

Do you think the program and the educational environment helped promote your research?

One of the biggest differences of being an engineering student in France and in Japan is the fact that students in Japan do research. In France we may have a research project, but in Japan students do their own real research, with presentation in scientific conference and sometime paper publication. And as a double degree student, I had the opportunity to do research just like a Japanese student.

How the research will be highly depends on the laboratory and the specialty. I think choosing wisely the laboratory for the program is very important. In my case, I was in a great laboratory where I was well integrated with the Japanese students. I did many experiments with the help of the professors and the other students, and even did a poster presentation in Japanese about my research. It would not have been possible in I did not have such a great support from my laboratory.

In my first year of master, I learned how the laboratory life worked, and learned how to independently use all the machines. I also learned how to ask the important questions to my professors. In the second year of master, I learned how to be a “senpai”. M2 students have a lot of responsibilities, they are the one in the day-to-day life looking out for the M1 students and B4 students, as well as the overall functioning of the laboratory.

I discovered research with the double degree program, and I grew a lot from my experience in my laboratory. My advice would be to learn as much Japanese as possible before coming to Japan and during the semester of Japanese classes, in order to be treated as a normal Japanese student in the laboratory. It might mean that you will not have as much free time than the other foreign students, but in my opinion that’s how you can make the most of the program.



Doing polishing and oxidation test

Living in Sendai: Experience Advice, and Leisure

Sendai is a great city to live in. Not too big, not too small.

Japan can be expensive but also cheap. For example, you can travel using shinkansen (expensive) or night bus (cheap). It is almost always possible to find a cheap version of something. As for fixed cost, I have the dormitory fee (42 000 yen/month), health insurance (2000 yen/month), my phone bill (3000 yen/month) and the pass for one metro line (7000 yen/month).

As for preparation prior to arrival, I think to do you our research is important. YouTube is a great resource to learn about Japan. I think to install Line (application) is a must, as all Japanese people use it. There is not many things that you can not buy directly in Japan, so I would suggest bringing a few items that you like from home, but do not over do it. Bringing some gift for your laboratory is very important!



Snowy campus in February



Sendai view at night

For the 2 years of master I was part of danse group (outside of university). The first year I did kendo in the kendo cercle (剣道サークル) of Tohoku university, and the second year I joined the horseback riding club (東北大学学友会乗馬部).



Year 2022



Year 2023

My dance group is called 魂響 Tamayura. We do a style of Japanese dance called Yosakoi, which is not the same as Suzume Odori (the dance from Sendai). With Tamayura, I danced in many Yosakoi festivals in many cities, including Sendai, Akita, Morioka and Nagoya. It was very nice to do something outside of the University. Through Yosakoi I was able to meet many people and travel.



This is me when I received my zekken "name tag" at the kendo circle.

It reads "東北大学 クララ" = Tohoku University Clara.

At the horseback riding club there are (actually) 25 students, 10 horses, 2 cats and 1 dog. Being part of a club is a lot of work, especially since in this case we have to take care of the animals. The trainings started at 5 am in summer and 5:30 am in winter. Being part of the club I got to experience a part of the Japanese culture. I also learned many new words.



I would definitely recommend being part of a club or circle or association. It is the best way to learn about Japan and make friends!

Career Paths

There are many paths possible after the double degree program. It is very easy to stay at Tohoku University for a PhD, however PhD students don't have a salary in Japan. During the first year of master, it is possible to join in with the Japanese students doing 就職活動. I did part take in shukatsu but ended up not finding a suitable company for my requirements.

I think we have an advantage as double degree students compared to other students in Europe if we want to do a PhD there, because of our experience with research in Japan. And of course, we can find a job in our home country or anywhere else.

Personally, I have not decided yet what I will do, which is fine too.