

The News Letter of the Center for Globalization, Kumamoto University

Short-term Exchange Program at KU

Kumamoto University operates a Short-term Exchange Program for non-Japanese students enrolled in regular degree programs at the university's international partner institutions. Designed for non-Japanese undergraduate students interested in Japanese language study, the societies and cultures of Japan and other parts of Asia, cutting-edge science and technology, and interaction with students from other countries, this system provides an opportunity for students to study in Japan for a term of up to one year while remaining enrolled at their home institutions. More than 200 students have been accepted since the program in the 2005 academic year. Currently participants can choose from two courses: Course I and Course II. Students fulfilling the completion requirements of their chosen course are issued with a certificate of completion. More than 50 students from Kumamoto University's international partners are currently studying in these courses.



An English-medium class in the Short-Term Exchange Program

Course I

Subjects	Credits
Short-Term Exchange Program subjects taught in English	Must complete at least 20 credits in one year, including at least 12 credits from Short-Term Exchange Program subjects taught in English
Japanese language / Japanese studies subjects	
Other requirements: - Submission of an independent research report. - Completion of at least ten credits per semester.	

Course II

Subjects	Credits
Short-Term Exchange Program subjects taught in English	Must complete at least 20 credits in one year, including at least 4 credits from specialized subjects offered in the faculty of affiliation
Specialized subjects in each faculty and general education subjects	
Japanese language / Japanese studies subjects	
Other requirements: - Submission of an independent research report. - Completion of at least ten credits per semester.	



Conversation practice with local students in a Japanese class

Kumamoto University also offers a one-year program for undergraduate Japanese Government Scholarship recipients who are majoring in fields related to Japanese language and culture. Known as the Japanese Studies Program, this program offers two courses designed to improve participants' Japanese language proficiency at the same time as equipping them with the expertise required to undertake research on Japan and a broad-ranging knowledge of Japanese language and culture applicable beyond university study. More than 120 Japanese Government Scholarship students have taken part in the program since its inception, and the two current enrollees are students from China and Poland.

(1) Japanese Language Course

This course is designed to equip students with knowledge of Japanese language and culture applicable beyond university study, with an emphasis on raising Japanese language proficiency.

Subject cluster	Minimum required credits	Notes
Japanese Language	12 credits	Must complete at least 26 credits in one year, including 12 credits in Japanese Language, 2 credits in Japanese Studies, and 6 credits in Research Subjects.
Japanese Studies	2 credits	
Research Subjects	6 credits	
(1) Japanese Language	At least 6 credits in total from research subject clusters (1) through (4)	
(2) Japanese Culture		
(3) Japanese Literature		
(4) Japanese Society		
Elective Subjects	At least 6 credits in total from Japanese language subject, Japanese studies subject and research subject clusters	
*Must pass an oral examination and submit a course completion report.		

(2) Japanese Studies and Japanese Culture Course

This course is designed to equip students with the expertise required to undertake research on Japan, and also to raise their Japanese language proficiency.

Subject cluster	Minimum required credits	Notes
Japanese Language	6 credits	Must complete at least 26 credits in one year, including 6 credits in Japanese Language, 2 credits in Japanese Studies, and 12 credits in Research Subjects.
Japanese Studies	2 credits	
Research Subjects	12 credits	
(1) Japanese Language	At least 6 credits in total from research subject clusters (1) through (4)	
(2) Japanese Culture		
(3) Japanese Literature		
(4) Japanese Society		
Elective Subjects	At least 6 credits in total from Japanese language subject, Japanese studies subject and research subject clusters	
*Must pass an oral examination and submit a course completion report.		

On April 5, 2011, a ceremony was held to mark the start of the first semester of the AY 2011 Short-term Exchange Programs. Hosted in the Reception Room of the Kusunoki Kaikan, the ceremony was attended by 12 students from Kumamoto University's international partner institutions, each of whom spoke in Japanese about their aspirations for their time at KU. The students will go on to select their courses under KU's short-term Exchange Programs, and enroll in Short-Term Exchange Program subjects, Japanese language classes, and specialized subjects.

KU organizes field trip for international students

At Kumamoto University, field trips are organized every year, with the objective of deepening the understanding of Japanese history and culture, and also to provide an opportunity for interaction among international students studying at KU. This year, a 2-day field trip was arranged during February 15-16, 2011 to Fukuoka and Yamaguchi region. A total of 116 international students from 16 countries, and 4 tutors participated in the trip. Also, there were 7 faculty and staff, accompanying the students.

