

Japan

UCEAP Advising Notes

Objective

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad advisor to review program-specific details that may impact a student's decision to apply for an UCEAP program. The document is **not** a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the [UCEAP](#) and [BSA](#) website. The best source of detailed program information are the [UCEAP webpages for Japan](#). If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website or this Advising Notes document, please contact the [BSA Advisor](#) for this program.

Updated August 2024

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Quick Links

Below is a summary of the 2025-2026 UCEAP Japan programs available to Berkeley students:

	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Year 2025-26	Spring 2026
<i>Immersion</i>				
Hitotsubashi University				X
International Christian University			X	
Keio University			X	
Waseda University			X	
<i>Language</i>				
Japanese in Kyoto				X
Japanese in Osaka	X			
Japanese in Tokyo	X			
<i>Research</i>				
Engineering and Science			X	X
STEM Research in Osaka	X	X		X
STEM Research in Tokyo	X			
<i>Themed</i>				
Global Studies. Japan		X		X

Video & Blog Resources

There are a number of videos provided by UCEAP or UC Berkeley Students to help students learn about their study abroad options. Here are some you can check out:

Videos

- 2021: [Study Abroad in Asia and Oceania | UCEAP Open House](#)
- 2020: [Study Abroad in Japan | UCEAP Study Abroad Fair 2020](#)
- 2019: [Spring 2019 Japanese in Kyoto students talk about their favorite places on campus \(in Japanese\)](#)
- 2013: UCEAP Japan Promotion Videos – [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)

Blogs

- 2014: [UC Berkeley Student on the Global Studies, Japan program](#)

Citizenship, Passport, and Visa Considerations

Per Japanese government regulations, if you have Japanese citizenship, you must enter Japan as a Japanese citizen, even if you have dual citizenship with another country. If you are a Japanese citizen and would like to apply to an UCEAP Japan program, please notify the BSA Japan Adviser by email prior to application. Students with Japanese citizenship do **not** need a visa to enter Japan. If you are a Japanese citizen and are applying for Waseda University, please note that Waseda University will *only* consider Japanese Citizens if you have studied at a foreign school (i.e., outside of Japan) for a minimum of a certain number of years, depending on the department:

- SILS: 6 years or more
- Other than SILS: 12 years
- Graduate Schools: 6 years

Students participating in UCEAP Japan programs must obtain a student visa in the U.S. prior to departure. In order to apply for a student visa, you will need a Certificate of Eligibility, which is issued by the host institution 10 to 30 days prior to the start date of the program. For fall, spring, or year programs, the COE are now issued electronically.

Students who are in the process of applying for U.S. citizenship or making any legal name changes are **not** eligible to apply to any UCEAP Japan programs unless the changes will be completed before application. There are no exceptions to this.

Non-US citizens should contact the Japanese Consulate to determine your visa requirements. Requirements and processing times for non-US citizens may vary. Ensure that you have the proper documents to re-enter the US. Consult with the Bureau of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (UCCIS) if necessary.

For all UCEAP Japan programs, students cannot be accepted to a Japanese university without a valid passport. Your [UCEAP application](#) will state how long your passport must be valid after the end date of the program and when a photocopy of it will be due. If you do not have a passport or need a renewal, please review the Passport Information section of the [UCEAP How to Apply Page](#), and take action immediately.

Programs That Typically Fill Before Deadline

All UCEAP programs in Japan (except Engineering and Science Year) have a limited number of spaces allotted. These programs usually receive more applications than we have allotted spots on the program, and typically fill before the application deadline. Nominations are on a first come first serve basis. Students should not be discouraged from applying to their first choice; however, all applicants are encouraged to consider programs in other countries for suitable alternatives as a backup.

The selection criteria we will use for programs that typically fill before deadline include:

- Pre-requisite or program eligibility (if applicable)
 - Class Standing
 - GPA
 - Student's coursework background and training in relevant areas
 - Completeness and thoroughness of the UCEAP and Berkeley online applications.
- Incomplete applications without sufficient reason could be denied immediately.

