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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: NUCB – Nagoya University of Commerce & Business

Exchange term: Fall 2017 (September-January)

Exchange Experience

About the country and city

First, you will never be prepared for Japan, the culture is so unique and different from anything in the world. Japan is relatively small country, but it has big diversity. Japan offers culture and manners, tasty fresh food, big urban cities and small villages, nature, volcanos, mountains, waterfalls, virgin beaches, hot springs, endless shopping and more. Japanese are welcoming and helpful, although most of them don't speak English.

Nagoya is Japan's third-largest city, though it's not a tourist city, it's business center. You will have the chance to live with the locals. It's beautiful city, with the most beautiful castle in all of Japan, parks and markets are everywhere. Nagoya is city of music, you will find live music in the city center every weekend, roads will be closed and turn into giant festival.

About the Host University

The campus is sophisticated, very beautifully designed, everything is smart, the classes are exact copy of Harvard's classes. You quite rooms to study, with Mac computers and other facilities. If you have classes on weekend the campus offers free meal on lunch time. The campus location is very well in the city center, just 15 min walk or one subway station to Sakae or Osu-Kannon market, the best places to go out in Nagoya. The campus enjoys very beautiful view up to the 12th floor. The atmosphere in the campus, like all Japan, is professional, it's quiet, everyone in dressed up nice, and you sometime feel like disturbing the peace just by the sound of your footsteps. With that being said, you'll meet amazing people, and great stuff, and the overall feeling is very friendly. All the faculty staff is working in an transparent open-space in the building lobby, so you can always see who's there and approach. There are free lockers, so you can leave you belonging locked in the campus. School trips and events are well organized, you get the real feeling of living in Japan. Our trips included: rice harvesting, visit to Toyota factory, art and pottery workshop, samurai experiences (traditional music show and katana swords show), trip to Kyoto with Zen-meditation, temples trips and villages experience, tea ceremony, and sushi and tempura night, where all the

faculty staff prepared the food with beer and even more. The overall experience is amazing, you get so much experiences and really bond with other students and faculty members. You study only with international students, since Japanese study in Japanese and not English, there was one carrier night, where you get to swap business cards like Japanese do, but you cannot really make networking connections, since Japanese don't speak English very well.

Courses and professors

The courses are mainly focus on classic business topics, with nice variety on topics, but there are no technology courses if you wish to focus on this. Most of the professors, are graduated from elite schools, like Harvard or Cambridge. I only took 3 intensive, so I'll explain on that. Intensive course is a course you finish in 10 days and 4-5 meeting. The meeting is very long 8-9 hours each, and on the last one you have exam. You get the reading one week ahead of the course, it's mostly Harvard's case studies. You need to submit assignments about the cases in the beginning of each class. The grades are 60-70% participation in the class, so you must know the cases very well to participate and get good grades. Also, because everyone is eager to participate, you'll find out the all the students rise their hands, and the professor can choose same student more than once in a class and other not choose at all, so it can become very frustrating. The grading system is also very different from what any student I met has every experience, the grades are not objective based on your performance, it's relative grading by the professors. The professor submits list of students from who is best (participated a lot and good assignments) and to who is worst, without grades. The faculty take that list and divide it to percentages, 5-10% of the class get A, next 30% get B, and so on, it can be changed from course to course. The low 10% gets F, even if they were good students. So, the atmosphere during the classes, is very competitive. The grades are arriving all the once in February, even for courses I finished in September, and how they put it together, you don't have grades for assignment, just subjective grades. You'll need to talk a lot in English during class and group meeting (which is also part of the class), sometime there is presentation you need to do with PowerPoint. Overall, the students are the ones who talks in the class, and mostly they are reaping the same answers about the case studies. What I felt is that the professor is more guidance in class than teacher, I didn't learn as much as I expected, just read a lot of case studies. If you only care about education level, this isn't the place for you.

Accommodation

There are two dorms, Israelis get the fancier ones, called "The Global Center", there is pros and cons to that. Pros: new facilities, amazing Japanese styled home, free breakfast, free bicycles rent, cleaning services, gym, movie room, cheap laundry, nice neighborhood, and impressive view to botanical gardens. Cons: expensive (you can get dorms scholarship, but it's still expensive), 10 min walk to the subway station with steep heel, and 30-40 min total travel time to the campus. The dorms are very far away from the city central, so if you are going out you must catch the last subway before

12am, kind of killing all the fun. The breakfast is very good and includes eggs, fruits, ham, salad, bread, milk with cereals, and juices. Breakfast is offered 5 days a week.

They are very strict rules for the dorms: no alcohol, no parties, no sleep over guests, and no noise after 10pm. You can find yourself kicked out very easily if you're not following those rules. The dorms is not allowed for couples, if you want you can rent a full apartment for the same price, check out free bell apartments or local real-estate broker.