On the first day, the participants of the trip visited Kyushu National Museum, Dazaifu Tenmangu, one of most famous shrine in Japan and Tsunoshima Bridge. At Kyushu National Museum, the international students learnt about the history of cultural exchanges between Japan and other Asian countries while appreciating the art, handicrafts etc of different countries. The participants were also introduced to the Japanese handicrafts which were influenced by western culture. At the Dazaifu Tenmangu, they were taught the traditional way of praying and were told about the God of learning –“Sugawara no Michizane” .

The international students stayed overnight at Hotel Nishinagato Resort in Yamaguchi Prefecture and took a relaxing bath in the hot spring which has fabulous view of the beach. They also tasted traditional Japanese dishes.

On the second day, visits were arranged to Akama Shrine, Kanmon Tunnel, Kyushu Railway History Museum, Mojiko Retro etc. At the Museum, the participants learnt about the history of railways in every region of Kyushu and also board some of the original railway carriages of the past.

On both days the weather was excellent, and the participants had a memorable time.

Center for Globalization opens revamped Exchange Room

The Center for Globalization’s Exchange Room, located on the second floor of Building A in the Zengaku Kyouikutou, underwent refurbishment from mid-February to late March. On April 5, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the newly refurbished room by President Taniguchi, the Center for Globalization’s Director Furukawa and Deputy Director Torii, and two international students enrolled in April in the undergraduate student exchange program.

The room has been equipped with new furniture, and now features an all-glass wall on the corridor side. International students and Japanese students can enjoy the freedom to interact in this bright, open environment.



AY 2010 Professional Skills Enhancement Training (International Work)

The Professional Skills Enhancement Training (International Work) program is designed to equip KU employees with the skills required to communicate effectively and efficiently with international students and researchers from outside Japan. In the 2010 academic year, the program was held monthly from September 2010 through February 2011.

Participants were placed in either the elementary or intermediate level. Training at the elementary level focused on the acquisition of basic English grammar and vocabulary, with participants learning how to introduce themselves, give directions, and engage in other simple forms of conversation in English, as well as writing e-mails and taking telephone calls. Intermediate participants honed their general applied English skills (reading, writing, and listening), as well as developing the conversational proficiencies needed to communicate more smoothly in English.

Fifteen elementary and ten intermediate trainees completed the marathon six-month program. It is hoped that they will continue to hone their skills individually while applying them in their respective workplaces.



The Association of Banks of Kumamoto Prefecture donates bicycles to international students

The Association of Banks of Kumamoto Prefecture have donated 8 bicycles to international students through Kumamoto Foreign Student Exchange Promotion Regional Conference (Kumamoto University -3, Kumamoto Prefectural University -1, Kumamoto Gakuen University -2, Shojo University -2). This donation is intended to help those international students who have limited financial resources. On February 17, 2011, Mr Ueda, Head of Secretariat of the Association, formally handed over the gifts in a simple ceremony. Professor Torii, Deputy Director of the Center of Globalization, Kumamoto University, thanked the donors for their kind gesture.



Deputy Director Torii is presented with a list of the donated bicycles

University of Brawijaya reps visit KU

On March 2, 2011, a group of six representatives from the University of Brawijaya, Indonesia paid a visit to the Faculty of Life Sciences to discuss future possibilities for student exchange and research collaboration.



Signing Ceremony

The group also made a courtesy visit to the Graduate School of Science and Technology on March 3 to attend a signing ceremony for a faculty-level partnership agreement with KU’s Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering, and Graduate School of Science and Technology. KU has received students from the University of Brawijaya in the past, particularly in the Graduate School of Science and Technology, but this visit and the new partnership agreement is sure to result in more active exchange into the future.



The representatives visit the Graduate School of Science and Technology

Second Overseas FD Training Program for Educational Internationalization

From March 7 to 18, eight KU faculty members were sent to California State University, Fullerton for a Faculty Development (FD) program focused on enhancing teaching and communicative proficiencies in English.

KU has been offering this program since the academic year of 2010 as part of its initiatives to advance internationalization on campus. This year, program content included lectures on teaching methods in English, workshops, class observations, and trial lessons. On returning to Japan, participants commented that through this training program they were able to learn many similarities and differences between the approaches used in the U.S. and Japan, and planned to apply what they learned to their own teaching practice.

The participants will be brought together again at a later date to report formally on the outcomes of their training.



A class at Cal State Fullerton

International Service Advancement Officers appointed on each KU campus

In order to improve service provision to international students and other individuals at KU, the Center for Globalization has assigned three International Service Advancement Officers to the university's campuses at Kurokami North, Kurokami South, Honjo/Kuhonji, and Oe. Students are now able to access various international services on their respective campuses.

The Officers will assist international students in procedures related to residence status in Japan, scholarships, and housing in KU International House and private accommodation, as well as advising Japanese students on study abroad options and offering individual consultations to international students.

Readers with questions and comments about this system are invited to contact the Global Strategy Unit.

Survey of Japanese language education at National University of Laos

Toshiyuki Imanishi and Shigeko Matsuse
International Language Studies
Center for Globalization



The Japanese Language Department at the National University of Laos

Two KU faculty members from the Japanese language education section of the Center for Globalization's International Language Studies division made a two-day visit to the National University of Laos (NUOL) in the city of Vientiane on March 1 and 2, 2011. A Japanese language department was established within NUOL's Faculty of Letters in 2003, and in 2009, KU welcomed its first international student from the department. KU concluded a partnership agreement with NUOL in March this year, paving the way for further interaction between the two institutions in student exchange and other fields.

Around 20 students are enrolled at each year level in the NUOL Japanese Language Department, making a total of 95 students across five year levels studying Japanese language and culture. In the summer of 2010, the department finally moved in to its own building, which was constructed with assistance from the Government of Japan. The two-storey building comprises six rooms including a staff room, and KU visitors were impressed by the way students worked together to clean and care for their department's new home.

The visitors discussed the department's curriculum and other matters with staff in charge of Japanese language education, and were also able to attend actual Japanese language classes and observe teaching methods and student engagement. (A detailed report is published in the Bulletin of the Center for Globalization vol. 2)

Through Japanese language education, we are looking forward to building a close collaborative relationship with the NUOL's department that will provide the basis for further development into the future.



Japanese Language Class

New international exchange agreements signed January-March, 2011

Level		Partner institution	Country	Type
University-Level		Beijing University of Technology	People's Republic of China	Academic/student exchange
Department-Level	Institute of Resource Development and Analysis	Mary/Lyon Centre, MRC Harwell	United Kingdom	Academic
	Faculty of Science Faculty of Engineering Graduate School of Science and Technology	University of Brawijaya	Republic of Indonesia	Academic/student exchange
	Faculty of Engineering Graduate School of Science and Technology	De La Salle University Manila	Republic of the Philippines	Academic/student exchange

My exchange experience at the University of Leeds

Shogo Machi

4th year, Department of Literature, Faculty of Letters



In August 2009, I went to the U.K. to study at the University of Leeds for about a year. Located in the north of England around 2.5 hours from London by train, the city of Leeds has developed as a center of industrial and commercial activity. Around 30,000 students currently study at the University of Leeds, including many from other parts of the world. Over the year I spent at the campus I heard English being spoken in all kinds of accents. I often felt frustrated by my own inability to express my thoughts in English during classes, but I learned the importance of working through each day at my own pace, rather than trying to hurry things. Exchange students can choose courses from a wide variety of subject areas, and most of my classes were in the fields of Japanese studies, East Asian studies, and education. I sometimes struggled to come to terms with the difference in value outlooks between Japan and the U.K. when we dealt with historical issues in my Japanese studies classes, but I learned a great deal from those experiences.

One of the great attractions of study in the U.K. is the easy access to other parts of Europe. Making use of the extensive network of cut-price air routes as well as railways, I travelled outside the U.K. twice during my time at Leeds, and visited a total of 11 countries on my own. This was one of the most valuable of the many experiences I had while on exchange.

Finances, job-hunting, and graduation plans were just some of the many issues that I needed to address before going on exchange. But reasoning that this would probably be my only opportunity to study outside Japan, I decided to go anyway. It is certainly possible to improve your English skills and interact with students from other countries even if you stay here at KU. However, the experience of living outside Japan is the real benefit that you can only get from student exchange. I am confident that this experience will prove very valuable to me in the long term. Once, when I was feeling a little low after returning to Japan, I contacted a friend in England, who told me: "You can come back here whenever you want." Maybe this was the most valuable thing to come out of my exchange experience: finding a place where I was accepted for who I am.

My summer session at Dong-A University

Mariko Goto

4th year, Department of Law, Faculty of Law



I attended the summer session at Dong-A University in Busan, South Korea over two weeks in August 2010. There was a large Japanese student presence at the session, with myself and four other students from Kumamoto University joined by students from other universities to make a total of around 40 students from all over Japan.

Mornings in the program were mainly taken up with Korean language classes. In the afternoons we studied Korean history and traditional culture through visits to well-known and historical sites and museums, and activities such as handcrafts and making kimchi. We also attended a baseball game and a concert, and visited an amusement park as part of the program, and in our free time we went to downtown Busan and were introduced to some of the local students' favorite haunts. These experiences gave me a great sense of the dynamism of Korean society.

The streetscapes, the people and other aspects of Korea resembled Japan closely. The culture, however, was certainly foreign to me, and I often felt culture shock at the way Koreans communicated and behaved. At the start I had many concerns about aspects such as the language barrier, living in an unfamiliar dormitory environment, and sentiments towards Japan. However, local students who were proficient in Japanese stayed with us from morning to night, providing attentive support and ensuring that I was soon enjoying my time in Korea. These supporters were by no means the only warm-hearted people I encountered. Even perfect strangers were willing to lend a hand whenever I was in trouble, and would treat me like family once they got to know me better. I ended up falling in love with the warmth, passion, and vitality of the Korean people.

During my time at Dong-A I made many friends—both Korean and Japanese—and expanded my own horizons. It was a truly worthwhile program.



Jun Ye, China

1st year doctoral student, Architectural and Civil Engineering, Graduate School of Science and Technology

Hello, my name is Jun Ye. I am in my first year of the doctoral program in Architectural and Civil Engineering in the Graduate School of Science and Technology. I arrived here from Zhejiang province in China in October 2008, so this is my third year in Japan. I initially gained admission to the master's program here on the advice of a professor at the Chinese university where I graduated.



My research is about urban structure for a low-carbon society, focusing on mobility-related activity in Kumamoto city. If we are to realize the ideal of a low-carbon society, it will be essential to reduce the environmental load of urban activity. One particularly crucial challenge is to reduce CO2 emissions from mobility-related activity. In Kumamoto city, factors such as expansion of urban zones into the surrounding districts and falling public transport usage rates have led to greater reliance on private automobiles, and the environmental load is now increasing. A reduction in transport-related energy consumption (PT-CO2 emission volumes) is necessary, and one way to achieve this is to create an urban structure that links the central activity district with local communities and residential areas.

I could not understand Japanese at all when I first came to Japan. Professor Iki recommended that I start off by studying Japanese, and I got advice and support from the teachers in my Japanese language classes. Over six months as a research student and one year in the master's program, I studied Japanese and learned how to write research reports, and slowly my life in Japan became easier. I found I could communicate better with my colleagues in the same research lab, and my own research began to progress more smoothly. Off campus, I am now working as a volunteer together with members of the Japan-China Friendship Association to assist international students to adjust to life in Japan. I spent a very fulfilling first two years at KU, and decided to go on and enroll in the doctoral program. I am determined to do my very best over the next three years.

Floretess Egos Corias Philippines

Trainee, Graduate School of Education Teacher Training Course

Life in Kumamoto

I will never forget the day I first set foot in Kumamoto. It was almost night and a cold autumn wind was blowing, but staff members and tutors from the Center for Globalization were there waiting for me when I arrived at the transport center. The first Japanese word I spoke was "cold." I found the Japanese climate very different from the tropical conditions back home. As time passed, I realized that that wasn't just the weather that was different—everything here was new to me.



I first visited Japan six years ago on a study tour organized by JICA. My interest in Japan continued to grow since that date, and I dreamed of going back. That dream finally came to fruition when I was given the opportunity to study at KU.

But living in a foreign country is not easy. There were no other people of my nationality studying at the Kurokami campus, and none had been here before me. But I found new friends who were prepared to help me, and I enjoyed many different experiences. Now I have many friends of both Japanese and other nationalities, and I appreciate the kind support of the staff at the Center for Globalization as well.

One challenge that I encountered when I came here, and one that I still struggle with now, is language. I made many mistakes, particularly in my first few months. With the help of my Japanese teachers and tutors, I am now gradually becoming proficient in the Japanese language. I took a Japanese language course for one semester at KU, and found the classes enjoyable and interesting.

KU has provided me with a wonderful study opportunity, and I have had a great experience living in Kumamoto. Coming to Japan was the realization of a dream for me. Japan faces a huge challenge at the moment, but I know that the country and its people will be able to overcome this ordeal and regain their former strength. Just as the cherry blossom blooms, I expect new hope to bloom in everyone's hearts.

"Gambatte kudasai" ("hang in there") is a phrase which my teachers have often used with me. Now let me say to all of you: Gambatte kudasai. We can do it! I love this country like a second home.

