



東 北 大 学

Tohoku University, Student Exchange Division

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January 20, 2020

Dear Incoming IPLA students,

Greetings from Tohoku University!

The faculty and staff of the Global Learning Center are now getting ready to welcome you to Tohoku University this coming March. Many of you might have already started making flight reservations or even planning ahead to ensure a smooth transition to life in Sendai. So, I just wanted to drop you a line about some important matters regarding your preparation for studying abroad at Tohoku University. Please read this carefully and feel free to ask us any questions.

1. Preparing to be a member of the IPLA community

The International Program in Liberal Arts (IPLA) is a very special program, focusing on deepening your understanding of Japan and enriching your global experiences. IPLA is well supported by the university, which enables us to offer the students extraordinary, diverse experiences including some mandatory activities. Please be ready to participate in these activities and enjoy being a proactive member of our community.

◆ **IPLA 2019-2020 Mandatory Activities and Important Events**

1) Orientation for Incoming Exchange Students	April 2, 2020
2) IPLA Orientation	April 3, 2020
3) Individual Meeting with the Director	Late April
4) IPLA Field Trip	June 2020 (To be announced at the orientation)
5) Final Presentation *The final day of the program	Early August 2020 (To be announced at the orientation)
6) Dormitory move out	By August 31, 2020



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7) Buddy Program	Weekly meetings with your tutor throughout the semester (Your tutor will be arranged)
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◆ Non-mandatory Activities:

- 1) Various cultural activities and events
- 2) Monthly and special events planned by IPLANET, the student-led support group for IPLA students. Click [here](#) to know more about IPLANET.
- 3) Global Café, a conversation circle where you teach Tohoku University students about your language and culture. More information can be found [here](#).
- 4) Weekend home-stay program
- 5) Participation in student club activities

2. Please Respect the Academic Calendar

We expect all IPLA students to commit themselves to academic activities while at Tohoku University. Taking temporary leave of the program during the semester is not permitted except in the case of emergency. Class attendance is extremely important, especially in Japanese language classes. Missing classes to take graduation or graduate school examinations at your home university, or to travel with your friends, for example, will result in a failing grade. So please pay special attention to these classes.

3. Temporary leave during holidays

We encourage IPLA students to explore Japan during the holidays. There are many beautiful and interesting places where you can discover different faces of Japan and gain rich, cultural experiences. Some of you may also be thinking about extending your trip to neighboring countries. However, because of the recent insecure situation in the region, we would like you to notify us in advance by submitting a [Report of Temporary Leave form](#).



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4. Study Japanese in advance

In order to have a smooth transition to life in Sendai, and also to prepare for the mandatory Japanese classes in IPLA, I would like to encourage you all to study [Hiragana and Katakana](#) as well as simple Japanese phrases in advance. Many of the domestic students are able and willing to interact with international students in English. However, knowing some Japanese at the time of arrival would make your adjustment easier.

5. Other issues

- 1) Before you come to Japan, the university will assign you a dormitory. Please be aware that you cannot change your dormitory once it is assigned. The university is facing a severe shortage of student housing, but gives priority to exchange students. There are certain rules and regulations at each dormitory. All residents must follow and respect them throughout their stay.

- 2) We assign each IPLA student a tutor (buddy), recruited from the university's domestic students. Your buddy will provide continuous support on your study and daily life throughout the semester/academic year. This buddy system is meant to support international students but also to create an opportunity for both international and domestic students to grow together. Your buddy is willing to help and spend time with you. Your buddy, however, is a student just like yourself. Please also respect his/her priorities.



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- 3) There will be several opportunities for you to present your culture, country, or university. Bringing some cultural artifacts such as traditional clothing, ornaments, university pamphlets, etc. would be a good idea.

- 4) IPLA students are expected to commit themselves to academic and cultural activities during their stay at Tohoku University. For this reason, we do not recommend that you take a part-time job outside the university. However, if you urgently need additional financial support or experiences to add to your CV, we may grant permission. If you wish to work part-time outside the university, you must meet with your IPLA advisor (to be assigned upon arrival) and submit a part-time work permission request form.

Last but not least, we consider communication to be an extremely important element in building a good rapport between you and us. We have been asking you to fill out lots of documents and forms one after another, which can be stressful, but please understand that your prompt reply to our email is essential to our good communication. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

We all look forward to seeing you here in Sendai in a few months.

Sincerely,

Kazuko Suematsu, PhD

Director of International Program in Liberal Arts

Tohoku University