Visa

Students get a visa for 6 months if you are going for a semester, the papers from japan arrive in mail to TAU offices, you go with it to Japan embassy. After a week, you get the passport back with the visa inside. At the checkpoint in Japan airport, you tell them you are a student, they'll help you fill the papers and print a resident card for you. You are not a tourist in Japan and cannot enjoy tourist benefits.

Transportation

Japan has amazing transportation system, you can reach by train almost anywhere across the country and fast! Japan bullet train reach up to 300kph. There is many kinds of trains, busses and flights, if you want to travel, it's super easy from Nagoya central location. Just 1.5 hour to Tokyo, and 35 min to Kyoto. Nagoya metropolis has amazing subway system, easy to use. You can buy commuter pass from school, it's like "hofshi hodshi", it's includes all the subway stations between where you live to school, unlimited rides. As faster as you go, as expensive it's get, local trains are the cheapest after busses.

University discount - you can get up to 5 discount coupons per semester, you get it from the school office. For rides over 100km in JR (the main train and bus company) you get 20% discount and you can use the same discount card for return ticket also. It's very significant for rides like going to Tokyo, which costs 11,000JPY (360 NIS) for one way.

Rent car - Japan road is different from Israel, they drive on the left side and all the highways are toll roads. It's recommended to rent a car if you are going to the countryside, where there is no trains and buses are not very often. Road signs are different, on the first day renting a car I got pulled over by the police, but they were kind enough to explain me the road system and not giving me any ticket.

Taxies in Japan are expensive, and you will prefer to find an alternative.

Insurance and Health Services

As a resident you get all the public health coverage, it cost around 16\$ a month and cover up to 70%. You get coupon by mail to pay each month. The university will help you fill the forms. I never used it, so not much to say on that.

Living expenses

Living expenses in Japan are relatively cheaper than Israel. You will find Japanese convenient store on every corner, just walking from the subways station to the campus you go by three branches of 7-eleven and few other Lawson, Family mart and others. Those stores are very cheap, and you can find anything there, average Japanese go to "convi" store 3 times a day. As a temporary resident, you can get Tax free when buying more than 5500 JPY. Student visa allow you to work part time, because of the non-English culture, you will only find jobs to teach English.

Food

Japanese food is very fresh and healthy. Eating out is very cheap and most of the Japanese people don't cook at home. Japanese convenient stores offer prepared fresh meals for 200-400 JPY, restaurants offer set-meals (like lunch deals) for 800-1500 JPY. It's very cheap relative to Israel. As mentioned before, school offers free lunch for students studying on the weekend and the dorms have breakfast includes except for the weekend.

My favorite meal, is Japanese curry with rice, you can find it anywhere across Japan. My favorite restaurant is Sushiro, it is a cheap sushi chain across japan, each plate costs 100 JPY (3 NIS). On typhoon days, I have ordered Domino's pizza to the dorms, no need to risk yourself in the wind. Food in japan is changing with the season, it's big part of Japan cultural. Japan 4 seasons has unique characters, and food, colors, clothes, everything is changing.

Night life

Nagoya offers many pubs (western or Japanese), small dance bars, live concerts and Karaoke. Big clubs is only available in Tokyo as far as I know. The place to be is Sakae, everything is going down in the city center.

Tips

- Never leave tips, not on the restaurant and anywhere. Japanese take big pride of their work, they will serve you, run for you, but if you leave a tip, you insult them.
- Japanese do not speak English well, so I recommend learning some basic words.
- Go travel, go far and see amazing places. I recommend going to Hokkaido and Okinawa islands. Japan is the safes country in the world, there is no crime in

Japan. Makes it very easy to travel even in the most remote areas. It is also cheap, best hostel in the world will cost you only 50NIS for night.

- Live the Japanese life fully, do not be afraid to explore. Sleep on Tatami floor, go to Onsens (hot springs), eat raw food, walk a lot, you will be amazed how healthy you feel when you live in Japan.
- Go to Nagashima Spa Land (30 min train from Nagoya), for fastest rollercoasters in Japan, and the cleanest Onsen in Japan. Next to it, visit "Nabana No Sato" for winter illumination.
- Feel free to contact me for any question!

General experience

Japan offered me an opportunity to discover a unique culture and travel in the most beautiful places. It was a powerful experience. I was disappointed with the teaching level, but if you take it with the right perspective, you will enjoy your time in Japan and meet amazing people.

Photos



Class of Fall 2017



My room in the dorms





NUCB Class



NUCB Lunch



Sushiro



Curry with chicken



Nagoya Castel



Beppu



Okinawa



Nagoya Oasis 21



Nagoya Sakae