

Report of DD Program

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Practical Life

VISA

After being accepted by Tohoku University, I started applying for a Japanese student visa.

Firstly, I had to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (CoE) for a student visa. The process began by filling out a detailed application form, carefully providing all necessary personal information. I then prepared several documents, including a copy of my passport, acceptance letter from Tohoku University, attendance certificate, diplomas, and financial sponsorship proof. Fortunately, Tohoku University was very helpful during this process, ensuring that my documents were complete and submitting my application timely to the Immigration Bureau of Japan.

The next step was to submit my student visa application at the Japanese Embassy. Once I received my Certificate of Eligibility, I took it along with my passport, photos, and admission letter to the Japanese Embassy in my city to apply for the visa.

Finally, upon arrival in Japan, I went to the local city office to register my residential address. My address was recorded on my residence card, which became an essential document for my life in Japan, indicating my resident status and other important information.

Accommodation

As an international student at Tohoku University, I had the privilege of living in International House Sanjo 2, significantly enhancing my study abroad experience.

International House Sanjo 2 is residential accommodation specifically designed for international students and researchers. My room had basic furniture including a comfortable bed, desk, chair, and ample storage space. Although small, it was sufficient for my needs as a student.

The dormitory's communal facilities were also practical. The communal kitchen became one of my favorite places, not just for cooking but also for socializing. There I met students from around the world, and we shared our cultures and experiences through cooking. Additionally, the laundry room and lounge greatly facilitated our daily lives.

The only downside was the location, which, as an engineering student, was quite far from the campus, leading to longer and more costly commutes.

Financial Situation

As an international student at Tohoku University, I was fortunate to receive the JASSO scholarship of 80,000 yen per month, significantly easing my daily life.

Firstly, this scholarship substantially reduced my financial stress. My monthly living expenses ranged from 80,000 to 100,000 yen, and the scholarship covered nearly all of my basic expenses, including food, accommodation, and transportation. Dormitory accommodation cost around 30,000 yen per month, allowing me to focus more on my studies rather than worrying about financial matters.

Telecommunications

Upon arriving in Japan, I quickly realized the importance of getting a local phone card. Communication is crucial for international students not only to maintain contact with family and friends but also to facilitate everyday life.

In Japan, there are several major mobile network operators such as NTT docomo, au by KDDI, and SoftBank, each offering a variety of packages to meet different needs. Additionally, smaller operators or MVNOs, like Y!mobile and UQ mobile, typically provide more affordable plans.

I chose SoftBank due to its excellent network coverage in Japan. My monthly plan cost 3,000 yen, including 20 GB of data, sufficient for daily use. Furthermore, I could access free internet via SoftBank Wi-Fi hotspots, convenient in many public places.

Upon arrival in Sendai, Japan, I went to Yodobashi Camera, a well-known electronics and communication service retailer near Sendai Station. The process of acquiring the phone card was swift, with staff assisting me in filling out the necessary forms and explaining contract terms. Within an hour, I completed the process, received my new number, and even chose my preferred digits.

University Life

My studies and research in Japan mainly took place in research laboratories. Japanese education emphasizes individual research, with fewer structured courses and more focus on independent research projects. In my research lab, my main goal was to deepen my knowledge in specific areas and cultivate research and problem-solving skills. This allowed me to explore my interests deeply and conduct detailed research. I learned how to study autonomously, manage research projects, and think independently.

In contrast, my study experience at INSA focused more on applied knowledge. The curriculum was diverse, covering a broad range of practical and applied skills. This educational approach emphasized applying theoretical knowledge practically and solving real-world problems.

Daily Life

Daily life in Sendai was a unique experience for me. As an international student, I found Sendai charming and lively, especially Ichibancho, which I visited frequently. Ichibancho is a

bustling central district full of shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues. I often went there after school or on weekends. It was particularly lively in the evenings, making it a popular dining spot for my friends and me.

Yodobashi Camera near Sendai Station was a frequent destination for me, conveniently satisfying my electronics and household needs. Additionally, Don Quijote, a discount store near the station, became my shopping paradise for snacks, beverages, and daily necessities.

Summary and Recommendations

Studying at Tohoku University and living in Sendai was an unforgettable journey filled with learning, exploration, and personal growth. During this time, I faced several challenges but gained many valuable experiences.

Initially, language was one of the biggest challenges. Although I had learned basic Japanese beforehand, everyday communication and academic discussions were still challenging. I gradually improved my language skills through language courses provided by the university and interactions with Japanese classmates.

Adapting to Japanese culture and lifestyle was another major challenge. It took time to adjust to everyday tasks like shopping and using public transportation, as well as adapting to the university environment and teaching style. The international student service department at Tohoku University provided enormous support throughout this process.

Overall, this study abroad experience, though challenging, was highly rewarding. It not only enriched my academic knowledge but also improved my adaptability and problem-solving skills. The support from Tohoku University and the city of Sendai made my study abroad life smooth and memorable.