In the event you are denied from your first choice program, the BSA Adviser will work with you to find an alternative UCEAP program or discuss other options. For the full list of programs that typically fill before the deadline, see the [How to Apply](#) page.

Application Note - Qualified students will be nominated on a 'first come first serve basis' based on their UCEAP application submission date/time up until the program's application deadline or until the program has filled. On the BSA website's [Explore](#) tool, you will be able to see that application filing period for specific programs.

All students, regardless of what term they are applying for, must submit both the UCEAP and Berkeley Study Abroad applications to be considered. Please consult the [application instructions](#) and your BSA Adviser if you have questions about the application process.

Program Considerations – Immersion

None of the immersion programs in Japan have a minimum language requirement or a language maximum. Whether you have no Japanese language experience or you are fluent, you are welcome to apply.

The UC unit value of courses taken in Japanese universities varies widely, but it is typically less than the standard units earned for a Berkeley course. Please refer to the summary below to see the average Berkeley units earned per course at the host institutions (subject to change). It is

encouraged that you discuss with your major/college adviser the possibility of using two courses on a similar theme to fulfill a single requirement.

- Hitotsubashi: 2.0
- ICU: 1.7 – 2.7 (regular classes), 8.0 (intensive language classes)
- Keio: 2.0
- Waseda: 2.0 - 4.0

How do you decide which host university is right for you? Research, research, research! The BSA Japan Adviser cannot simply tell you the host institution that is going to be the best fit for you, academically or socially. Expect to dedicate many hours of research to the process of deciding which university to apply to. The best place to begin is on each host institution's website to review their course listings and each "program details" tab on the UCEAP program page. There are significant differences in academic culture between Japan and the U.S. It is highly encouraged that you research the Japanese academic culture prior to applying for a year-long program.

[International Christian University](#)

The [International Christian University](#) program runs on a quarter system and is only offered as an academic year program through UCEAP.

[Keio University](#)

The [Keio University](#) program is offered as a full academic year UCEAP program only.

[Waseda University](#)

The [Waseda University](#) program is offered as a full academic year UCEAP program only.

[Hitotsubashi University](#)

Beginning Spring 2025, Exchange students can take courses at the School of Social Data Science. Courses in English are somewhat limited.

Program Considerations – Language

[Japanese in Tokyo](#)

The Japanese in Tokyo program is hosted at [International Christian University](#). Students must have a minimum of 6 quarters/4 semesters of university-level Japanese at the time of departure. The program will no longer offer special courses for heritage/native/near-native Japanese speakers.

[Japanese in Osaka](#)

The Japanese in Osaka program at [Osaka University](#) is for students with little or no prior study of Japanese language and is suitable for those with 1 semester or less of first year university-level Japanese language study. Students who are looking for a summer option in Japan but are linguistically overqualified for the Japanese in Osaka program should consider the Japanese in Tokyo program, or semester or year-long UCEAP options.

Beginning in Summer 2025, the program will undergo changes to its duration, course offerings, and eligibility requirements. More information will be updated on the UCEAP program page, please reach out to the BSA advisor for more information.

[Japanese in Kyoto](#)

The Japanese in Kyoto program is hosted at [Doshisha University](#). There is no language prerequisite, but beginning to advanced speakers can be accommodated on the program. The program is considered language intensive and is 4 and 1/2 months in length. The program offers students an amazing opportunity to explore Kyoto and the historic Kansai region of Japan.

Most of the academic offerings of this program fall into the "language" category. All students take 10 semester units of language on the program. Though it will feel like taking one large rigorous language course, it will actually translate into ten 1-unit courses on your transcript, each with an individual grade. The language courses are taught every weekday from roughly 9am to 12:30pm. On top of your language coursework, you will also take a minimum of two elective courses. Electives meet only once per week for 1.5 hours per class, and are worth 2 semester units each.

Thus, the minimum unit load on the program is 14 semester units. You are welcome to take additional electives beyond the required two.

