

Mobility program	ERASMUS+
Partner university	Sophia University, Japan
Subject attended	B.Sc. Business Administration
Semester	3rd Semester
Name and E-Mail	

Overall Impression	<p>Looking back, I feel that choosing Sophia University in Tokyo was my best decision. Being in a city with the most inhabitants in the world meant that something was always going on, no matter what time it was. There were countless things to discover in Japan alone, and thanks to the ERASMUS+ program, I gained an excess of experiences, impressions, and adventures.</p>
Entry/Arrival	<p>In order to ensure a smooth entry process, Sophia University provided me with a "Certificate of Eligibility" to fill out during the application process. This was a four-page Excel form where I had to enter information for my entry. Once I completed the form, Sophia University forwarded it to the Japanese consulate. In my case, the consulate collaborated with the Swiss consulate, and I could simply drive there to pick up my free visa. Upon arrival at the Japanese airport, the immigration office verified my visa and issued me a residence card since the visa was only valid for a single entry. With this card, I was able to leave and travel back to the country as often as I wanted within the period of validity (one year).</p> <p>Tip: If you want a work visa, inform the immigration office at the airport. It will be issued immediately, not after a two-week wait.</p> <p>After receiving my residence card, I had to visit the ward office within 14 days to register my address and sign up for mandatory health insurance.</p>
Finding a Room/Living	<p>I found it very easy to find accommodation for my stay. Sophia University has already provided a list of around nine dormitories in the online application process. I just had to prioritise them, and luckily, I got my first choice. I believe everyone can find a place that fits their needs. My first choice was the Naka-Kasai Dormy Global House. Although it was located 50 minutes away from the university, I had no trouble using the Tokyo metro system. One of the advantages was that they offered a meal plan that included breakfast and dinner every day except Sundays and public holidays. The Dormy had a cafeteria, a shared kitchen, and shared showers separated by gender. Additionally, on every floor, there were shared toilets (also separated by gender), washing machines, and dryers. Each room was equipped with a sink, a refrigerator, a desk, a bed with a mattress, ample closet space, an AC, a humidifier, and a balcony.</p>
Public Transportation	<p>I do not believe anyone can argue that the rail network in Japan is not excellent. Let me explain the route I took from my accommodation to the university. I started at Kasai Station and took the Tokyo Metro to Otemachi Station, where I changed lines and continued to Yotsuya Station. If I missed a train, another one arrived within six minutes at the latest. To make this commute more convenient, the university provided us with a form that we attached to the back of our student ID. This allowed us to obtain a commuter subscription at the Commuter Pass Office. The card could be topped up with money at any station, allowing me to use it outside the specified route. Moreover, if I wanted to take the Shinkansen (bullet train), I could print out another form from the university and receive a 20% discount.</p>
Preparation	<p>Prior to applying, I conducted thorough research on the available courses. I found out that the university offered more than enough courses in Japanese as well as English. I was able to gather all the necessary information about the courses, including their schedule, effortlessly from the university's website by opening the "Syllabus inquiry". However, I could only sign up for the courses after attending an introductory day and only had a week</p>

	<p>to make my final decision. Therefore, thorough planning is highly recommended. For my 3rd semester abroad, I enrolled for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Microeconomics (VWL I: Mikroökonomie) • Introduction to Macroeconomics (VWL III: Makroökonomie) • Human Resource Management (Personal, Führung und Organisation) • Japanese 1 (elective language course) <p>All courses had an English language requirement of at least TOEFL iBT 79, TOEFL ITP 550, IELTS 6.0, TOEIC 730 or Cambridge English C2 Proficiency. If you wanted to choose a course taught in Japanese (other than the Japanese language course), you also had to have a certificate there. As far as proof of studies goes, my complete passing of the first semester was sufficient.</p>
<p>Information University</p>	<p>Sophia University is a private Jesuit university founded in 1913 and located in the heart of Tokyo. It is one of the top private universities in Japan and Japan's pioneer in global education. As mentioned, Sophia University has various English-medium programs and is renowned for offering high-quality language education. The University has nine undergraduate faculties with 29 departments and ten graduate schools with 27 programs. The total number of full-time students enrolled is around 15,000, plus an additional 2,000 international students each semester. The Yotsuya campus is centrally located within walking distance of the National Diet, Imperial Palace, and the State Guest House. Shinjuku, the world's busiest transport hub, is just a five-minute train ride from Yotsuya.</p> <p>The campus consists of twelve buildings, each with an average of seven floors. One of the buildings is a gym, which includes a large sports hall, a swimming pool, and a karate hall. Additionally, a spacious sports field is next to all the buildings available. During lunch breaks, there are four cafeterias with a huge variety of meals, a Subway (fast food chain), and at least four food trucks on campus daily. Moreover, there is a 7-Eleven convenience store on campus and several restaurants situated outside of the campus.</p> <p>The periods (lessons) are 100 minutes each, with a 15-minute break between each period. After the 2nd period, there is a 55-minute lunch break. The 6th period (the last one) is from 7:10-8:50 p.m.</p>
<p>Attended Language Course at the University</p>	<p>The Japanese 1 course took place every day from Monday to Friday in either the 1st or 2nd period (I got the 2nd). The emphasis was put on thorough mastery of the basic functional grammar of Japanese through oral practice. We covered Lesson 1 to 12 of Situational Functional Japanese (SFJ). By the end of this course, I could handle various daily conversational situations and read and write simple texts with hiragana and katakana, as well as approximately 180 kanji (Chinese characters) for production and recognition.</p> <p>The course was taught by two teachers (Mrs Tokiko Sera and Mrs Yuko Iwahashi), who alternated each day. One teacher focused mainly on the oral part, while the other focused on the theoretical part. Both teachers had good English skills and could communicate with us effectively. They made the lessons very engaging by promoting interactions between the students. The assessment consisted of the following components: attendance (5%), class participation (5%), two composition (3%), daily assignments (5%), three oral tests (10%), 36 quizzes (15%), six lesson tests (15%), a midterm exam (20%) and a final exam (22%).</p> <p>I found it to be beneficial in my everyday life. While I could not engage in in-depth conversations, tasks such as ordering food at a restaurant or requesting assistance in a store were effortless. Additionally, I was able to navigate easily on trains outside of Tokyo, even when the signage was not in English.</p>
<p>Support at the University</p>	<p>Throughout the semester, the International Office was available around the clock during their office hours and could answer all inquiries immediately. At the start of the semester, I joined the buddy program, which allowed me to meet a full-time student. However, I did not utilise my buddy's assistance or seek help from her throughout the semester since most of the other international students already had answers to my questions.</p>

Studying at University	<p>I received credits for all the courses listed below. For detailed information about the lecture content, please refer to the Sophia University online portal "Syllabus inquiry."</p> <p>Introduction to Microeconomics: This course was taught by Mr. Gabriel Fuentes Cordoba and took place every Monday and Thursday in the 3rd period. During this course, the professor utilised PowerPoint slides created by Mankiw, an American macroeconomist. The slides helped clarify the lessons and build upon the knowledge we had gained at the University of Liechtenstein. The professor also conducted optional problem-solving sessions, allowing us to apply the theories covered in the lectures practically. These sessions were highly recommended as they facilitated better understanding and retention of the material. The course evaluation comprised five quizzes (70%) reinforcing our learning and a final exam (30%).</p> <p>Introduction to Macroeconomics: This course was taught by Mr. Naoto Isaka and took place every Tuesday and Friday in the 1st period. During this course, the professor used PowerPoint slides from Mankiw too. Each lecture had a ten-minute active learning session, similar to the problem-solving session from microeconomics, just in a shorter form. In those sessions, we practically solved one or two tasks. The assessment was based on two group assignments (30%), a midterm exam (30%), class participation (10%), and a final exam (30%).</p> <p>Human Resource Management: This course was taught by Ms. Parissa Haghirian and took place every Monday and Thursday in the 4th period. During this course, the professor used specially created PowerPoint slides. However, her interactive lecture style, similar to Markus Jehle's from the University of Liechtenstein, supported by a lot of practical experience, made the lessons really exciting. She also encouraged group discussions and provided a lot of important information for one's private career, such as how to master a job interview or how to write an appealing CV. The assessment consisted of the following components: attendance (15%), class participation (15%), several reaction papers/in-class assignments (20%), several report assignments (25%) and a final exam (25%).</p> <p>Japanese 1: I have already provided an explanation of the course in the section titled "Attended Language Course at the University".</p>	
Cost Planning	<p>I used to spend approximately 700 euros per month, not including accommodation but including trips. The prices were generally between Swiss and Austrian prices. Lunch on campus was much cheaper than anywhere else, costing only 400 yen. I only needed to purchase textbooks for the Japanese 1 course, which cost around 100 euros. For all my transactions, I used Revolut, an online bank that does not charge any exchange fees except on weekends.</p>	
Life/Leisure	<p>During my stay in Tokyo, I spent most of my time with international students from my accommodation. The cafeteria or communal kitchen were our usual meeting points. Furthermore, I could still pursue my hobby of bouldering and sports climbing in private. Additionally, Sophia University offers a variety of clubs, including sports clubs, which I found to be very interesting.</p>	
Comparison of Universities	<p>What I found most impressive about Sophia University was the large number of accessible workspaces available on campus. Additionally, the numerous cafeterias and other food options helped benefit from more variety and freedom of choice. I was also impressed by the evaluation system for all lectures, which goes beyond just the final exam. Furthermore, Sophia University provides many clubs for students to participate in, with each club having a president and engaging in various active activities. On the other hand, the University of Liechtenstein typically does not hold classes on Fridays and has fewer students, creating a more intimate environment.</p>	
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