



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Physics and astronomy

destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
name university abroad	Kyoto University
start date	26 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	05 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The information provided by the International office was mostly sufficient. I would prefer to have it less close to the hand-in deadlines however. In some cases I was only able to fill in forms at the last moment, which caused some unnecessary stress.</p> <p>The selection process took place through a lottery this year. I think this is not a good idea. I would personally find it preferable by far to have selection take place by looking at students' motivation. This would help ensure that the students with a very specific motive for going to a particular university are guaranteed a place, while others, possibly selecting a university semi-randomly, go to their second and third options where necessary.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>Sahra Farah helped me on multiple occasions with questions I had about various forms. This was handled smoothly.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I would have liked to have been told that what is first semester here, is the second semester in Japan, and vice versa. As it stood I was not aware of this information, and I initially selected all my courses from the wrong semester. I only found out about this when, once at Kyoto University, I tried to go to my classes only to find the classrooms empty.</p>
language preparation	<p>I studied Japanese as a hobby for several years before going to Kyoto University. My skill with the language, albeit limited, proved incredibly useful numerous times throughout my stay. It allowed me to take faculty courses (which, for the science faculty, were all in Japanese), to join the outdoor circle 'DOWNHILL' (with otherwise only native members), and helped immensely in day-to-day life in terms of asking directions, making small talk, etcetera.</p> <p>I can heartily recommend any prospective exchange students to establish at least some basic Japanese language skills.</p>
finances	<p>I lived in the most expensive dormitory, Yoshida international dormitory. I went to the cafeteria for dinner almost every day and ate simple meals (cheap bread or onigiri) for breakfast and lunch. I also made some extra expenses for weekend trips with the outdoor club. All in all, I spent roughly slightly more than a thousand euros on a monthly basis.</p>

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)

Course registration was a complete mess. I could write a bookwork on all the things that went wrong, but to save my time, and that of the reader, I shall limit myself to as concise a summary as possible.

Information about courses is vague, incomplete, sometimes incorrect, and spread throughout a stack of paper around twenty centimetres thick, acquired through the various information gatherings spread through the first week.

Registering for a course requires you to attend the first lecture, get a signature from the teacher on several forms, make an online application, in some cases make a test, and in many cases to get through a lottery. This makes enrolling in the mandatory number of six courses a complete nightmare. For the courses with a lottery, you won't know whether you're in or not until after it's already too late to enrol in other courses.

The selection of English-taught courses basically only consists of liberal arts and science courses, many of which are of an extremely low academical level. The more interesting and challenging courses are invariably faculty courses, and English faculty courses are exception rather than rule. My faculty, the faculty of sciences, did not teach a single lecture in English, and from what I've heard, this is the case for almost all the faculties.

It is said to be 'mandatory' to enrol for at least six non-language courses. This last fact, that language courses do not count, was not explained to me until the classes had already started, and forced me to make a desperate attempt to enrol in five extra courses within the week. Though heavy penal measures were at first implied should one fail to meet this criteria, in the end there turned out to be none. You are expected to make an effort to attend six classes, but if you fail to do so, possible because you have been excluded from several of them because of the lottery, there are no consequences whatsoever. I was not yet aware of this however, and ended up following eleven courses (five language courses). Later I dropped one of them.

When selecting liberal arts and sciences courses, it pays to be extremely critical of their level. There are several courses taught at a level to be expected of first-year university courses, but a far larger number of them that are very much subpar. This I have on good account of other exchange students, rather than personal experience. The llas courses I followed (Honors Mathematics, Japanese Intellectual history and lastly Critical thinking and communication skills) I can all heartily recommend.

The Japanese language classes are great. I followed as many advanced classes as fit in my schedule. I switched over to these from intermediate II at the last moment, and am glad to have done so. The classes were challenging, but very manageable.

academic quality of education activities

The Japanese classes were of high quality.

The faculty courses were heavily focused on lectures, and there was no homework or exercises. I found this troublesome, as it was difficult to judge and improve my understanding of the course matter.

The llas courses I took were of passable level, but I heard from others that many of their courses were complete jokes and had no difficulty whatsoever.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The people of the exchange office were friendly and helpful, but their administration was a horrible bureaucratic mess, and completely outdated. We were buried in a mountain of paperwork upon arrival, and none of the online services worked properly. Any attempt at feedback to this regard was completely ignored.



transfer of credits

I am still waiting on the letter with my grades to arrive, reportedly somewhere in April. I have as of yet no clue whether I will be able to transfer any of my credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation program was confusing, daunting, and demotivating. We were handed a pile of paperwork to sort through by ourselves at home, and spoken to in broken English, being explained a complicated series of bureaucratic steps sufficiently long that I am convinced not a single person was able to note down all of them, let alone memorize them on the spot as we seemed to be expected to do. The first two weeks were a complete hell.

accommodation

I was situated in Yoshida dormitory, right on the campus. The proximity to the university, as well as the dormitory facilities, more than made up for the higher price.

leisure & culture

I insist that anyone who goes an exchange to Kyoto University should feel obligated to join one of the circles or clubs present there. I joined the outdoor club DOWNHILL, and haven't regretted it a moment. The other members were friendly, welcoming, and above all very patient with my Japanese. Together we went on numerous trips to places I wouldn't even have known existed, let alone been able to go to by myself, without them leading me there. It was an unforgettable experience.

suggestions/tips

Join. A. Circle. Consider this more mandatory than any of your courses.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

After the initial paperwork was over, I had a great experience. Kyoto University offers many unparalleled opportunities for steeping yourself in Japanese culture. These will not be presented to you on a silver plate however. You will have to go through great effort to find interesting courses, join fun circles, and meet new people. But, should you manage to do these things, the experience will certainly be worth the investment.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

First semester and second semester in Japan are opposite from those in Europe.