You will not find out which electives are available to you until after you arrive at Doshisha University (which hosts the Japanese in Kyoto Program) and take the language exam. The language exam determines what level of language course you are placed in (there are 8 levels), and it also tells you which electives you can take, because electives are taught at different language levels (you can also take electives in English). Additional course information can be found on the [Doshisha University website](#).

Program Considerations – Research

All Research Programs

Our Japanese partners look at credits completed rather than number of semesters attended. Therefore, if students are taking upper division courses and have completed the requisite number of units to be a Junior, they may be eligible for consideration for these programs. In addition, review the eligibility requirements on the UCEAP program page for a complete list of requirements.

Prospective students are encouraged to accept placement in this program **only if** they are certain they will be able to participate within the lab they are assigned. Lab research placements such as this are often competitive; if you accept and later decline a placement, you may be taking an opportunity away from students who were not selected. Research teams at the host university also count on having nominated students as part of their lab, so you are encouraged to accept the placement only if you can commit to participation in the program.

Semester or Year-long Research Programs

In Japan, UCEAP Engineering and Science students have the status of junior researchers. You will be assigned to work in a *kenkyushitsu* (laboratory) that typically includes a professor who oversees research, an associate professor, a postdoctoral student, graduate students, and undergraduate seniors writing their senior theses. Graduate students conduct independent research, and undergraduates conduct assigned research within their field of interest. Most learning and interaction with other students takes place in the *kenkyushitsu* through a mentor process rather than in a formal classroom setting.

Because of reasons above, applicants to Research programs will be asked to submit a research project proposal *after* being nominated for the program by Berkeley Study Abroad. The purpose of the proposal is to match you with an appropriate professor/lab at the host university.

Engineering and Science

This program does not have a language requirement, but students with advanced Japanese language skills also have access to electives taught in Japanese.

At [Tohoku University](#) (which hosts the Engineering and Science program), students typically take the following course load each semester:

- Independent Study Project (Lab Research): 5.3 semester units
- Japanese Language: 4 semester units
- Science and Engineering Electives in English: 3 classes worth 2 semester units each (6 total units)

You may review electives offered on the [Tohoku University website](#).

Students have the opportunity to double the amount of time (30 hours per week) and units (10.6 UC semester units) earned in the lab portion of their program at Tohoku. This is known as the intensive research course, and it requires the approval of the research supervisor after arrival at Tohoku University.

STEM Research in Osaka

The Fall program at [Osaka University](#) runs from late September to mid-February, so it is only possible for students who do **not** have to return to UC Berkeley for the Spring semester or are graduating after the Fall term. Please review the “calendar considerations” section for additional information. Due to capacity constraints, students may not extend their program if nominated and may only participate in 1 term max. Independent research outside of UCEAP is also not permitted. Consult the BSA Japan adviser if you have further questions.

This is a full-time lab program for academic credit. During the Semester-length program, you may take one or two courses in addition to the lab research. Courses that will be open to UC exchange students will not be known until the program begins. Many students take one Japanese language course.

During the semester-length program, students take the following course load:

- Lab Research: 14 semester units
- Optional Japanese language course

The Summer package of the STEM Research in Osaka program is often extremely impacted, and UC Berkeley is only able to send a few students each summer. If you are not nominated for this program due to space constraints, your application may be redirected to other summer research programs, such as [Research in Hong Kong](#) or [Research in Taipei](#). Nomination by Berkeley/UCEAP does not guarantee placement by Osaka University. You must be accepted by the host university in addition to BSA and UCEAP.

STEM Research in Tokyo

The STEM Research in Tokyo program is often extremely impacted, and UC Berkeley is only able to send a few students each summer. Students can apply to either the Summer Science or the Engineering track. If you are not nominated for this program due to space constraints, your application may be redirected to other summer research programs, such as [Research in Hong Kong](#) or [Research in Taipei](#). Nomination by Berkeley/UCEAP does not guarantee placement by the University of Tokyo Research Internship Program (UTRIP). You must be accepted by the host university in addition to BSA and UCEAP. Science, Engineering, and Math majors are welcome to apply. Placement in Biology-related labs is very competitive.

