

# Laurie Azoulay

**INSA Lyon, Double-degree program student from April 2023 to March 2025**

## Student's Life

In my case, I chose to pursue this double degree in Japan because I wanted to deepen my knowledge of robotics, which was not extensively offered in my French program beyond a six-month project. At Tohoku University, I had the opportunity to work comprehensively on a subject related to AI and robotics, from start to finish. This allowed me the time to explore, conduct multiple tests, experience failure and success, and even participate in a conference. It was an incredible opportunity to learn and immerse myself in the field of research. In France, pursuing such an in-depth experience would typically require enrolling in a PhD program, which involves more constraints and a longer time commitment.

One drawback of this program is that, unlike in France, research in Japan is often conducted independently. Group work is not a common practice. Depending on the lab, regular meetings may be held to check progress, but ultimately, the work is done individually. Given the large number of students (both Master's and PhD) in each lab, research topics can vary significantly among students, making it challenging at times to find guidance. However, this environment teaches you that research is inherently about trial and error, and through perseverance, you gain valuable insights and experience.



*International Festival*



*French Group 2023*

## Living in Sendai: Experience and Advice

In Japan, you can find almost everything, so there isn't a strict list of items you need to bring before arriving. In my case, I brought a supply of eye lenses, contraceptive pills, and some of my favorite skincare products that aren't internationally available. Once you arrive, Tohoku University has an excellent welcome organization to assist with the registration process at the ward office, setting up a bank account (essential

for receiving scholarships), arranging dormitories, and health insurance. If you're unsure about anything, there are always double degree students who are already there and willing to help.

Regarding the cost of living—including food, accommodation, and transportation—I would say it's generally less expensive than in Lyon, France. After six months, you can apply for a scholarship of 80,000 yen, which covers the dormitory costs and a significant portion of food expenses.

I didn't face any major difficulties in Japan because Japanese people are generally very friendly and willing to help, even if there are language barriers.

One of my biggest pieces of advice for new students is to make the most of your time in Japan by traveling and exploring. At first, a Master's thesis might seem overwhelming, especially in Japan, but most lab professors are open to giving students time to travel. Even if you're on a budget, there are ways to travel affordably. For instance, I worked for a month at a guesthouse in Okinawa in exchange for free accommodation. Staying in Japan for two and a half years is a unique opportunity to explore the country more thoroughly and enjoy its remote and beautiful locations at a slower pace.



*Okinawa*



*Nagano*



*Mt Fuji*



*Kumamoto*

### Career Paths

After this double degree, I am planning to go back home and search for a job there. I am hoping to find a job in the same field than my lab which would be the robotic in the medical field. I hope my research thesis would help to obtain a job easily.