



Exchange Report
Waseda University
School of Commerce

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WASEDA University

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Part I – Monthly Activity Log

September

It was about late September when I first arrived in Tokyo, Japan. I have visited the place often, but this was going to be my first time where I would be staying for a long period. I was both nervous and excited about my new semester at a new place. My first orientation at Waseda University was a chance for me to meet with other international students. During the orientation, we were able to enroll in courses that we would like to take for the upcoming semester and afterwards, we had an opportunity to talk with one another and also with some of the current students at Waseda. I thought it was a good start and looked forward to the coming semester.

October

In the first few weeks of October, it was more of a time for me to get used to the new environment and also try to meet more people. Since I was living off campus, it was relatively harder for me to meet with other exchange students. However, I was able to get used to my off-campus dormitory and was able to meet other people from different backgrounds. The two most memorable events that happened in this month are Halloween event at my dorm and the Shibuya Halloween Festival. The Halloween event at my dorm was significantly memorable since it was a great way for me to get to know a lot of people in my residence. Majority of the students were from various universities other than Waseda and some were also graduate students. Getting to talk with people from a completely different background and embarking on different routes was unforgettable. Moreover, with some of my friends whom I have become close with the past few weeks, we heard about how different Halloween is in Japan, we were lucky enough to be in time for the celebration and it was also an interesting experience.

November

In November, it was already the midterm period and I was busy with reviewing. Unlike UST, Waseda University does not have a study week and also all midterms are taken during regular class periods. After my midterms, it was already mid-November and some places were already getting ready for the Christmas season. Some of my friends and I have talked about the Christmas lighting and illumination events that would be taking place around different parts of Tokyo. It was getting cold, but I was glad that I was able to visit most of the popular sites of Tokyo to see the renowned Christmas illumination.

December

In December, I was already more than halfway through my semester and I had a place that I wanted to revisit during my exchange, Tokyo Disneyland. It was an enjoyable day. Another event that I had a chance to experience was attending a mini concert. My friends were interested in going to a fan meeting event and it was also my first time; I found it a memorable experience as well. Moreover, I had a few fond people visiting me during my semester as well. My close friend from my home university visited me as well during this month and it was genuinely nice. My parents were able to visit me as well and we also went to some close by cities near Tokyo to experience the quieter parts of Japan. Spending time with my friends was nice, but it was also nice to see my parents during my exchange and I had a lot of fun showing them my university and talking about the my new journey throughout the semester. I leisurely spent my last month of the year trying more stuff and experiencing various activities; the time flew and it was already winter vacation. A lot of my classmates decided to stay in Japan, but I chose to return home to spend time with my family over Christmas and New Year.

January

After spending my time with my family, I returned to Japan to finish my semester. I already felt the semester ending and I wanted to spend more time with some of the people that I have met during this journey. During this month, rather than visiting more places or doing new activities, I decided to tour local places near my area. I also wanted to buy gifts for my friends here and also back in my home country so whenever I had a free time, I went out to buy and look for local shops. My friend also visited me during this month and I was more than happy to give her a tour of some of the places that I have been to. During the last week of January, everybody was busy getting ready for the finals, including myself. A lot of my friends left either at the end of January or early February so I spent my last times with them as well.

February

My last couple of weeks in Japan was more or less spent in wrapping up my semester at Waseda University and saying farewells to people I have met. I was busy packing everything and getting ready to return. I was one of the last ones to leave Japan since a lot of my friends semester started earlier in January. Although I spent only a semester at this place and there were times when I missed my home university and my close friends, I was also glad for this new experience because I have learnt a lot along my way and also have learnt about Japan from this opportunity. Travelling to a specific country and living in one is a completely different experience and for one to have the chance to undergo this experience is an opportunity to learn.

Part II – General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

The university would provide one with the paper works that are needed for visa application. They would support one in applying for the COE and one needs to go to the embassy to register for visa afterwards. I was able to pick up my visa within a week after registration.

2) Orientation Activities

Orientation at Waseda University was mainly focused on course registration and informational purpose. There were two orientations in total prior to the beginning of the semester and both were focused on informing the students about regulations and procedures.

3) International Services & Activities

International services and activities were provided by an association called ICC. Unlike our home university where exchanging diverse cultures was the core due the international environment of the campus, majority of the events being held were opportunities to observe Japanese culture.

4) Accommodations

University dormitories were provided to some of the exchange students, but it was not offered to others. I was on the latter and had to enquire about my options. Thus, self-responsibility may be required and further details would differ depending on one's choices and durations.

5) Courses Registration

Course registration was similar to home university in a sense that online registration was held, but differed in various aspects. With over enrollment, lottery method is held and regardless of the order, one may or may not be enrolled into a certain course. The directions of online course registration would be explained in detail during the orientation period.

6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

Teaching and assessment methods differ depending on the professors and from courses. For language course, the courses would be taught from a different center of Waseda and each course would have distinct requirements and syllabus. For Commerce courses, exams carry a heavy weight and are mostly divided into two parts.

7) Sports & Recreation Facilities

Sports and recreation facilities are located in different parts of the campus and unlike home university, there are several campuses with an addition of a baseball ground. Going to a home game is an experience I would recommend and also for one to be allowed to use these facilities, one needs to go through health checkup procedures prior to usage.

8) Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

One may or may not open an account during exchange at Waseda. I opened a post office bank account due to its simplicity. The currency is Yen and expenses would be relatively similar to Hong Kong, but a huge difference in transportation fee with Japan being well known for its transportation expenses.

9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

One can have an experience of seeing all the clubs at Waseda during a School club fair. There are various clubs promoting and introducing, but with majority of them only being provided in Japanese.

10) Health & Safety

Health and safety should not be a concern in Japan with an easy access to clinics and pharmacies. One needs to make an appointment with the doctor beforehand.

11) Food

Food prices in Japan ranges a lot and one needs to keep in mind that during meal hours line is something one cannot avoid. Cafeteria is available at Waseda, but I often ate off campus at nearby restaurants.

12) Transportation

Transportation is convenient yet expenses needs to be taken into account. With subway being the most common transportation being used, transportation cards, such as Suica or Pasma, are highly recommended for convenience.

13) Climate

Climate in Tokyo during Fall and Winter is chilly to col. Heater is available, but bringing warm clothes is recommended and with a dry Winter, humidifier is also recommended.

14) Communication

Communication at school can be done through e-mails. I used a data only mobile and did not have any issues regarding communication. Language barrier would be a bigger concern with a majority of Japanese being not able to communicate in any other language than Japanese.

15) Cautionary Measures

Earthquakes occur occasionally and one should be aware of the precautions and actions that must be taken when such events occur. One would be informed about the rules and procedures.

Part III – Items to bring

- Adapter (110V)
- Wireless adapter
- Lan cable
- medicine
- blankets
- winter items (scarves, gloves, etc)
- prepaid data sim card (beginning)
- camera
- passport
- visa/master card
- coin bag
- raincoat
- umbrella
- water bottle
- exchanged money
- thermal clothes
- copy of important documents
- ID picture
- Visa
- watch
- Japanese dictionary/translator
- chargers
- laundry bag
- home food

Part IV – Useful Links and Contacts

- <https://www.waseda.jp/top/en/about/work/organizations/international-affairs-division> (Waseda International Office)
- <https://www.waseda.jp/fcom/soc/en> (Waseda School of Commerce)
- <https://my.waseda.jp/login/login> (Waseda Canvas - online assignment)
- <https://www.waseda.jp/inst/cjl/en/> (Waseda Center for Japanese)
- <https://www.waseda.jp/hoken/english> (Waseda Health Clinic)
- <http://www.wasedashochiku.co.jp/en.html> (Waseda Movie Theater)
- <https://tabelog.com/en/> (food recommendation)
- Contact of the city office one would belong to when in Tokyo would be useful
- Contact of your dorm and the manager would be useful