Review program information and possible research projects on the [UTRIP website](#). Nominated students should apply to as many labs as possible at the University of Tokyo to ensure best chances for placement in a lab.

Students participating in this program earn 5.0 UC semester units for this program. To qualify for summer financial aid at Berkeley, a student must enroll in a minimum of 6.0 semester units. Therefore, this program **does not qualify for summer financial aid** as a standalone option.

Program Considerations – Themed

[Global Studies, Japan](#)

Students with a declared Social Science major are given priority, but all majors will be considered so long as a student demonstrates sincere interest in the academic program via their UCEAP application (and any follow-up requested by the BSA Japan Adviser).

Meiji Gakuin University (MGU), which hosts the Global Studies, Japan program, is one of the few UCEAP Japan partner universities that offers some 4.0 semester unit courses. Higher unit value courses may be easier to use for major, minor, and/or breadth credit. Course information for the current MGU semester can be found on the [MGU website](#).

For the courses at MGU that have lower unit values (2 semester units), students may be able to do a special study project related to a particular course in order to increase the unit value of the course and meet their departmental requirement.

UCEAP students at MGU will be housed in a subsidized university dormitory in single rooms. The housing includes a meal plan with breakfast and dinner, keeping the program affordable and providing excellent opportunities to mingle with Japanese students. A limited number of homestays may also be available on the MGU program. More information can be found on [MGU's website](#).

MGU offers internship positions for UC students to help in the learning center as English tutors and to pursue teaching internships for academic credit.

Calendar Considerations

The academic calendar in Japan is not a direct match to UC Berkeley's. Programs that have a significantly different calendar compared to the Berkeley academic calendar are listed below:

Global Studies, Japan

- Fall: mid September to late December
- Spring: late March to late July

Hitotsubashi University

- Spring: late March to late July

Japanese in Tokyo

- Summer: early July to late July

Japanese in Osaka

- Summer: mid June to mid August

Japanese in Kyoto

- Spring: late March to early August

STEM Research Tokyo

- Summer (Engineering): mid June to late July
- Summer (Summer Science): mid June to early August

STEM Research Osaka

- Summer: mid June to mid August
- Fall: late September to early February
- Spring: late March to late July

Engineering and Science

- Spring: late March to early August
- Year: late September to early August

International Christian University

- Year: late August to late June

Keio University

- Year: mid September to late July

Waseda University

- Year: early September to late July

All courses taken abroad on UCEAP will report back to students' Berkeley transcript. However, whether this fulfills graduation requirements such as major, minor, or breadth should be discussed with College and/or Major advisors as each department is different. A petition process may be required in order to fulfill graduation requirements abroad. The standard processing time for UCEAP grades to post back to a students' CalCentral is around 3 months (subject to change). Grades are posted from the host institution abroad to UCEAP for processing and then

to each UC. If students are planning to pursue graduate school, an internship, or job immediately after a UCEAP program ends, please coordinate with the graduate school or job prospect directly to discuss whether an updated transcript can be provided at a later date. More information can be found on the [BSA Academics page](#).

Japanese Language Preparation

Some programs in Japan do not require previous Japanese language study. However, you are advised to expose yourself to learning the language now so that you have an idea of what learning Japanese is like.

For Research programs, although research is supervised in English, all seminars, courses, and meetings of the research unit are in Japanese. It is mandatory that you attend the seminars and colloquia and participate in the group's research efforts and social events, even if you lack an optimal level of Japanese comprehension.

