1001  
JAPAN | **U.S. Consulate in Japan**  
U.S. Consulate General in Osaka-Kobe  
2-11-5 Nishitenma  
Kita-ku, Osaka 530-8543  
Telephone: 81-06-6315-5900  
Emergency after-hours telephone: 81-6-6315-5900  
Fax: 81-6-6315-5914  
Web: [https://jp.usembassy.gov](https://jp.usembassy.gov) | Remember that in most cases, local contacts are best in local emergency situations. |
|  |  | If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require. |
## Web Information: Japan

### City
Osaka Hirakata City Homepage: [http://www.city.hirakata.osaka.jp](http://www.city.hirakata.osaka.jp)


### Culture


### Country
Japan: [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/japan](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/japan)

Japanese Rail Pass: [http://www.japanrailpass.net/eng/en001.html](http://www.japanrailpass.net/eng/en001.html)

Lonely Planet: Japan: [https://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan)
When past participants of the Kansai program were asked to sum up their experience, here is what they said:

I wish I had known that nothing would be as intimidating as I thought it would be, like the classes, the professors, the international students, and the Japanese students. Things may have seemed difficult, but everyone kind of has an "in this together" attitude, so it's never a problem if you need help or advice - you can find both fairly easily, in friends, other students, and staff.

Changing my daily schedule/routine according to my environment was an adjustment I had to make. For example, I had to put more effort into finding the foods I like, meaning I had to plan when to go to the grocery store that was nearest to me and figure out what to buy, and I also had to adjust my exercise schedule. As a major creature of habit, I made these activities really routine in America, so adjusting these routines in Japan was a challenge, but not one I was unable to overcome.

I wanted to know who my host family would be because it was hard trying to find a gift to bring them from the United States. Unfortunately, that is outside anyone's control as the program doesn't pair you until you arrive.

Sometimes late at night there are drunk people and they will follow me home. There is some sexual harassment on public transportation but I have not seen it happen, I have only heard about it from other students. Travel in groups, especially at night to avoid this.

Kansai is in a great location because it’s super close to Kyoto and Osaka. With a lot of things to do in both Kyoto and Osaka, if a student wants to travel, whether it’s to shop or do more culturally-oriented things such as shrines and temples, they can occupy a lot of the weekends by going to these close cities. The campus itself is beautiful, the living situation is nice and Hirakata is a nice city too. When it comes to classes, a variety of interesting options are available!

The Japanese are so friendly here – I made a lot of friends very quickly and we’re always doing stuff together.