Japan
UCEAP Advising Notes

Objective of the Advising Notes Document

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student’s decision to apply for an EAP 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, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the UCEAP Program Guide from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or the Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information

For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/advising

UCEAP Japan Programs Key Notes for 2020-2021

The STEM Research Tokyo program offers Engineering research placements in addition to the science placements previously offered. This program still remains impacted, and Biology remains competitive.

For the Japanese in Tokyo program, students are required to stay in on-campus housing due to the Olympics.

See what EAP Japan Alumni Say About Studying Abroad in Japan

In 2013, the Tokyo Study Center staff spoke with past EAP Japan students about their experiences and their lives in Japan. Check out the videos on YouTube:

- Part I: http://youtu.be/jgVpniPZjpo
- Part II: http://youtu.be/16WQbXn6cTq

Other resources:

- Fall 2014 Global Studies, Japan student blog: okane-mochi.tumblr.com
- UCEAP Tokyo Site Visit Video: https://youtu.be/fqpWHmXsfoM
- Spring 2019 Japanese in Kyoto students talk about their favorite places on campus (in Japanese!): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tocjLGhnbM
Citizenship and Student Visa Considerations, All EAP Japan Programs

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.

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. Please do not make plans to travel outside the U.S. in the month before the official start date of your UCEAP Japan program.

Students who are in the process of applying for US 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 to the EAP program.

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.

A valid passport is required to apply to all host universities. If you do not have a valid passport, or if your passport will expire less than six months after the end of your program, please apply for one immediately.

Advisory for Transfer Students

Transfer students who do not have a UC GPA the term before going abroad are eligible to apply for the following UCEAP Japan Programs:

- Japanese in Osaka (Summer)
- STEM Research Osaka (Summer, Fall, Spring)
- Global Studies, Japan (Fall, Spring)
- Engineering and Science (Spring, Year)
- Hitotsubashi University (Spring, Year)

Transfer students who do not have a UC GPA the term before going abroad are NOT eligible to apply for the following UCEAP Japan Programs:

- International Christian University (Year)
- Keio University (Year)
- Waseda University (Year)
- Japanese in Kyoto (Spring)
- Japanese in Tokyo (Summer)
- STEM Research Tokyo (Summer)

Transfer students are encouraged to contact the BSA Japan Adviser to discuss specific academic plans and timeframe for study abroad in Japan.
**Impacted Programs**

In some academic years, we receive more applications for select programs than we have allotted Berkeley spots on the program. Students should not be discouraged from applying to their first choice; however, all applicants are encouraged to consider other programs for suitable alternatives.

The selection criteria we will use for impacted programs include:

- GPA
- Class Standing
- Student’s coursework background and training in relevant areas
- Statement of Purpose: priority will be given to students who successfully convey why HKU in particular is a good fit for them and how the program will benefit them academically, professionally, and/or personally.
- Completeness and thoroughness of application. Incomplete applications without sufficient reason could be denied immediately.

The following programs are considered impacted. If your first choice is an impacted program, speak with the adviser for this program to discuss if you may obtain permission to apply to a back-up choice.

- Global Studies, Japan – Fall
- Japanese in Osaka – Summer
- Japanese in Tokyo – Summer
- STEM Research Osaka – Summer
- STEM Research Tokyo – Summer Science & Summer Engineering

**Program-specific Considerations: All Lab Research Programs**

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 selected students as part of their lab, so you are encouraged to accept the placement only if you can commit to participation in the program.

**Program-specific Considerations: STEM Research Tokyo**

The **STEM Research Tokyo** program is often impacted, and UC Berkeley is only able to send a few each summer. If you are not accepted to this program due to space constraints, your application may be redirected to other summer research programs, such as **Undergraduate 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 selected 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 often very competitive.

Review program information and possible research projects on the **UTRIP website**. Nominated students should apply to as many labs as possible at 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-specific Considerations: STEM Research Osaka

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

Academic Considerations, Japanese in Osaka

The Japanese in Osaka program is for students with little or no prior study of Japanese language and is suitable for those with 1 semester or less of 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.

The beginning Japanese language course is divided into two four-week sessions. The course is reported as part A and B. Both grades will be reported at the end of the program to the Office of the Registrar. Students must receive a passing grade in the first session (part A) (as determined by Osaka University) in order to be allowed to stay at Osaka University and progress to the second session (part B).

Academic Considerations, Year-long Programs (not Science/Engineering-related)

Hitotsubashi University, International Christian University, Keio University, Osaka University, and Waseda University

Students may consider the year-long immersion program for broad-based study in Japan at one of four Japanese universities. Placement notifications can be expected in late January.

These four Japanese universities have the following minimum language requirements:

- Hitotsubashi University – None
- International Christian University (ICU) – None
- Keio University – None
- Waseda University – minimum of 1 year of university level Japanese prior to departure

Applicants who exceed the minimum language requirement of a given university may still apply to that university (e.g. a student with three years of Japanese prior to departure may still apply to Keio or Waseda).

The UC unit value of courses taken in Japanese universities varies widely, but 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. It is encouraged that you discuss with your major/college adviser the possibility of using two courses on a similar theme to fulfill a major requirement.

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

There are significant differences in academic culture between Japan and the U.S. It is highly encouraged that you research the Japanese academic culture or make an appointment with the UCEAP Japan adviser to discuss these differences prior to applying for a year-long program.
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.

**Academic Considerations, Semester Programs (not Science/Engineering-related)**

Students considering studying abroad for one semester in Japan have the option of an “immersion” program (broader focus, enroll in regular university courses) at *Hitotsubashi University*, or they can choose from “special focus” programs that have curriculum pertaining solely to the special focus of the program—these special focus topics, including course listings, are easily accessible from the UCEAP website, so they are not repeated here.

Applicants should research the courses offered on special focus programs and demonstrate an understanding of the program offerings in their UCEAP application (in their Statement of Purpose and Preliminary Academic Planning Form).

**Global Studies, Japan (Fall, Spring)**
No language prerequisite! This program is often impacted in the Fall package. If your application is not selected due to space constraints, you may be redirected to another EAP program. Students with a declared Social Science major are given priority for selection, but all majors will be considered so long as a student demonstrates sincere interest in the academic program via their EAP application (and any follow-up requested by the BSA Japan Adviser).

Meiji Gakuin University, 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](#). Course information for the prior MGU semester can be requested via email to the BSA Japan Adviser.

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!

**Japanese in Kyoto (Spring)**
There is no language prerequisite, but beginning to advanced speakers can be accommodated on the program. The program is 4 ½ months in length and 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 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 arrival at Doshisha University (which hosts the Japanese in Kyoto Program) and you 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.

Academic Considerations, Engineering and Science Semester/Year 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 post-doctoral 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 Engineering and Science 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.

UCEAP offers two semester or year packages for Engineering and Science majors with varying levels of Japanese language proficiency:

**Engineering and Science (Spring, Year)**
No 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 requires the approval of the research supervisor after arrival at Tohoku University.

**STEM Research Osaka (Fall, Spring)**
This program does not have a language requirement.

The Fall program 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.

It is possible to turn this program into a year-long option by applying to both Fall and Spring programs. Consult the BSA Japan adviser if you are interested in this possibility.

This is a full-time lab 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.

At Osaka, students take the following course load each semester:
- Lab Research: 14 semester units
- Optional Japanese language course
A Note about UCEAP Japan programs without language requirements

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. Students with learning disabilities may find learning another language challenging. If this is the case, consider providing a letter from your campus DSP Adviser to document your learning disability.

Below are a couple resources to assist in learning Japanese:

- Learning hiragana
- Learning kanji

For Science and Engineering 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.

Calendar Considerations, All UCEAP Japan Programs

The academic calendar in Japan is not a direct match to the academic calendar of UC Berkeley. Programs that do not compare to the Berkeley academic calendar are listed below (if a program is not listed, there is no significant difference). Some Fall packages require a student to sit out the Spring semester at Berkeley.

Engineering and Science:
- Spring: early April to early August
- Year: late September to early August

Global Studies, Japan:
- Fall: early September to late December
- Spring: early April to late July

Hitotsubashi University:
- Year: early September to late July
- Spring: early April to late July

International Christian University:
- Year: late August to late June

Japanese in Kyoto:
- Spring: late March to early August

Keio University:
- Year: early September to late July

STEM Research Osaka:
- Fall: mid-September to early February
- Spring: late March to early August

Waseda University:
- Year, Year-GLFP: early September to late July

Go to the Participants section of the UCEAP website to view previous years’ calendars.
Financial Considerations for EAP Japan Programs

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 EAP program, you will be invited to apply through your pre-departure paperwork, after you have been accepted to EAP. 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

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.

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 June or July. 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 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 on a spring semesters 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.

Considerations for LGBTIQA+ Students

International Christian University is one of the best campuses in terms of support offered for LGBTIQA+ students. Please review the LGBT in ICU Student Guidebook.

Japan is included on UCEAP’s list of tolerant destinations for LGBTIQA+ students. Nations on this list are included based on recognition of same-sex unions and the existence of human rights laws prohibiting discrimination against gay individuals. This resource considers potential risks as they specifically affect members of the LGBTIQA+ community, and not necessarily the overall threats posed to all students traveling and studying abroad. You can review the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018 from the U.S. Department of State for more information.
According to the U.S. Department of State’s Human Rights Report, no law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In general, societal acceptance of LGBTIQA+ persons continued to improve. There are no existing penalties associated with such discrimination, and no related statistics were available. Laws governing rape, sexual commerce, and other activity involving sexual intercourse do not apply to same-sex sexual activity, since the law defines sex as exclusively male-to-female vaginal intercourse. This definition leads to lower penalties for perpetrators of male rape and greater legal ambiguity surrounding same-sex prostitution.

NGOs that advocate on behalf of LGBTIQA+ persons reported no impediments to organization but some instances of bullying, harassment, and violence. Stigma surrounding LGBTIQA+ persons remained an impediment to self-reporting of discrimination or abuse, and studies on bullying and violence in schools generally did not take into account the sexual orientation or gender identity of the persons involved. Pervasive societal stigma surrounding LGBTIQA+ persons also prevented many from being open about their sexual orientation, and attorneys who frequently represent LGBTIQA+ persons related several cases during the year in which clients were threatened with disclosure of sexual orientation. Self-censorship in the press remained an impediment to bringing LGBTIQA+ issues into mainstream discourse.

The law allows transgender individuals to change their legal gender, but only after receiving a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

Traditional Japanese society stigmatizes homosexuality, often discouraging an open expression of identity. Despite some occasional social discomfort, the LGBTIQA+ community enjoys a high degree of freedom and increasing levels of support from communities and the government. Pervasive societal stigma surrounding LGBTIQA+ persons also prevent many from being open about their sexual orientation, and attorneys who frequently represent LGBTIQA+ persons related 10 cases during 2012 in which clients were threatened with disclosure of sexual orientation.

Map, Descriptions, and Photos of the Japanese Host Universities

We are working on creating a more up-to-date resource, but for now, please refer to this website with a map and descriptions of the Japanese universities affiliated with UCEAP.

Each university has its own photo album with helpful descriptions:

- International Christian University
- Waseda University
- Keio University
- Hitotsubashi University
- Osaka University
- Doshisha University

A Final Note about Applying to UCEAP in Japan

Preparations for studying abroad in Japan are complicated and time-consuming, beginning with your actual UCEAP application and continuing through 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.