Financial Considerations

Studying in Japan can be expensive due to the high living costs in Japan, but it should not deter you from pursuing this option. There are many generous scholarships offered by organizations in the US and Japan. Here are a few scholarships to explore:

- [Bridging Scholarships](#)
- [JASSO Scholarship](#): if available for your program, you will be invited to apply through your pre-departure paperwork, after you have been nominated for UCEAP. Please wait for instructions.
- [Gilman Scholarship](#): you must be a US citizen receiving a Pell Grant to qualify for this scholarship.
- [American Association of Japanese University Women Scholarship](#)
- [Japanese Government \(Monbukagakusho: MEXT\) Scholarships](#)
- [Freeman-ASIA Scholarship](#)

Students participating in the STEM Research Tokyo summer program earn 5.0 UC semester units for this program; 4.0 units for research and 1.0 unit for the lecture series, which are both graded on the Pass/No pass grading option only. To qualify for summer financial aid at Berkeley a student must enroll in a minimum of 6.0 semester units. Therefore, this program **does not qualify for summer financial aid** as a standalone option.

All UCEAP students are encouraged to apply for a [UCEAP Scholarship](#), which offers a \$1000 award for summer programs. For more information, visit the UCEAP Scholarships page.

More information on financial aid and scholarships can be found on our website:

<http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances>

Financial aid students can request a financial aid estimate for the program here:

<https://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances/financial-aid-advising>

Considerations for Transfer Students

Transfer students should review BSA's [I am a Transfer Student webpage](#) for an overview of considerations. As a general rule, transfer students are eligible to apply for study abroad programs that take place after the student has completed one term at UC Berkeley (one semester residency requirement). For example, if a student's first term at Berkeley is Fall 2024, the earliest cycle to apply is either Spring 25 or Summer 25. This is dependent on application deadlines and the program eligibility requirements. Students should consult with their academic department to confirm College and/or Major study abroad requirements and to confirm when study abroad can fit into their academic plan.

Considerations for Graduating Seniors

If you are a graduating senior who is applying to a Spring semester program, please be advised that the finals period may stretch into July or August. Returning to Berkeley to walk in a commencement ceremony is an unrealistic expectation for Spring participants. If walking in graduation is very important to you, we recommend that you apply to the [National University Singapore](#), as there is a better chance that the program will end before commencement. As an alternative to walking in a Spring ceremony, there is also a UC Berkeley "December Graduates Convocation" if you would like to have the experience of walking in graduation (not department specific). Similarly, you can wait and walk in the following Spring departmental ceremony.

Graduating seniors participating in a spring semester program should ensure that they are on the Spring degree list. If they are not yet on this degree list, students should petition to move their graduation term with their UC Berkeley college. However, spring program grades are often not reported to UCEAP until mid-September or October, so your grades will not arrive in time for your degree to be processed with the spring degree list (which occurs in mid-July). You will be automatically removed from the spring degree list and placed onto the summer degree list, which is processed in October. Thus, your diploma would display a summer graduation date rather than a spring graduation date. **This policy is subject to change.** For all students, after your UCEAP grades arrive and you are waiting for the next degree list to be processed, you can

request a "Certificate of Completion" from the Berkeley Registrar that can serve as "proof" of graduation.

More information can be found in the [I am a Senior page](#).

Considerations for LGBTQ+ Students

International Christian University is one of the best campuses in terms of support offered for LGBTQ+ students. Please review the [LGBT in ICU Student Guidebook](#).

In general, Japan is **not** included on UCEAP's [list of LGBTIQ-tolerant countries](#), which was compiled using information from the [Spartacus Gay Travel Index](#). For additional information, review BSA's [I am a LGBTQIA+ Identifying Student webpage](#) for an overview of considerations.

Information from the U.S. Department of State's [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) is as follows:

The law requires transgender persons to be without reproductive capacity, effectively requiring surgical sterilization for most persons, in order to have their gender identity legally recognized. They also must meet additional conditions, including undergoing a psychiatric evaluation and receiving a diagnosis of "gender identity disorder," a disorder not recognized in the International Classification of Diseases; being unmarried and older than age 20; and not having any children younger than age 20.