Take clothes for both very warm and very cold weather.

Join a circle.

Be *very* critical when selecting courses.

As a foreign student, and even more as a Dutch student, you have a massive advantage when trying to make Japanese friends. Make use of this.

The cafeteria offers relatively cheap, healthy, easy and tasty food. If you don't mind spending slightly more than when cooking for yourself, the cafeteria is a great option.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Molecular Life Science

destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
name university abroad	University of Kyoto
start date	01 / 04/ 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	/ / (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The exchange application with Kyoto was from time to time a bit troublesome. You had to hand in a lot of documents and you had to be quick. That is a representation of Japanese bureaucracy. The documents themselves however, are easy to get, but they do take a lot of time to get.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The international office is very good in helping you and my academic advisors helped me a lot. No one has questioned anything I did and they were all very supportive.
academic preparation	
	I was member of a board of an association. But I do not entirely know what the academic preparation further could be.
language preparation	
	I did practice some Japanese before coming to Japan. That came in very handy because to encounter fluently English speaking Japanese is somewhat rare. It also provides much better adaptation to Japanese life if you can speak at least a bit of Japanese and read a bit of kanji.
finances	
	I financed my own stay abroad. In Japan it is really doable because the international houses are owned by the university. Therefore, the rent is low. In addition, you can get a bike in Kyoto and cycle around the city and therefore save on transport costs. It is relatively cheap to eat out. Vegetables are expensive in Japan.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	I studied at the KUINIP exchange program. That is basically liberal arts and sciences. You can choose anything you want to study, from science, law, economics, medical, you name it, you can do it. It has some focus on Japan, of course, but you can either choose not to pick those courses or choose them because they focus more on Japan.
	The days are divided into 5 timeslots of 1,5 hours. You start at 8:45, have lunch at 12, start again at 13 and finish at 18:00 if you pick all your courses on one day. You can also plan to have one or multiple days of if you schedule correctly. However, the courses I wanted to take the most were often scheduled on the same timeslots. So be prepared when that happens to you, you might have to improvise. I got some good courses in the process so the damage was limited.
	I only went for half a year, and while I was there I thought on multiple occasion that the most interesting period



to be in Japan is the period from April to August (Japanese first semester), but the most interesting courses are provided in the second semester.

academic quality of education activities

Some courses were considerably easier than in the Netherlands. But some others were not and I learnt a great deal from them. You can also challenge yourself and do more courses than the minimum of 6. The difficulty then is keeping up with all your courses. I did 10 courses including the Japanese language class which is 4 of the 10.

I was positively surprised at the level of English the teachers had. Most of them were foreign, but even then, I only encountered one very heavy accented teacher.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Right at the start of the semester, you are told where to go for what specific advice. You can always go to the ILAS building which helps internationals with everything they need. You were also coupled to a tutor right at the start. You can ask them anything and they will help by providing their native knowledge. Some students might see it as a "see you once and never again" but the students from the science faculty were very open and we hung out with them a lot.

transfer of credits

For my program, it was accepted that the minimum of 6 courses accounts for two periods worth of ECTS, but I still need to figure that out because at the time of writing my program is still ongoing.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The first week in Kyoto is basically free. You can explore the city as a tourist. Then meet some Japanese locals and explore the city as a local (tourist). In the first week, there are a lot of opportunities to participate in clubs and club activities. Kind of like associations in the Netherlands, but mainly focussed on the activity rather than alcohol (although that might be a part of it too).

accommodation

I lived in Shugakuin International house in the north of Kyoto. It is situated very close to a train station with which you can get to the university quite easily. You can also buy a bike because they have their own parking place. In principle, there are researches in the dorm, but the students mainly occupy the lower two floors and therefore have little contact with the researches. Another thing to note is that everyone has a kitchen in their room. So you need to invest more time to hang out because the common kitchen doesn't have stoves and it is therefore not as natural to hang out in the kitchen as it might be in the typical student dorm in the Netherlands.

leisure & culture

Get recommendations from locals. They matter the most and you get the best experience from that. Kyoto is the cultural capital of Japan and that shows in the amount of temples and world heritage sites surrounding it. There is also enough room to hike, because Kyoto is surrounded by mountains, and you can make trips to the sea, Osaka and inland quite easily.

suggestions/tips

Go to an onsen (natural hot spring), try okonomiyaki and make that extra effort to get to know locals. Everyone told me that Japanese are very shy. They are, and are not. If you make the effort of talking to them, you can find friends quite easily. I would suggest talking to people who went abroad or who are going to. They are mostly easier to talk with because they are more open (and probably speak better English).

CONCLUSIONS



would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would certainly recommend this destination to others. Kyoto is the cultural capital of Japan and that shows in all the different temples, shrines and cultural heritages in the city.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are going to Japan and want to learn the language, I would recommend starting before you go there. If you have no experience in Japanese, you should learn the basic alphabets first (hiragana and katakana). But to know more is recommended because then you're not limited to the English speaking Japanese.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Law
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's -> Bachelor's
name study programme	KUINEP

destination city & country	, Japan, Kyoto
name university abroad	University of Kyoto
start date	/ / (01/04/2019)
end date	/ / (31/08/2019)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>I do not vividly remember this period as well, however I do seem to recall that beyond a general motivational letter and the need to translate my resume in English there was not much to do in order to apply for the exchange to Kyoto University.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>Excellent. I found the supporting staff at Utrecht University to be very helpful and proactive. Despite me being a little overwhelmed due to both my internship and my board year I was still able to get most of my documents prepared in time thanks to the support of UU.</p>
academic preparation
<p>Very few, considering that Kyoto University only has limited course lists available up until the point of arrival. I found that the courses are changed quite often at the beginning of a new period in Kyoto and therefore that the lists found on the website are not always as reliable. Considering that I did my exchange after already getting all my credits it followed that for me, the available courses were not as important as the destination itself.</p>
language preparation
<p>In my case, very few. I studied some Japanese using the Duolingo app which resulted in me being able to ask the most basic things, such as where to go which proved helpful. I can strongly advise learning Hiragana and Katakana however, as this makes it much easier to read where to go or where to find things. It is however not required to speak Japanese at all in order to study at Kyoto University. A variety of courses in all kind of fields are offered in English. Although speaking Japanese greatly improves upon the number of available courses, I do not think you can properly prepare yourself to the point where you can speak Japanese in a period as short as the preparation period.</p> <p>Kyoto University offers language courses in Japanese. If you have already studied some Japanese by yourself you can of course choose for more advanced language courses. If you are keen on learning a new language than I would strongly recommend trying to get to understand Japanese as best as possible.</p>
finances
<p>There are multiple scholarships available I believe; however, I personally did not bother with those mostly due to a lack of time. Luckily, I found that my dormitory had a monthly rent of 140 euro, which was easily affordable even without a scholarship. Furthermore, due to the euro/yen rate I found that generally living expenses in Japan are about 20% cheaper than in the Netherlands.</p>



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

No complaints here. It takes some time to get used to the way Kyoto University operates on this field – and as is to be expected, considering Japan’s culture in this regard – they are very bureaucratic, resulting in tight application procedures to get into courses. However, there is very little to worry about here. You are given a list of available courses during your introduction week at Kyoto University and after that you can apply for those courses using their website. Take note that Kyoto University requires you to register for a minimum of 6 courses, excluding language courses. Each course consists of a lecture or meeting lasting 1.5 hours, so the minimal attendance in a week is 9 hours. You are free to choose more however you please.

academic quality of education activities

Arguably the only complaint I might have. The level of academic quality greatly varies in my opinion. A lot of this has to do with the admittedly respectable effort teachers put into their English. Despite this, not all courses given in English are at the same level of spoken English which causes some courses to diminish in value somewhat because the teacher’s English is too limited to truly express what they want to. This can be remedied easily however. In Kyoto University there is 1 week available in which you can attend courses without enregistering for them. This way, you can test whether or not a course is up to your liking.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Solid. In the few moments of confusion on my part the supporting staff have proved themselves as both capable and helpful. It deserves mentioning – much as the UU staff – that they are very reliable and truly try their best in order to make sure that all goes well.

transfer of credits

Sadly, I have not yet transferred my credits due to my own negligence. One problem that can arise is the fact that you have to decide on your courses in 1 week and are unable to select those courses before going to Kyoto. Therefore, there is always a risk involved of the UU not accepting the courses you have selected. Beyond this I do not have to add any other comment on this.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Once again, solid. Kyoto University offers a variety of activities in order to make sure that you feel welcome. The first week does a good job too at informing you of everything that has to be done. Although it can get a little overwhelming due to the Japanese tendency to register everything – resulting in a big checklist of things you need to do during your first month – the University informs you of all those tasks and offers as much guidance on how to do those tasks as possible. The KIZUNA lounge is a way to get into touch with Japanese people eager to meet foreign students and the same goes for the Lunch meetings, which are both introduced to you in the first week. Those are all, of course, optional.

accommodation

Excellent - in my case at least. Kyoto University has a number of different dormitories including one on the campus itself. You can apply to whichever dormitory you prefer, but as all the dormitories have a different distance towards the campus some are more popular than others resulting in the off-chance of you being placed somewhat far away from the campus. In my case, I have to ride my bike for about 30 minutes in order to reach the campus. For me this is fine, but if this seems daunting to you, this is something you might want to take into consideration as there are some dormitories even further away (although uncommon).

leisure & culture



Fantastic. Kyoto is a very historical and typical traditional Japanese city that offers the size of a city yet the vibe of a traditional Japanese town. For those interested in original Japanese culture – temples, shrines, geisha’s and more – as opposed to the more modern and huge Japanese culture found in Tokyo, Kyoto is the place to go to. The city has a rich cultural history for you to explore and is easily on the greatest boons of choosing to apply for Kyoto University for your exchange. If you love traditional Japan, I do not think there is a better place to go to then Kyoto!

suggestions/tips

As expressed earlier, trying to know even the most basic Japanese expressions is recommended. The level of English in Kyoto is notorious for being some of the worst in Japan compared to other big cities. This means that you cannot always rely on English in order to find your way, which is important. Of course, I believe that this only adds to the challenge of an exchange and improves upon your experience here. Take my mentioning of ‘basic Japanese expressions’ very literally. There is no need to be able to speak Japanese at all, but knowing how to ask the way of if they have X in store can prove very helpful. The same goes for knowing Hiragana and Katakana, the two ‘alphabets’ of Japanese. Being able to read those means that often times you can read commonly used English words and therefore are able to understand what’s on a packaging of food or signs.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Very much so. Japan is a wonderful country and especially interesting because it offers a destination that is at the same time Western and very Eastern. It allows you to travel to a completely new country and culture with a very different mindset, whilst still maintaining a lot of the luxuries you would typically find in other developed countries. Japanese culture is greatly appreciated by many outside of Japan and if you have affiliation with this type of culture – be it pop culture or traditional culture – then you will not be disappointed. Kyoto, as expressed earlier, offers exactly what you would come to expect from traditional Japan and is both a big city and a cosy place to be. I believe that Japanese culture – being somewhat introverted – can also greatly appeal to those who prefer quiet places where you can be yourself easily.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No more than already expressed under the last two sections.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Sociale wetenschappen - Psychologie
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	KUINEP

Destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Kyoto University
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	28/03/2018
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	23/08/2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process is smooth, but you have to wait a long time for everything you do. Make sure you check every document you receive and send at least twice so you don't forget anything. If you run into any trouble, make sure you tackle them quickly as it helps the process a lot and relieves you of a lot of stress.

Please keep in mind that the Japanese system is a lot different from the one in UU. But don't be afraid to ask their international office any questions you might have, they will be ready to help you out and usually respond within a day. However, they do take their policies seriously and will not make an exception as was the problem for me. If they ask you for two letters of recommendation from your teachers, it will have to be two letters of recommendation even though you might have had only one teacher. I managed to solve the problem in the end and it all worked out!

Counselling/support at home university:

The international office in UU will help you quickly and to the best of their abilities. This results in issues and problems being solved within a short time. My coordinator was Sahra and she helped me out well.

Academic preparation:

I had no academic preparation.



Language preparation:

I took half a year of Japanese language classes before going to Japan. I would recommend learning at least some Japanese, as most Japanese citizens don't speak English well.

Finances:

I spend around 800 euro per month, with my rent being 300 euro a month. The rent price is expensive if you consider the other options that are available. 800 euro a month is a generous amount as it allows you to do basically anything you would want to do. However, I've had months where I only spent around 500-600 euro(including rent), so it definitely is possible to survive on less.

- I got 800 euro on a monthly basis from study finances.
- Took my own savings with me to travel around.
- Food is as expensive as you want to make it. Eating in the university cafeteria is probably the best option next to cooking for yourself. A proper meal in the cafeteria costs about 5-6 euro.
- You can buy a bicycle for around 90-110 euro. I would recommend buying a bike in Kyoto as it allows you to bike around the beautiful city in a peaceful way.

The first month it may very well be the case that you'll end up spending more than your monthly budget, so make sure you have a buffer in your savings.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

For the KUINEP programme, you'll have about two weeks to try every kind of course that's available. After this period you sign up for the courses that you like online or by a special paper for the classes that put a limit on the amount of students. To get the 45 ECTS, you'll have to choose 9 courses and get permission from the Board of Examiners. Every course in Kyoto gives you 5 ECTS in UU. During this period you'll also be assigned a tutor(a senior from Kyoto university) whom you can ask anything.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

Every class takes about 1,5 hours. The courses are not really demanding in comparison to UU if your English is good. How the courses are graded differs for every course, some courses only require you to do a seminar and others require you to make tests or reports. In the first few weeks the teachers will fill you in on all the assignments. The level of difficulty for each course differs from one another, some are pretty challenging and others can be quite easy. What you choose is up to you, as long as you get permission from the Board of Examiners.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Any problems or issues you might face, you can go to the international office in Kyoto University. They will help you to the best of their ability. They offer a lot of different things for international students, like Japanese language support and international lunches with Japanese students etc.

Transfer of credits:

1 course in Kyoto University = 5 ECTS in Utrecht University
45 ECTS needed for semester.

Student life



Welcome/orientation programme:

Do not miss the orientation day, as they give you a lot of necessary information in order to study in Japan. On the orientation day you also fill in some insurance papers, in fact you'll end up filling in a lot of papers during your stay in Japan.

It might sound like you have to do a lot of things in a very short time, but it will all be fine. If you feel overwhelmed, you can ask the international office there for help.

Accommodation:

I stayed in Mizuki dormitory. This dormitory is directly behind the Kyoto South Campus and is a very social dormitory because you share a lot of utilities. There is a big common room where everyone usually gathers around dinner time and where meals are shared. It's one of the more expensive dormitories, with a monthly rent of about 300 euro, but the location makes it worthwhile. There are two convenience stores on either side of the dormitory and there are some restaurants in the area. There is an equal percentage of men/women and the housekeeper organizes a lot of activities for you to participate in.

Leisure/culture:

Kyoto offers a lot of interesting things to do, first off you can visit all the shrines and temples that are present in Kyoto. Second, close to Mizuki and Kyoto University there is a river called Kamogawa where a lot of people practice for sports/playing music/draw/make paintings and it's a beautiful place just to hang out and have something to drink. The mountains around Kyoto make for beautiful hiking spots if you're more adventurous. If you're into manga and games, Kyoto has some bookstores and electronic stores like BIC and Yodobashi. But you can also go to Osaka and visit: Den Den Town, which is basically a haven for anime/manga and figurines. The area around Kyoto also allows you to do things like rafting. And last but not least, there are plenty of places where you can do karaoke, most of which also give you a discount for being a student. And don't forget to try the "all-you-can-drink" in the bars!

Suggestions/tips:

- Buy a bike.
- Try lots of ramen (There are a couple of good ones north of Kyoto University)
- Participate in activities
- Enjoy yourself
- If you come during Spring, make sure you visit the places with Sakura blossom first as most of the blossom will be gone in about a month after arrival.
- Either choose a pocket WiFi or a SIM, I chose for a pocket WiFi by Sakura Mobile.
- Don't take too much stuff with you when you come here as you'll end up buying a lot of stuff here.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Yes, definitely! Kyoto is a big city that does not feel busy. You can do a lot of things here and its one of the most beautiful cities I've seen so far.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Try Taiyaki.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Faculty of Science
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Computer Science (Informatica/game-technologie)

Destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Kyoto University
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	26-09-2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	22-02-2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process took some time and was some paperwork. Sometimes there were big time gaps (2 months or more) between the different procedures. However, it was straight-forward, and everything is well explained on the website. So, you don't have to worry. We had to apply at Utrecht University first. We had to send where we wanted to go + motivation + CV + study/financial plan etc. After I heard I was accepted, the other part of the application was through Kyoto University. It wasn't difficult, but it took some time. For example, I had to go to my general practitioner, so he could sign a health certificate. I also had to ask teachers/student advisors if they could write me a letter of



recommendation (I needed 2). This isn't difficult, but it's difficult to do in one day. So, start on time and everything will be fine.

Early September, I received a package from Kyoto University. It contained all kinds of information. Most importantly, it contained my COE (Certificate of Eligibility). With this and some other documents I prepared earlier, I was able to go the embassy for my VISA.

Also, don't worry about choosing courses during the application of Kyoto University. At some point, I had to choose courses. It was some sort of pre-signup, I think. Kyoto university wouldn't allow me to choose the courses I wanted to do during this time. Being in the faculty of science, I was only able to choose courses related to e.g. engineering. In the end however, it didn't matter what I filled in during the pre-signup. During the first week at Kyoto University, I was able to register for whatever course I wanted to.

I think that during the pre-signup I had to choose from certain courses in order for Kyoto University to place me in a certain faculty.

Counselling/support at home university:

Whenever I had questions or problems, I was always able to ask them to the people from the international office. They also arranged certain presentations and meetings (e.g. pre-departure meeting) which were very helpful.

Academic preparation:

Before going, I didn't do any academic preparation's. I don't think it is necessary as well.

Language preparation:

I learned some Japanese before going to Japan. I finished the Genki series (self-study, book 1 and 2). I have to say it really helped me during my stay. There are many people who don't speak English that well, so if you learn some basic Japanese, it will make life easier for you. However, I also knew some people who didn't speak Japanese and they were just fine.

Interesting side note if you are thinking about taking Japanese language classes:

Because I wanted to follow Japanese language courses at Kyoto University, I had to make an online placement-test. During the test however, I had some internet issues and I couldn't finish it in time. So, instead of following the "intermediate 1" Japanese course, I followed the "elementary 2" course. I picked the intensive course (4 classes per week) and it was worth 8 credits (same as 4 normal courses!).

If I wanted to, I could do the intermediate classes (then I had to go somewhere and tell them what happened etc.). However, I actually was quite happy with the result. The "elementary 2" course was easy because I already studied Genki 2 (which we also used during that course). So, I had a lot more free-time and I was able to drop other classes I didn't like that much because the



intensive Japanese course was worth so much credits. (I dropped out of 3 other courses). Learning some Japanese helped me a lot :).

Finances:

My finances were not different from my finances here in the Netherlands. I did put a stop to my OV. I received about 80 euros every month because of that.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

Before the semester started, there was a welcome/orientation program. It was from 9:00 AM till 17:00 PM. It was pretty boring and long. I also received a bag filled with all kinds of information. Don't worry too much about that. Half of the things inside you can throw away and the other half you only need to look at once.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The academic quality, overall, was fine. I was in KUINEP programme, which mainly consisted of courses given in English. The classes I followed, had good teachers who also spoke good English (with or without Japanese accent). It was also easy to find where the classes were held. However, as mentioned earlier, I did dropout of some classes. Some of these classes had teachers who I simply found bad at teaching. There was one teacher I could barely understand. Luckily, I followed the intensive Japanese course, hence I was able to dropout of these classes. However, suppose I did not...:(. During the first week you can visit classes you would like to take. And then make your decision. So, try to visit many classes if you are unsure.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Just as at Utrecht university, whenever I had questions or something else, there were always people who I could contact. There is an office on campus, but you can also send an email. I always went to the office, because it's much faster.

I was also assigned a tutor. I think everyone was. I met up with him twice. He didn't speak English that well. So, we communicated in Japanese and English. Your tutor is able to help you with everything you may be struggling with.

Transfer of credits:

I still haven't transferred my credits. I am currently in the process of doing it.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

Apart from the first orientation programme, the international office of Kyoto university regularly arranged "language lunches" or trips. Which is great if you want to meet other people (Japanese and exchange students).



Accommodation:

I lived in Uji, in the Ohbaku dormitory. Many say this dormitory is the worst of all the other ones because it's so far away from Yoshida campus (main campus where you will probably have your classes). About 1 hour and 15 minutes by train (train station is a 10-15 minute walk). However, I really liked it. My room was nice and I had my own shower. Whenever I went to school, I usually took the shuttle bus which took about 1 hour. The bus leaves from Uji campus which is a 10-15 minute walk from Ohbaku dormitory. It's free and there was always a seat for me (maybe 1 or 2 times I couldn't take the bus). The bus leaves almost every hour (not during lunch time, which is around 12:00 – 13:00). The last bus leaves around 16:30, if I am right. I heard from some people that the bus is supposed to be only for graduates and researchers. However, there is no check when you enter the bus and everyone just seems to take the bus. There was also a football field right across my door, so during the weekends I played football with friends. There are enough opportunities to make friends. Some I just met because we lived on the same floor. And others during classes or parties at my dormitory.

The other dormitories are in Kyoto and closer to Yoshida campus. However, keep in mind that not every dormitory has rooms with personal showers and toilets. During your application, Kyoto University will send you all the details about their dormitories. Be sure, to read it carefully.

The rent was also pretty cheap: about 11900 yen. However, this does not include the electricity bill, which for me usually was about: 4000 yen.

I also did not have my own bike, because for me it wouldn't be that useful. Many students in Kyoto bought their own bike because they went to school by bike. However, Ohbaku dormitory had a couple of bikes that everyone could use. You could ask for the keys if you wanted to. It was a lot of fun to ride the narrow streets of Japan at night, downhill :) and uphill :(.

Leisure/culture:

Kyoto is a very beautiful city to live in. There are a lot of things to do when you have time. There are also many shrines, temples and museums near Yoshida campus. There is also zoo close to the campus.

Suggestions/tips:

When I was registering for courses, I looked at their time-schedule. I wanted to have as many free days as I could. In the end I only had class on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Which means I was free the remainder of the week. Which was great.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

I would recommend this destination. Kyoto is a very beautiful place with a lot of things to do. If you want to experience Japanese culture, enjoy visiting shrines and temples, go exploring etc, then



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Faculty of Science
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Biology

Destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Kyoto University
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	02/04/2018
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	30/08/2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The UU application process through Osiris was pretty easy. I needed to supply some documents, like a financial plan, study plan, resume and a motivation letter. For your study plan you need to choose the classes you are going to take, this can be a bit challenging as you don't know if the curriculum (in terms of classes/timeslots) is going to be the same the moment you enter Kyoto University.

Sometime after the application, if the UU nominates you to go abroad, you need to apply to Kyoto University. For this you need to submit additional documents such as a health certificate, signed by a general practitioner, two short recommendation letters from professors and additional paperwork. Not too hard to come by but it will take some time and can be confusing at times.

Counselling/support at home university:

The UU international house will keep you up-to-date by e-mail about certain deadlines. There is also a pre-departure meeting with the other outbound students who will go to the same region, although for me this orientation was almost a full year before I actually left. Aside from that you can always contact the international office if you have any questions about the application or something else related to the exchange.

Academic preparation:



I did not do any additional academic preparation.
Language preparation:
I took two Japanese courses at the Volksuniversiteit Utrecht, but in the end I did not really keep up with the coursework. This means that I was pretty unprepared in terms of language. I would say that it is certainly convenient to know some basic Japanese, but you'll be able to get around without it too. I was also lucky enough to make friends who could speak Japanese and could help me.
Finances:
Besides the plane ticket I was able to pay for the basics and leisure activities with my usual student loan & income (about €750 in total). The first month was a bit expensive though because of all the insurances and other stuff you have to pay for, like utilities for in your dorm, bike etc. The flight ticket was around €900, mostly because I took a direct flight. If you book a flight with a transfer far in advance you can be off much cheaper.
Study/placement abroad period
Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):
I made a study plan based on the syllabus that was available on the Kyoto University website. In the end I needed to make changes because the actual class sign-up took place the week after I arrived in Kyoto.
Academic quality of education/placement activities:
The classes are in my opinion easier than UU classes. Most bachelor classes are from the liberal arts faculty and taught in English. The quality of the classes heavily relies on the teacher. I had mostly foreign professors which, in my opinion, were really good. On the other hand, I also heard some people really complain about their professor. I guess it really depends on the classes you take. There are also classes available from the faculty you apply to, although I didn't take any of these because they were taught in Japanese.
Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:
There is counselling available, although I did not make any use of it. If I couldn't figure something out, I would solve it with fellow exchange students.
Transfer of credits:
At the moment of writing this the semester hasn't ended yet and I didn't receive any credits yet.
Student life
Welcome/orientation programme:
The first days at Kyoto University consisted mostly of a lot information and paperwork. There was not really an introduction period like there is at the UU when you enter university.
Accommodation:
Kyoto University offers stay at one of multiple international houses. Most likely you will be living in Shugakuin International House (Kyoto, 20 min. from campus by bike or public transport), Yoshida International House (on-campus) Misasagi (Kyoto, far from campus) or Ohbaku (Uji, 1 hour from campus). I got lucky and got a dorm at Shugakuin International House, probably the best out of all of them. The rent is a lot cheaper than Yoshida and the other dorms are uncomfortably far from both the city center and the university itself.



In Shugakuin it was really easy to make friends with other people, especially in my corridor. You can hang out with others in the common kitchen, organise movie nights in the lobby or play table tennis. There's also small library in the international house where you can study.

Leisure/culture:

There is so much stuff to do in Kyoto and Japan that I don't even know where to start. There's a lot of temples and shrines and other places to go sightseeing in and around Kyoto. There are mountains around the city which makes it a great place if you are into hiking. When it's not too cold outside you can relax along the Kamogawa river, definitely one of my favourite things to do in the city. It's basically a park throughout the whole city. If you're fed up with temples and shrines, there's easy access to Osaka (1hr by train) which is totally different from Kyoto.

Suggestions/tips:

Explore the city by biking without a goal in mind, take day/weekend trips to see other places and meet lots of new people!

I recommend going from the airport (KIX) to your dorm with MK Shuttle bus. This costs around 4200 yen and saves you the hassle of going through public transport with your luggage.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Definitely, Japan is so different from the west and has a lot to offer. Especially if you're interested in Japan or East Asia.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Science
Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Computing Science

Destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Kyoto University
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	12 September 2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	24 March 2017

Preparation

- Exchange/placement application process:

The UU application was quite straight forward, nothing to difficult. I just filled in the forms, wrote a motivation letter and sent it all through Osiris. I struggled a little choosing my master courses, because the master course list of Kyoto was nowhere to be found on the website. I had to email Kyoto University for them to send it to me. Furthermore, you also must explain why the master courses you choose are relevant for your programme.

The Kyoto application was a lot more work than the UU one. I had to write another motivation letter, fill in some forms, let my general practitioner sign the health certificate and let two of my teachers write a recommendation letter. These were all uploaded through a website where I had to fill in more forms. Afterwards I had to wait for a while to fill in another form. The result of whatever I was accepted for the exchange in Kyoto took a long time. But most of the time after you got accepted by UU for the exchange than you will also be accepted for the exchange to Kyoto.

- Counselling/support at home university:

My exchange coordinator was Sahra and she helped me a lot with my exchange application of Kyoto. Whenever something was not clear in the form she would explain it to me. She also helped me check if everything in the form was filled in correctly.

- Academic preparation:

I did not have to do any academic preparations.

- Language preparation:

I learned hiragana and katakana through an app on my phone. Learning these two will help you read romaji, which is basically English but written in Japanese characters. Furthermore, I learned some basic sentences through an audio program.



- Finances:

From the Dutch government, I gain monthly 300 euros of study finance. The government also lets you travel for free with public transport, because I could not use it in Kyoto I gain monthly 80 euros instead. This all together and mine savings was enough for my exchange. Try not to be too dependent on the JASSO scholarship as it is really hard to get.

Overview of my finance:

- Airplane ticket – 550 euro
- Dormitory at Shugakuin – monthly 150 euro
- Data only sim card (BIC SIM) – monthly 8 euro
- Bike – 90 euro
- Various Japanese Insurances (half year) – 120 euro
- Food (eating out) – monthly 400 euro
- Electricity – monthly 20 euro

Study/placement abroad period

- Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

I did not have to sign up for my courses, because Kyoto University did that for me already. Do note that most courses are semester bounded, which means that they are only available during either the fall or spring semester. As a master exchange student, I had to choose a minimum of four courses. I added another course so that I have enough credits for my master program in The Netherlands.

- Academic quality of education/placement activities:

I had a total of five courses and every week I have 1.5 hours of lecture for every course. In the beginning the courses were simple and not very demanding, I just had to write some report and do some homework. At the end of the semester all the teacher will give you last moment assignments and report writing. Even though the teachers did not give tests, I was really busy during the end of my semester.

- Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Every master student will be assigned to a lab. A lab is your personal working place where you work on your school stuff. From my lab, I could borrow a laptop, computer screen, keyboard and mouse. This made my lab a perfect place for doing my assignments and writing the reports. My student-tutor was really helpful. She helped me with translation of Japanese letters and some organisation stuff.

- Transfer of credits:

I am still waiting for my transcript to arrive at the exchange coordinator. I think it would be not too hard to transfer the credits as I already had discussed with my program coordinator about the credits conversion.

Student life

- Welcome/orientation programme:

The orientation day was really useful as they give you a lot of information paper and help you fill in



some insurance paper. When I say a lot of information paper I do mean really a lot of information papers, Japanese people apparently likes to print every things a lot of times.

- Accommodation:

Everything was explained clearly when I arrived at my dormitory. My dormitory is called Shugakuin and I think it is the best dormitory. The monthly fee is only 150 euro, which is way cheaper than the Yoshida one that cost 300 euro. Furthermore it only takes 15 minutes biking to reach the university, which is the second closest dormitory. Shugakuin was recently renovated and therefore everything looks new and fresh. The lobby is a cosy place where you can have movie night as they have a big tv with HDMI input. Near Shugakuin is a convenient store and a bentou box store. On your way to University there is a street called Ichijoji, this street is filled with a lot of ramen stores. As a ramen lover, I tried almost every ramen store at that street and I also recommend you to do it as every ramen is different there.

- Leisure/culture:

Japanese people are the kindest people you will ever meet. Even though they do not English that well, they will still try their very best to help you. In Kyoto, there is a lot of temple and shrine to see. In general shrines has free entrance while temples have an entrance fee. Kyoto is also surrounded by mountains ready for you to hike it. I recommend you to do this for an awesome view over Kyoto. There is a lot of festival in Japan, where you can enjoy yourself with food and Japanese culture. Karaoke is really cheap in Japan, for only 10 euro pp you can sing from 21:00 until 3:00. The price also includes all you can drink, but do note that this package is only available at "Karaoke J". Going to Osaka is also a must do as it only takes 1.5 hours and there is a direct train going from near Kyoto university to Osaka. In Osaka you can eat the best okonomiyaki and takoyaki. For all your anime needs you can go to den den machi.

- Suggestions/tips:

Buy a bike as a lot of places like Sanjo, Kyoto station and temples/shrines are easily accessible with a bike. Sanjo is near Kyoto University and is a fun place to hang out, eat stuff, shopping and clubbing.

I recommend you to get the BIC SIM from either the store Yodobashi or BIC camera. You have to look for the data only sim card as you do not need voice calling. Instead of voice calling you can use VOIP like facebook messenger. Every month you gain 3GB of data for 8 euro, which was enough for me. First you have to pay 25 euro sim card fee and then you have to activate it online. Use google translate to help you fill in the form. After you activated the sim card you also have to fix the APN on your phone. The instruction is either written on the manual or you have to ask the staff to do it for you.

Choose for Shugakuin as your dormitory and hang out in the lobby. There you will meet new friends which will make your exchange even more worth.

Eat sushi at Kura Sushi where you can win stuff for every 5 plate of sushi you eat. Each sushi cost 0.80 euro. You can also eat better quality sushi at Musashi sushi where every plate of sushi is 1.20 euro.

Participate at Japanese outside school activities. Japanese outside school activities can be divided in to either clubs or circles. Clubs are usually only for Japanese student and requires you to participate it every week. Circles on the other hand is more casual and you can go whenever you



have time.

Book your tickets from Lufthansa as they allows you to have 2 times 23kg of baggage for check in. And believe me that you would need it if you want to buy souvenirs and stuff in Japan or if you want to bring a lot of stuff from The Netherlands.

Conclusions

- Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

I would recommend to everybody that likes anime, manga, sushi, ramen, nice people, okonomiyaki, takoyaki, temples, shrines and a lot more Japanese stuff. Even if no do not like none of the things above, Kyoto is still a very cool and calm place to be for your exchange.

- Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Just do it and have a lot of fun in Kyoto.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Science, Computer Science
Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Game and Media Technology

Destination city & country	Kyoto, Japan
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Kyoto University
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	12/09/2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	24/03/2017

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application progress required me to fill in a lot of forms. A lot had to be done on paper. Prepare some photos, different than those on your passport.

Counselling/support at home university:

I got some good support from the exchange coordinator. Any questions I had about the courses I was allowed to follow or about the exchange in general I could ask her.

Academic preparation:

I had to choose my courses in advance. Since I was only allowed to take courses that were given in English, my options were limited.

Language preparation:

I learned some Japanese beforehand. It is not needed at the university, but I do recommend to learn some basic Japanese as a lot of people there do not speak English that well and almost everything is in Japanese there.

Finances:

I used the money I saved.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

I had to pick my courses beforehand. They provided a syllabus with the courses. Be sure to pay attention in which semester the courses are given.

Aside from the courses related to my programme, I also took Japanese language classes. The organization was pretty vague. There was an official sign up for these courses, but they are not



really related to Kyoto University. If you're interested in Japanese language courses, go to the Japanese language center office if you have any questions. Not to your lab/Kyoto university.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The level of the courses were comparable to those given at Utrecht University. I would say the workload is the same, but the deliverables are a little bit easier.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

I was assigned to a lab. I could ask my tutor if I had any questions.

Transfer of credits:

One course equals 5 ECTS. I'm still not sure how the grades transfer to the UU system.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

A lot of this was in Japanese. The day I arrived in Kyoto I was invited to my lab's party. They welcomed me wholeheartedly. The welcome programme of the university was a bit vague, a lot of it was in Japanese. Since I had contact with my lab before the official orientation, I got my orientation already and could go home on the day the others had to meet the professor.

Accommodation:

I stayed at Yoshida International House. Very comfortable location and clean.

Leisure/culture:

Aside from studying I had time to travel around with friends I made there. Kyoto is a city with a mix of modern and traditional Japan. There are so many things to visit there.

Suggestions/tips:

Get a bike to travel easily (but do be careful, biking is way more dangerous over there) and save some bus money.

Take the subway/train to visit Osaka.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

I definitely recommend this university to others. This was a life experience. Japan is a beautiful country and the people are really friendly.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?: