



BERICHTSFORMULAR

Non-EU Student Exchange Programm

2022/2023

BewerbungsID 15772

Nominierte Studienrichtung: 066/974 Studienrichtung Masterstudium Banking and Finance

Angaben zum Aufenthalt:

Gastinstitution: Momoyama Gakuin University - (Japan)

Aufenthaltszeitraum: SS 2023

Aufenthaltsbeginn: 03.04.2023 **Aufenthaltsende:** 04.08.2023

STIPENDIUM	
Stipendium Uni Wien gesamt laut Zuerkennung: (inkl. Zuschüsse für Reisekosten und Sprachtest)	€ Rückforderung: nein Rückgeforderter Betrag: € Rückforderungsgrund:
Weitere Stipendien (zB Jasso, Studienbeihilfe):	Weitere Stipendien: Ja <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipendium des Gastlandes: ja (<i>Momoyama Scholarship covering mostaccomodation fee</i>) • Bundesländerstipendium: nein • Studienbeihilfe: nein • Sonstiges Stipendium:
Summe weiterer Stipendien:	€
Gesamtsumme aller Stipendien:	€ 1.511,00

KOSTEN DES AUSLANDSAUFENTHALTS	
Unterkunft:	€ 1.763,87
Art der Unterkunft:	Studierendenwohnheim
Reisekosten:	€ 1.105,22
Lebenshaltungskosten:	€ 4.000,00
Studienkosten:	€ 0,00
Versicherungskosten	€ 138,59
Visakosten:	€ 0,00
Gesamtkosten des Auslandsaufenthalts:	€ 7.007,68

Bericht veröffentlichen:

PERSÖNLICHER BERICHT

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Verfassen Sie bitte einen persönlichen Bericht über den Studienaufenthalt

- **Mindestumfang:** Fließtext 1 Seite DinA4
- **Inhalt:** Gastuniversität, Kurse, Prüfungen, Mitstudierende, Unterkunft, etwaige Schwierigkeiten etc.

BERICHT ÜBER DEN STUDIENAUFENTHALT

Reflections on My Semester at Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku

First of all, let me thank both the International Offices of the University of Vienna and Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku for facilitating the realization of what has been the most enriching semester of my academic journey, this was a dream come true for me. I will forever treasure and cherish the memories, the friendships, and the lifetime experiences I made here. I spent the Summer Semester of 2023 (March-August) in Izumi-city of Osaka prefecture, and I am glad that I chose this location for conducting my studies for multiple reasons, even if I was a bit unlucky – I will elaborate on the unfortunate circumstances later. While I encountered mixed feelings during my time there, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity. I can only recommend this partner university to any prospective student looking for a bit more remote location in Japan. If someone does not want, get overwhelmed all times about the big cities and crowds like those in Tokyo and in Osaka this is the perfect small-town environment for them. This place is still relatively close to everything that students would want to explore while they are conducting their studies here and they do not have to worry about anything, as they will meet plenty of friendly people here as well. I would even recommend future students to stay for an entire year if they are not studying business related classes, but instead have their studies in fields such as Japanology, or Sociology.

In any case, students coming here should make sure that they not only read the course list from last semester (as most probably the university will not have the new course list ready yet when they apply) but they should try to fixate somehow that prior to coming here the international office of Momoyama agrees to host enough classes in their scientific field. Regrettably, my course selection encountered setbacks due to unexpected faculty changes. Even though according to the list they had 4 courses offered to me, in reality the 2 English speaking Business professors changed jobs to work at another university, hence I was offered 0 courses when I arrived to Japan. At last, after requesting the International Office staff at Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku, they eventually addressed the issue, securing one course for me. Beyond academics, I engaged in Japanese language lectures, while still allowing ample time for exploration and even part-time work teaching middle school students.

Prospective students are encouraged to connect with peers from the University of Vienna heading to Momoyama. While we did not form the closest bonds, the familiarity with fellow students prior to departure provided a sense of comfort, and probably made us feel a bit less homesick at the very beginning of our journey.

About the staff, professors, dormitory residential assistance, and buddy system at Momoyama

In my opinion, apart from minor unexpected circumstance, the international office demonstrated effective organization. Already at the airport we had a warm welcome, both by the head of the International Office Ms.



Fumika Iwai and the RAs (residential assistants). Taking into account the fatigue from the long flight, they did not overload us with administrative things right away, they checked our room before handing it over, and we went to the city hall to do some paperwork and to the university for a tour later that week, but at nicely separated time intervals, so we could recover from the minor jetlag that some of us were suffering from. The professors were able to deliver us quite interactive classes. My Japanese classes and my Business Valuation course were of very high quality, and I feel I improved a lot from them.

During the semester, we went on two excursions organized by the university, and I also went on further ones that were organized by the RAs. The latter may be different for everyone, as RAs organised the trip for their own friends in the first place, so different exchange students went on trips to different places with different RAs.

Navigating language differences proved challenging, as English proficiency varied among staff, residential assistants, and the buddy system participants. Despite this, immersing oneself in a Japanese-speaking environment remains crucial for rapid language improvement. Students should be aware that in Japan it is not common to speak English at academic level. While the staff at International Office and the professors can speak almost native level without hesitation, and the majority of the RAs can speak at very nice, comfortable B1-B2 level, most people in the buddy system and students not conducting international studies are harder to communicate with without having any prior knowledge in the Japanese language. In any case, it is still worth trying out the buddy system, as it is very important to be in a Japanese-speaking environment as much as possible in order to improve as quickly as possible and the students participating in this system are really enthusiastic, friendly and helpful.

They have a lot to show about the Japanese culture that one could not get to know otherwise. I learned about a lot about Japanese cuisine from my buddies including just the places of the best restaurants or even learning myself how to cook some of the traditional dishes. Speaking of dishes, in Osaka, Okonomiyaki is a must-try. It is okay if one likes the Hiroshima version (Hiroshimayaki) better, like I did, just not mention it to the locals, because that is a cardinal sin. Other than that, a student must better get used to the crazy amounts of Takoyaki, Combi no Onigiri, Karaage and Ramen that they will be eating here. Just a tip for the future students that might be reading this: The best place for ramen is definitely Tori no Keiji (麵や鳥の鶏次), which is located near the Nakamozu train station. But there's plenty of other food, places and culture to explore, which I do not intend to spoil right now, as students should explore everything for themselves.

About the university and the dormitory and other facilities

Momoyama Gakuin, a small private university, boasts a picturesque location with modern facilities, including a variety of amenities. There are 2 canteens that are open during university hours, so one can even have breakfast here. The canteen is student wallet friendly and has mostly local food on the menu, so if anyone wants to spare some money, while trying out different things, this is a really good place to start in general. There are many supermarkets in the area, but again, just a tip for the future students is that the best value is Gyomu super, and it is almost next to the university, but it might be a bit hidden at first. As I mentioned, the university moreover has library, study halls, a gym and a pool (although the opening hours of these are not the best because most of the time they are closed for the use of student circles or clubs only), jacuzzi, ATMs, a combini, a coffee and bubble tea shop (which is highly recommended, because it is of good quality for the cheap price it offers), chapel, printers (printing up to 4500 pages for free) etc.

Students can join a student circle or club, but most of them will require students to speak at a good conversational level of Japanese already, and to pay a sometimes-hefty fee for joining them. There is an opening day at the beginning of the semester when students can check out these clubs and circles.

The Maison de Eleve dormitory, though a 20-minute walk from the university, provides well-equipped individual apartments. Students are highly recommended to apply for a bike before arriving to the university, which they get free of charge from the university and it is a very useful tool to have, even though Izumi-city and in general the area tends to be a bit hilly.

The dormitory is 40.000 yen per month (plus a one-time fee for the whole semester), however the Momoyama scholarship (that students in partnership with the University of Vienna receive for conducting Japanese language classes) covers this monthly 40.000 yen exactly. Every dormitory apartment comes equipped with a small kitchen, with one stove, a sink, a small drying rack for plates, a bathroom with a bathtub, a sink and toilet, a living/bedroom with a bedframe with very thin futon mattress, tv, desk and chair, a fridge, AC, a closet, and lastly but not least a small balcony. The higher the room the better the panoramic view on the mountains around Izumi from the balcony and on the sea on the other side of the apartment, from the corridor. While the dormitory is nicely equipped, students must be aware of the fact that the walls are super thin, so hearing the neighbour sing at 2-3 am

is possible. Not everyone in the dormitory is a university student at Momoyama, but if they are, then they are either exchange students or RAs.

How to receive some extra funds for the stay?

At the beginning of the journey, it is possible to request a work permit at the airport. Even if a student does not think that they will need it, it is recommended, as it is completely free of charge, but at the airport it can be acquired within 10 minutes, while afterwards it might take even a month of wait, should someone reconsider getting one. Job opportunities may require Japanese language proficiency, and the university is no longer involved in job placement. I successfully secured an English teaching position, emphasizing the importance of networking with previous semester students for job insights.

Getting hired at the local restaurants as kitchen help is also possible, some of the student e.g., got hired at Kura sushi and Sushi ya. Should someone have an international driver's licence, they can also work as food delivery driver. I do not however recommend getting a job of over 3-4 hours a week (unless someone is really dependent on this extra income), since students who do work more than this, will miss out on many important classes as well as opportunities that they can otherwise never do again.

Courses

The time for courses differs greatly, but for Japanese language courses it was 2 times 90 minutes, with a 10-minute break between them three times a week. Two days were grammar and reading courses, and one was for kanji and conversation. The professors were strict, but it made it easier to have rapid progress among all students. Books were affordable, and within a month, I gained confidence in daily Japanese communication.

For the Japanese courses we had 3 different professors changing on each day. They were very thorough with their teachings, they explained everything to the last bit even if e.g., a phrase was vaguer at first or if it included some deeper cultural meaning behind it, they were not finished unless we fully understood everything down to the last bit. The classes were made up of multiple assignments, not just reading, writing, and listening, but some more interactive parts as well. This included real life situations like asking the neighbour for some help, asking for directions in general, conducting some very basic interviews and sometimes even helping teacher students understand phrases in English.

The Business Valuation course, taught by a former PwC Partner Professor, offered practical insights and interactive sessions. We started from looking at balance sheets of Japanese companies, and gradually built up our understanding on how much the current stock prices should be, or how should the companies make more investors interested in investing the company. The professor really made us see the connections between the theories and the real life practice, and not only did I gain a deeper understanding on the Japanese firms valuation but on Japan's corporate finances and work ethics as well.

The exams were usually held at the very end of the semester, but we had quite a lot of homework as well as smaller tests during the semester. With continuous preparation these tests and exams can be passed with a good score, however one should really study from class to class in order to not get behind the level of other students. The questions however were very straight forward, and if someone did study throughout the whole semester, they could not be easily surprised by the content of the exams.

Thanks to all of the courses I had I just became more interested in learning about the Japanese culture, the language and the economy and I know for sure that I will one day return to this amazing country, maybe even for working here.

Facing difficulties

While staying in Japan, I faced some personal issues, some of which I would not want to detail here, however some other part of it was thanks to being homesick. While it can be challenging, it is very crucial to be proactive in community organizing, as having more and more friends will help you feel less mentally devastated from being away from family/friends at home.

Japan is famous for its environmental hazards like Tsunamis, Typhoons, Earthquakes etc. At the beginning of the semester, we were all taken to a disaster prevention centre where we were properly educated on all the dangerous situations and on avoiding them. Nevertheless, we had 3 earthquakes while I was there, but none of them were with casualties luckily and 2 typhoons as well. In the first case which was the more severe one, we were ordered by the

university to leave the dormitory immediately with the guidance of the RAs to a safe place until the dormitory was considered to be safe again. They allowed us to go back home the same day, as it was more of a protocol that they had to follow through, but I totally understood the reason behind it, even if the situation did not look dangerous to us. It is important to stay calm in these situations as living here in Austria we might not know the severity of the dangers that we will need to face in Japan as much as the locals, who face it on a yearly basis. The second one happened just before my departure, so sadly, my flight was delayed thanks to it. It is not a huge issue however, as I had friends who were more than happy to take me in for the one extra day I had to wait for the next departing flight.

Places to explore in Japan

While academics remain a priority, exploring Japan's diverse locations is highly recommended, students are therefore not recommended to waste too much effort on taking up jobs. Rather, they should try to visit as many places as possible. There are favourite tourist spots, that are easily accessible. These are Osaka city, Kyoto, Nara, Wakayama and Kobe. It is recommended to: do at least one Hanami (cherry blossoming viewing, as well as picnicking while doing it) in Osaka castle garden with fellow students, eat the Kobe beef at the proper place at least once, to pat the wild deer on the streets of Nara, go to the Golden (Kinkakuji/金閣寺) and Silver (Ginkakuji/銀閣寺) temples and climb up to the Fushimi Inari Taisha (伏見稻荷大社) of Kyoto or see the seaside at Wakayama. Smaller hikes are recommended around Izumi city are Izumi Katsuragisan, Minoh waterfall (at Osaka), Nunobiki waterfalls (at Kobe), Wakakusa and its waterfalls (at Nara), or a smaller one I already mentioned, Fushimi Inari Taisha (at Kyoto). A bit further away are Hiroshima, Nagoya, Fujisan, and Tokyo. I have proved that it is possible to hike up and down the Fujisan in a day, even if someone wants to spend 2-3 hours at the top, resting and looking around, one just must wake up for the first bus and time it well to still reach the last bus. It is very hard to convince Japanese students to join you on a hiking adventure at first, but offering to finish the day at an onsen will definitely help the case.

There are some hidden gems as well, that offer unique cultural experiences, that Japanese people tend to forget to recommend to exchange students or tourists, because they would want to preserve it for locals only. These include such places as Ise, Miyazu and Suwa-ko. Miyazu and Suwa-ko are really exciting because of the festivals in August, especially Miyazu with the lantern festival. Ise has still a very traditional shopping street, one of the largest temple sites, as well as the Meoto Iwa or the wedded rock, which is two rocks connected by a rope. The trains taking people here are also much less busy and the view on the way is gorgeous. In the end one's experience is what they make it out to be. In conclusion, my time at Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku was a transformative experience, marked by challenges and triumphs and I will be always grateful for all the memories, the academic and the personal growth I achieved here during this enriching study abroad journey.