No law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and there are no penalties associated with such discrimination. LGBTI advocacy organizations reported instances of discrimination, outing, bullying, harassment, and violence. A letter signed by 96 human rights and LGBTI organizations and sent to the prime minister in April urged the Liberal Democratic Party to introduce legislation to protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The parents of a student who fell from a school building in 2015 after his classmates disclosed he was gay appealed the Tokyo District Court's 2019 dismissal of their civil lawsuit seeking damages from Hitotsubashi University. As of November the case was pending at an appellate court.

In April, two all-women national universities in the country, Ochanomizu University in Tokyo and Nara Women's University in Nara, started accepting transgender students.

According to a government survey, just more than 10 percent of companies have policies aimed at protecting the rights of sexual minorities. LGBTI rights advocates welcomed an increasing number of municipalities that introduced ordinances to ban discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation and recognized same-sex partnership. The Ministry of Justice received a few inquiries about potential human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2019, providing the inquirers with legal advice.

Stigma surrounding LGBTI persons remained an impediment to self-reporting of discrimination or abuse.

There are two openly LGBTI national legislators, both of whom are members of the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking accommodations should review BSA's [I am a Student With Disabilities webpage](#) for an overview of considerations. If you receive accommodations at UC Berkeley and would like to know if they are also available in the program abroad that interests you, it is a good idea to email your BSA adviser to inquire about your specific needs. That way, if your needs cannot be accommodated in that program, you can investigate other programs that might.

For programs in Japan, accommodations for a reduced course load are unfortunately not possible due to student visa restrictions. However, students may be able to seek other accommodations that are outlined in a DSP letter, such as extra time on exams.

Students with emotional support animals or service animals will need to request accommodations from their UCEAP Program Specialist prior to departure on their UCEAP program. Emotional support animal accommodation requests are not guaranteed. Below are additional resources to consider:

Traveling Internationally with a Guide Dog or Service Animal

Pros and cons, legal and health considerations for going abroad with your service animal

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/serviceanimal>

10 Steps to Bring Your Service Animal or Guide Dog to Another Country

Start planning early and consider international quarantine and vaccination laws

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/10steps>

Should I Take My Guide Dog or Service Animal?

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/guidedogdecisions>

Caring for Your Guide Dog or Service Animal Abroad

Learn tips for supplies to take along, climate preparations, and animal health while traveling internationally

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/preparingyouranimal>

Considerations for Undocumented Students

Berkeley Study Abroad is committed to supporting undocumented students in their pursuit of study abroad programs. The BSA Office collaborates with the [Undocumented Student Program](#) and the [East Bay Community Law Center \(EBCLC\)](#) to support undocumented or DACA students interested in studying abroad. We also partner with the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office to support students on this journey. We have sent undocumented students on Berkeley Study Abroad programs internationally and domestically since DACA's inception in 2011. The Advance Parole processing timeline can take anywhere from 10-13.5 months to process and it is highly encouraged that students interested in studying abroad reach out to the BSA office as soon as possible to discuss the next steps to submit an early application. For more information, review the [I am an...Undocumented Student](#) page.

Diversity Abroad Resources

BSA recognizes that there are many nuances to exploring your identities abroad, and these articles may not be representative of all identities and experiences. Diversity Abroad resources, however, are a great starting place for your exploration. You can find a variety of [articles](#) to help you prepare for your study abroad experience as well as a [Japan Destination Guide](#).

A Final Note on Applying to UCEAP Japan

Preparations for studying abroad in Japan are complicated and time-consuming, beginning with your actual UCEAP and Berkeley Study Abroad application and continuing through pre-departure for your program with host university and visa paperwork. Attention to detail is vital to the success of your application and placement at a Japanese university. Remember that Japanese officials (including host university administrators, Japanese Ministry of Education, the Japanese Immigration office) are very strict about the accuracy and appearance of your paperwork, so please look over all forms meticulously before submitting them.

For further information or general resources about studying in Japan, consider reviewing the [Study in Japan](#) webpage provided by the Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco.