

Name	Christian FLEINER
University	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany)
Duration	2017/10 - 2018/9
Graduate School	Information Sciences
Academic Advisor	Professor KINOSHITA Tetsuo
Research Theme	An Agent-based Smart Home System for Hearing Impaired People
IRTLab	3 (Fall Semester) 4 (Spring Semester)



Reasons for choosing COLABS

After I had begun my graduate studies, I planned in doing an exchange year in Asia. I was especially interested in Japanese culture and so I discovered the COLABS program at Tohoku University. In most exchange programs, you attend lectures of the partner university. The COLABS program, however, is quite different. Instead of simply attending lectures, you work in one of the university's laboratories and conduct state-of-the-art research. Therefore, it offers the opportunity to deepen your knowledge in a specific field while gaining on-hands research experience. The combination of research and cultural insights made me apply for COLABS.



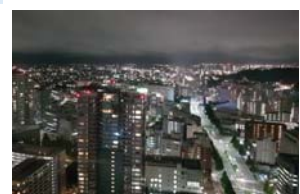
Overall COLABS experience

The COLABS program is well organized and structured. In the first two weeks after my arrival, volunteer students helped us open a bank account, get a bicycle and a working SIM-card. In the laboratory, I was supported by my tutor who helped in research or daily life topics. The COLABS program only sets a rough guideline for conducting your research. Most decisions are made by your lab's professor. In my case, I was free to choose my research topic. Moreover, I could attend Japanese language classes and was allowed to take days off to do sightseeing. Besides research activities, the lab sometimes conducted dinner parties. In my lab we also were running together 3km each Tuesday preparing for the University's run. Overall, I have learned a lot through COLABS and could conduct my research in an enjoyable and supporting environment.



Experiences at TU, in Sendai and Japan

Although some of you might disagree, I perceived that the Japanese and German lifestyle are fairly similar. Thus, my acclimatization phase was very short. For starters, Sendai's temperature over the year was almost the same as in Karlsruhe – only with less snow. The city has a lot of green spots which is great for cycling. The students at Tohoku University are very welcoming. For example, there are even some student clubs that focus primarily on promoting activities for foreign students. In general, Japanese people are very open and friendly. However, the language barrier can obstruct this impression. Nevertheless, what I really enjoyed was the variety of after-work activities. For instance, there are arcades, baseball batting stations, bowling centers, karaoke bars and izakayas. Moreover, Japan has many seasonal events like cherry blossom blooming or the Tanabata festival (Sendai is quite famous for that one). Sendai's tourist office offers many interesting cultural workshops. Among them are sake tasting and a mini Tanabata decoration workshop. In my opinion, Sendai offers a sound mix of urban and cultural experiences.



Schedule (on days with Japanese classes)

6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	📅	Japanese Classes (JLPK)					📅	IRTLab					📅	IRTLab		Night Run	JLPK H/W	

Schedule (on days without Japanese classes)

6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			📅	IRTLab				📅	IRTLab				Gym		📅	JLPK H/W		

H/W (Homework)