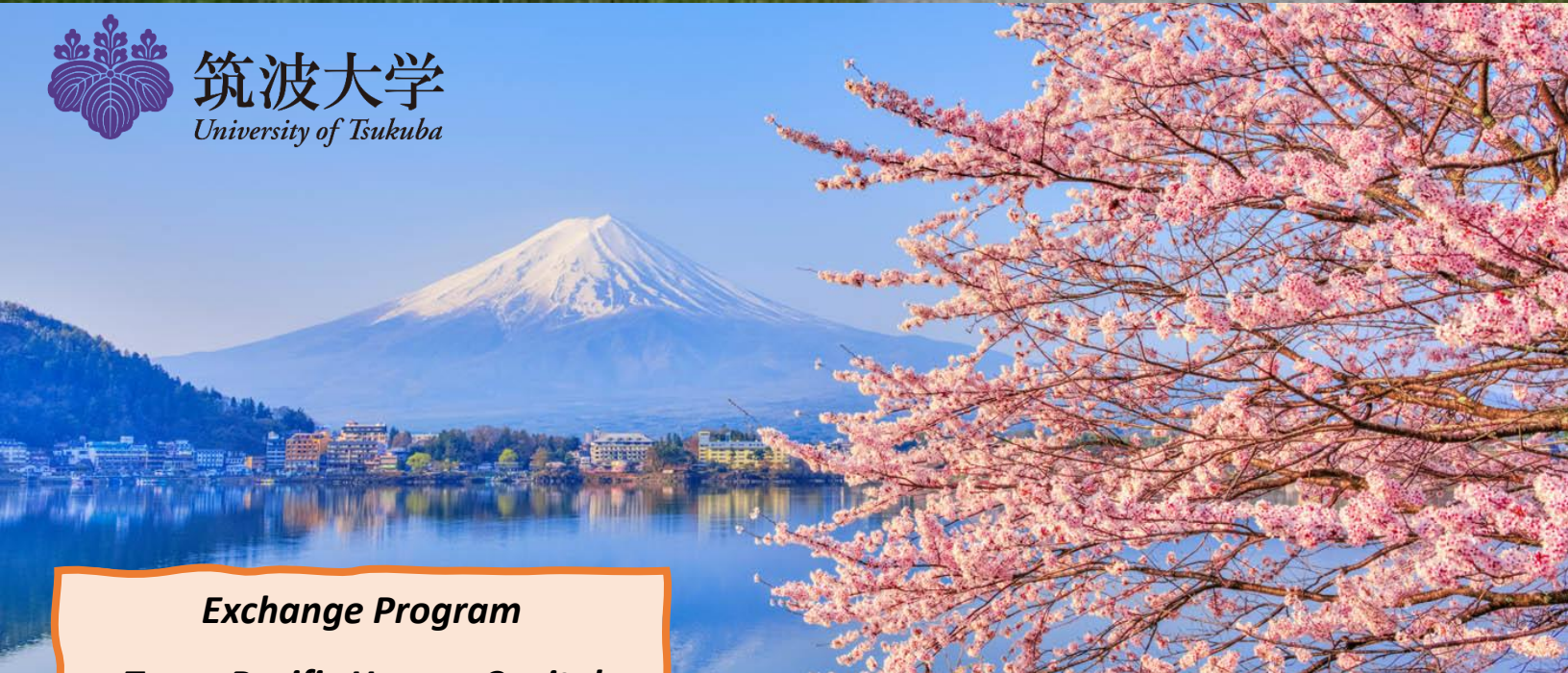




筑波大学
University of Tsukuba



Exchange Program
Trans-Pacific Human Capital
Development Program



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TSUKUBA UNIVERSITY

University's Official Website < <http://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/> >

About exchange program's application

< <https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/study-tsukuba/exchange-students/programs> >

General Information about the University of Tsukuba

- Name: University of Tsukuba (筑波大学).
- Classification: Public university
- Location: Tsukuba City, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan
- Nearby airports: Narita International Airport, Ibaraki Airport
- Foundation: October, 1973
- Position in the world ranking of universities: 270
- Position in the Japanese ranking of universities: 10

(QS World University Rankings, 2020)

- Exchange time: October 2019 - September 2020 (1 year)

Tsukuba University (筑波大学, Tsukuba daigaku), located in Tsukuba, Ibaraki, is one of the prestigious national universities established by the Japanese government. The university has 28 university groups and schools with around 16,500 students (as of 2020). Tsukuba's main campus covers an area of 258 hectares, making it the second largest single campus in Japan.

The university was established in October 1973. One of the precursor was the Tokyo University of Education (東京教育大学, Tokyo kyōiku daigaku), which was founded in 1872. It was one of the oldest universities in Japan, the Tokyo Higher Normal School (東京師範学校, Tokyo Shihan Gakkō). In October 2002, the University of Tsukuba merged with the University of Library and Information Sciences (ULIS, 図書館情報大学, Toshokan jōhō daigaku). It has provided several Nobel laureates, such as Leo Esaki, Hideki Shirakawa and Sin-Itiro Tomonaga. Dr. Satoshi Ōmura was an auditor at the Tokyo University of Education.



筑波大学
University of Tsukuba

* University logo

The University of Tsukuba was reborn in 1973 as a comprehensive university based on new educational concepts. It has inherited the traditions of its predecessors, beginning with the Normal School, which was founded by the Meiji government in 1872 as the first institution of higher education in Japan, and continuing through its history as the Tokyo University of Education. The philosophy of human resource development ingrained in our university is expressed by the phrase shikon risai (師魂理才). Loosely interpreted, it emphasizes the need to be kind to others, like parents and teachers, and to have the ability to bring people together, as well as to solve problems in a rational way. By applying shikon risai (師魂理才), the university's mission is to create knowledge aimed at finding solutions for emerging global tasks and building a future society, including cultivating human resources who will take the lead.

Undergraduate schools ranking

Tsukuba Law School was ranked 16th in 2019 for its Japanese exam pass rate. Tsukuba was ranked 7th by Universal in the ranking of "Excellent Business Schools Nationwide and / or with Continental Links" in Japan.

Student ranking

According to the 2020 ranking of Toyo Keizai Inc, Tsukuba graduates have the 54th best employment rate in 400 major companies in Japan. By contrast, the average salary for Tsukuba alumni is very high, with the eighth best in Japan, according to PRESIDENT, Inc.

Popularity and selectivity

Due to its high ranking in Japan, the University of Tsukuba entrance exam is highly competitive. The general difficulty is currently rated "A1" or two on a 10-point scale.

About Japan

- Name: Japan (日本, Nihon or Nippon)
- Population: 126.5 million
- Area: 377 9753 km²
- Capital: Tokyo
- Currency: Yen (¥, JPY)
- Language: Japanese
- Form of government: Parliamentary monarchy
- Emperor: Naruhito
- Prime Minister: Yoshihide Suga
- Religion: Shintoism, Buddhism



Japan is divided into forty-seven prefectures, each governed by an elected governor, legislature, and administrative bureaucracy. Each prefecture is divided into cities, towns and villages. In the first decade of the 21st century, the nation was in an administrative reorganization, uniting cities, towns and villages, one with the other.

This process reduced the number of sub-prefectoral administrative regions and was expected to cut administrative costs. Japan is mainly subdivided into 47 prefectures, grouped into 8 regions:

Hokkaidō	1. Hokkaidō (北海道)	Tōhoku	2. Aomori (青森)
3. Iwate (岩手)	4. Miyagi (宮城)	5. Akita (秋田)	6. Yamagata
(山形)	7. Fukushima	(福島)	Kantō
8. Ibaraki (茨城)	9. Tochigi (栃木)	10. Gunma (群馬)	11. Saitama (埼玉)
12. Chiba (千葉)	13. Tokyo (東京)	14. Kanagawa (神奈川)	
Chūbu	15. Niigata (新潟)	16. Toyama (富山)	17. Ishikawa (石川)
18. Fukui (福井)	19. Yamanashi (山梨)	20. Nagano (長野)	21. Gifu (岐阜)
22. Shizuoka (静岡)	23. Aichi (愛知)	Kinki	24. Mie (三重)
25. Shiga (滋賀)	26. Kyoto (Kyōto; 京都)	27. Osaka (Ōsaka; 大阪)	28. Hyōgo (兵庫)
29. Nara (奈良)	30. Wakayama (和歌山県)		Chūgoku
31. Tottori (鳥取)	32. Shimane (島根)	33. Okayama (岡山)	34. Hiroshima (広島)
35. Yamaguchi (山口)	Shikoku	36. Tokushima (徳島)	37. Kagawa (香川)
38. Ehime (愛媛)	39. Kōchi (高知)	Kyūshū y Okinawa	40. Fukuoka (福岡)
41. Saga (佐賀)	42. Nagasaki (長崎)	43. Kumamoto (熊本)	44. Ōita (大分)
45. Miyazaki (宮崎)	46. Kagoshima (鹿児島)	47. Okinawa (沖縄)	

Faculties and colleges of the University of Tsukuba

The University of Tsukuba has several undergraduate and graduate colleges and universities in almost every field. You can also see each college of all undergraduate faculties on the following site:

< <https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/academics/organization-ug-list/index.html> >

Undergraduate Schools

<i>School of Humanities and Culture</i>	<i>School of Social and International Studies</i>
<i>School of Human Sciences</i>	<i>School of Life and Environmental Sciences</i>
<i>School of Science and Engineering</i>	<i>School of Informatics</i>
<i>School of Medicine and Health Sciences</i>	<i>School of Health and Physical Education</i>
<i>School of Art and Design</i>	

Classes

In all the colleges offered by the university, classes are taught in Japanese and some others in English. In both modalities, Japanese students can participate as foreign students, even if they are for a short program or long stay. In the case of short-stay foreign students (one semester or two semesters), who want to participate in a certain class, they need to fill out a form delivered by the exchange student office, registering all the desired courses and requesting the teacher's stamp and permission for each class, especially if you want to take classes in Japanese. This format applies to all classes, both Japanese, specialized, culture, etc.

In the Tsukuba exchange program, a minimum of 12 credits must be taken during the program period, obligatorily taking: 4 Japanese courses, subjects related to your specialty in your home country, culture, seminars (this usually cannot be chosen, you have to take it with your assigned advisor), and finally an Internship. The amount of credits per subject depends on the class, usually those of the Japanese classes have a value of 1 credit, some specialized subjects have a value of up to 2 credits, the seminar and the Internship have a value between 2-3 credits. Adding up the credits, in total per program period, you take between 7-8 classes.

In my personal experience, I recommend to take physical activity classes as a sport, since the University of Tsukuba has a great variety of sports classes, they also have a half credit value. Among them traditional Japanese sports such as Kyudo (Japanese archery) and Kendo (Japanese fencing). You can also choose many other sports, such as swimming, judo, tennis, etc.



The official website of the University of Tsukuba has a Syllabus where you can find the classes offered for each semester in Japanese and English. In the first link you can see the list of classes offered in English from all schools. And secondly, the link to the Syllabus to search for specific classes, see the schedules, teachers and the objective of the class.

- <<https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/study-tsukuba/under-graduate/ug-courses>>
- <<https://kdb.tsukuba.ac.jp/>>



*** Syllabus, where you can classes in Japanese and English**

Guides on registering classes in English:

- <http://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/education/ug-courses/pdf/2020/kaisetsu/9-1.pdf>
- <http://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/education/ug-courses/pdf/2020/kaisetsu/9-2.pdf>

Visa

You need a student visa if you are going to be in Japan for more than three months (90 days). Getting a student visa is not that complicated once you have been selected and applied by your university, but you also need to complete the paperwork required by the University of Tsukuba in order to send the necessary documents to your university and thus process your visa at the consulate and embassy of Japan in your country. After being selected by your university, these are the documents you need to e-mail to the University of Tsukuba:

1. Formal letter of application for admission. (Sample: <https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/application/files/7015/9918/7441/Sample.pdf>)
2. Official transcript of grades
3. Official Enrollment Certificate
4. Copy of passport
5. JLPT score and result certificate (only if you have one)
6. Certificate of your stay in Japan. Only if you have experience of having been in Japan for purposes other than tourism (summer program, working vacation)
7. CoE (Certificate of Eligibility; without this one the visa cannot be granted)

Documents that need to be sent by post to Japan (the shipping cost is on your own, you can meet with other colleagues who apply at the same time and share expenses):

1. Application packet checklist and cover page.
2. Two ID photos (40 mm long × 30 mm wide).
3. Certificate of Bank Balance * The last balance of the applicant's bank account and / or Certificate of scholarship / student loan.



*** CoE Sample**

The University of Tsukuba, depending on which semester you apply, has deadlines for sending the documents, it is important to be careful to meet the delivery date, especially when it is necessary to send the documents to Japan, since they have to arrive at the University of Tsukuba before the deadline.

It is necessary to check the time it takes for shipping from the country where it leaves to Japan. In the following link are the application dates and deadlines for documents in English, in addition there are some Excel and PDF files of the previous necessary documentation already mentioned.

<https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/study-tsukuba/exchange-students/programs>

Also, many of the documents mentioned here are provided by the same universities to the postulated students. There is a lot of information on the internet on how to fill out the documents, especially on the official pages of the embassies or consulates of each country.

After the University of Tsukuba reviews the files, they will send you by post the CoE (Certificate of Eligibility) and Letter of Acceptance for you to apply for the student visa in your own country. The students themselves are the ones who have to do this procedure. The visa processing process usually takes a few hours. Although it can also be by postal mail.

What documents are necessary to process the visa in my country?



- 1. Certificate of Eligibility issued by the educational institution (original and a copy)
- 2. Visa application form (completed carefully)
- 3. Identification photos (must be pasted on the form)
- 4. Valid passport with a minimum expiration of three months after finishing the exchange in Japan.

****Student visa. This is added to the passport.***

©Embassy of Japan in Indonesia

Health insurance

For most Latin American universities, it is a requirement to apply for medical insurance before carrying out an academic stay, so before coming to Japan it is necessary to take out exchange student insurance with a trusted company in your country. This has to cover your entire stay. The price ranges from \$ 250 for half a year to \$ 490 for 1 year (with student discount). There are many insurance companies that have this discount service of up to 40% for students, such as the insurance company "365".

Also, after arriving at Tsukuba University, you need to pay for other national student health insurance. You have to request this at the city council, and you can pay it in a single payment or monthly payment. Regardless of the payment method you prefer, you will receive an envelope with the payment papers by post, which you can pay at convenience stores, ATMs or at a bank.

Each baucher has a payment deadline date (in case of paying it monthly), so you must be very careful not to pass the deadline, if so, you will be sent another payment paper, but with a small penalty for the late payment, approximately 100 yen.

Since there is not much public transport in Tsukuba city, a bicycle is required, so you will also have to pay for bicycle insurance. It's around 2000 yen, paying for a single show. If said insurance is not paid, the bicycle will be taken by the university authorities and a penalty will have to be paid plus the insurance payment.

Security

Fortunately, Japan is among the safest countries in the world, where compared to Latin America they can look like two completely different worlds. Foreign visitors also often write on the Internet about Japan, valuing it as a “safe country”, expressing their surprise with comments such as “I forgot my camera and mobile phone in a restaurant and they kept it for me”, “Young girls can walk alone in the street at night quietly”, or “Japanese women walk down the street without closing their purses”, and there are few who when comparing with their country end up considering Japan as “the safest place in the world”. Although Japan is not free from crime and accidents, from the outside it is perceived as a safe place compared to other nations, a reality that we cannot ignore.

However, it is better to be cautious about anything, especially in big cities like Tokyo; I have heard anecdotes from other foreigners who have forgotten to close their ATM in a public bathroom or onsen (thermal baths) and all their money or wallet was stolen. The city of Tsukuba is very safe, there is practically no report of theft of purses or valuables, however, what is most often reported is the theft of bicycles.

Tsukuba, being a city where a bicycle is required to be able to transport within the city, has a high rate of bicycle theft. Therefore, I recommend that you always secure the bicycle and have it registered, and in case it is stolen, you can report it to the police.

As an anecdote I can add that, one day in a supermarket in the city I forgot my wallet at the automatic cash register, and I realized several minutes later. When I returned to ask if it was still there, an employee of the place told me that a customer found it and gave it to them, later they asked me questions about what it was like and how much money I had, agreeing with the wallet they made me fill out a sheet with my data and signature to be able to give it to me. They even asked me to confirm that all my money and cards were without fail. When confirming finally they gave me the number and name of the person who found it for me and asked me to call them to thank them for their kind gesture.

I must also add that, sometimes I have gone shopping and I leave my bags with my things bought in the basket of my bicycle and I have left the place for a few minutes, and when I returned, things were still intact in the basket. Normally in Latin America, they would have been taken by someone seeing that they have no security, but in Japan one can be calmer about the theft of objects.

To finish this point, something to be careful with are the crows that are free everywhere, they tend to steal objects, food from bicycle baskets, etc.

Other points to keep in mind

- *Photographs:* In a large number of tourist and non-tourist places in Japan, videos and photographs are prohibited, especially in religious places such as Shinto and Buddhist

temples. Normally you can take pictures of the outside of the buildings, but inside the temples it is prohibited, even touching is not allowed.



- There are also many restaurants or museums where photos and videos are not allowed. In the Gion neighborhood, Kyoto, the harassment of Maikos and Geishas by tourists has become a big problem, which is why photographs and videos of them are prohibited unless you have their permission. In this same area, there are many houses and narrow streets where photos and videos are also prohibited. There are usually signs of forbidden places.

- I also recommend carrying your residence card and student ID all the time, since there are some places where they usually ask for a Japanese address and official identification to make a registration or reservation.
- In several museums or events there is usually a student discount, so it is better to carry the credential all the time.

Vaccination

For Japan it is not mandatory to have some type of vaccine if you are Mexican, although I have heard from students from other Latin American countries who are required to have all the vaccines to enter Japan.

In Japan there is generally no risk of contracting any disease, even tap water is drinkable and can be used for drinking and cooking.

Things to consider about health

- In Japan, they usually eat different types of raw meats, so be careful of the resistance of our body or you may suffer some poisoning.
- In Japan there are different types of climate and it is very normal for it to rain often, so you have to be careful not to catch a cold.

- In winter times it is very cold, it even snows sometimes in Tsukuba, so you have to be warm and do not forget a scarf, hat and gloves for your hands, especially if you ride a bicycle.
- In summer the temperatures could exceed 40 degrees, so you have to stay very hydrated, avoid exposing yourself to the sun for a long time and use sunscreen, if you do not take the appropriate measures you may suffer heat stroke.
- If it is a rainy or snowy day there and you plan to bring an umbrella, try to place it in a safe place, or buy an adapter for umbrellas that are sold in 100 yen stores. As my own anecdote, I placed my umbrella in the basket of my bicycle and without realizing it got tangled with the bicycle rim, causing the bicycle to stop dry and I was thrown out of it, so I had to go to the hospital in ambulance and medical costs in Japan even with insurance are very expensive.

Currency / Exchange

It is recommended to exchange from your national currency to dollars in your own country before coming to Japan. After arriving in Japan, many places inside and outside the airport (even train stations) have machines to change dollars, euros and other currencies into yen, and generally the conversion is fair and does not charge much commission. Also at Seven Eleven convenience stores there are ATMs that accept foreign cards and you can withdraw up to 30,000 yen with just a 210-yen fee, approximately \$ 2.5. By automatically converting the national currency to the yen. In my case, I would withdraw from my Mexican

debit card, write the amount in yen that I wanted to withdraw and the cashier made the rest, for only a commission of 210 yen.



*** Seven Eleven ATM**

There are other ATMs where you can withdraw money from foreign cards with the same or lower commission, but usually an extra commission is also charged by the bank in your country. Therefore, my personal recommendation is to withdraw at the Seven Eleven ATMs.

In addition, the cashiers of the convenience stores are usually open 24 hours, and the normal cashiers usually close between 5:30 to 7 pm. Another point to note is that, depending on the time of day, the commission price increases or decreases. When

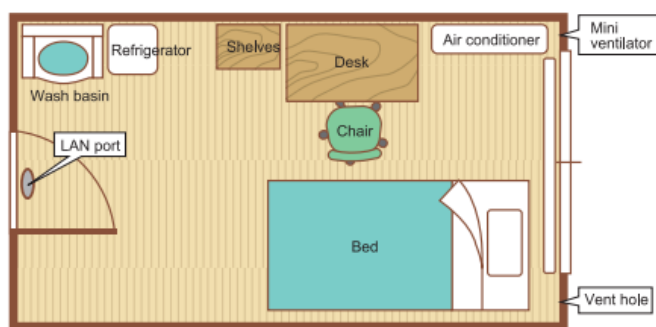
it is usually cheaper or free, it is around 8 am to 4 pm. It is usually free when it is a Japanese card. Also in practically all ATMs they have a menu in English, others a little in Spanish.

Accommodation

The University of Tsukuba has different types of dormitories for foreign students, in the surroundings of the university. A total of 68 residences with around 4,000 rooms are located in Ichinoya, Hirasuna, Oikoshi and Kasuga Area. For more information on types of rooms, equipment and monthly rent, you can consult the guide "Student residence guide" at the following link:

<<http://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/students/campus-life/accommodation>>

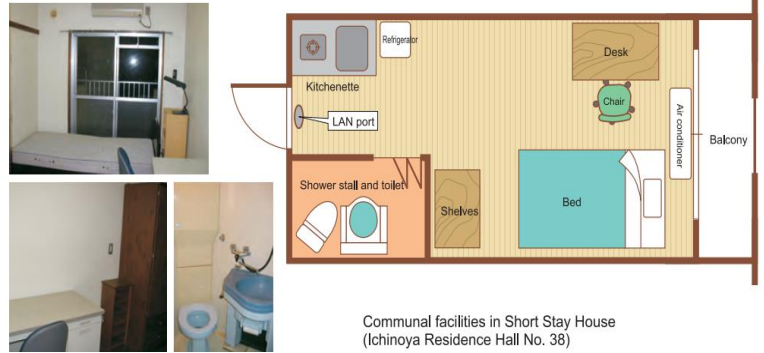
Each Standard-Single residence has a laundry room, a common kitchen and a bathroom with shower, etc. In addition, each area (except the Kasuga area) has a Community Center which has administrative offices, a hair and beauty salon, and an appliance store. Additionally, the Hirasuna Community Center has cafeterias and restrooms, and the Ichinoya Community Center has convenience stores. At Global Village, each unit has a kitchen and bathroom that are shared only with other residents of the unit. In addition, Global Village has its own laundry room and community space "Daiwa Lease Community Station".



The university ensures that rooms are available to undergraduate first year students and foreign students on a priority basis. When the number of new applicants exceeds the number of rooms available, students coming to Tsukuba from different districts/states have priority over those local students who may possibly travel to the university from nearby areas. The application calendar for the following academic year will be posted on the web bulletin board or on campus boards as needed.

Within these bedrooms you can find shared bedrooms (share house style), where you have your own room, and you share the kitchen, bathroom and shower with 5 other people. This is the cheapest dormitory that the university offers. The room includes your bed, desk, chair, sink and a small refrigerator. The rental cost for this monthly room is 23,800 yen (renovated room with air conditioning) or 15,380 yen (non-renovated room), plus the electricity bill you have used for the month. Water and gas are already included in the rental price. The size of the room is approximately 7-10m².

If you are looking for a personal bedroom, which includes a kitchen, shower, bathroom in a single room, the monthly rent is approximately 36,100 yen (renovated room) or 31,600 yen (non-renovated room) plus the monthly percentage of the use of electricity and water. Also the room is equipped with bed, desk, chair, refrigerator, air conditioning and a balcony. The size of the room is approximately 13-14m².



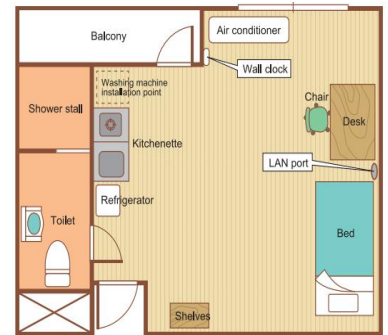
Communal facilities in Short Stay House (Ichinoya Residence Hall No. 38)

And finally, the largest room costs 44,000 yen per month. This room is equipped with the same as the others, and also has a large size, approximately 30m². Regardless of the room you choose or are assigned, you have to pay a security deposit of 30,000 yen, which will be returned when leaving the bedroom, less the percentage of cleaning the room, depending on the size of the room it can be 7 one thousand to 15 thousand yen.



Room facilities

Separate toilet, kitchenette, shower stall, ventilator, and balcony



On the official page of the Tsukuba dormitories, it is said that the security deposit plus a month or two months' rent in advance is needed when arriving in Japan, so it is recommended to already have that money prepared. Many of The students are awarded with JASSO scholarships because in their countries there is not enough financial solvency to pay the expenses of Japan, and this scholarship, in case of being selected as a beneficiary, is granted up to two months after arriving in Japan. So many students request to pay the deposit and rent until the scholarship arrives, and the dormitory office understands the students' situation and is accessible to this, and allows students to pay until then.



My experience as an exchange student in the Tsukuba University

Name: Jessica Rubi Mora Flores

Bachelor: International Relations

Study Objective in Japan: Political and Migration Issues of Japan

Exchange University: University of Tsukuba (筑波大学)

Exchange period: October 2019-September 2020 (2 semesters
Fall / Spring)

Name of the program in Mexico: AMES

Program name in Japan: Trans-Pacific Tsukuba

Scholarship used: AMES / JASSO (only 8 months)



Why did you decide to do an exchange in Japan?

From a very young age I have had an interest in Asian culture in general, and it was because of my interest in anime that I began to study more about Japan and its culture. I liked it so much that I decided that I wanted to study in the country and have many experiences that would allow me to learn more about its culture and language. After several years of researching different programs and different universities, I decided to study at the University of Tsukuba because of its great prestige within Japan.

My itinerary on a normal exchange day

<Weekday>

- ✧ 8:30 Wake up, have breakfast and prepare for classes.
- ✧ 10:00 Japanese classes (Almost all classes last only 1 hour 15 minutes).
- ✧ 11:30 Have a small lunch with other exchange students in the cafeteria.
- ✧ 12:15 Take the following Japanese classes (usually Japanese classes are at the same time every day, but I took classes of different levels so I had different Japanese classes on the same day).
- ✧ 3:00 Prepare the food.

- ✧ 4:30 Prepare to go to the practices of the circles and clubs in which I participated (Kyudo, Yosakoi (traditional dance of matsuri)).
- ✧ 8:30 Return home.
- ✧ 9:30 Dinner.
- ✧ 10:00 Do my homework and prepare my backpack for classes the next day.
- ✧ 12:00 Sleep.

<Weekends and holidays>

I usually had plans to go with my friends to visit some place, eat in a restaurant or walk around Tokyo. When we didn't have a lot of money, we would buy food together, prepare it and eat it together while we watched movies, we also played a board game. When there was some seasonal event we would also go to see it, such as the October fireworks in the neighboring city of Tsukuba, Tsuchiura City, it is considered one of the best fireworks events in Japan.

What preparations did you have before coming to Japan?

As I mentioned before, I had to research the different programs of various universities, as well as going through a selection process at my university before applying to the University of Tsukuba. For this process you need to prepare recommendation letters, motivation letter (explaining why you want to go to Japan), renew your passport and US visa, conduct interviews, fill out forms, send documents to Japan, and save money for the first months that you do not receive even the scholarship.

Also, in my university I took several courses on culture and history in Asia since I started my university career, I also started studying the Japanese language almost 4 years before going to Japan (I highly recommend having a prior knowledge of the language before coming). Although many people know English within the university, outside of it there are not many, and the possibility of finding part-time work may be less. Although there are places where people with little knowledge of Japanese are hired.

I also had to create a bank account in my name, and take out international medical insurance at a cost of 490 dollars, price for one year and a 40% discount for being a student.

Expenses before and during my academic exchange in Japan

Before coming

- ✧ 490 dls International health insurance
- ✧ 90 dls in renewal of 6 years of passport (Mexican passport)
- ✧ 70 dls in travel bags
- ✧ 650 dls to use the first two months in Japan (\$ 15 thousand Mexican pesos)

During my stay

- ✧ 33 thousand yen per month in rent and expenses for electricity and shower.
- ✧ 20 thousand yen in food and drink expenses per month (between restaurants and supermarket).
- ✧ 15 thousand yen between travels, souvenirs and others, per month.
- ✧ 15 thousand yen in total for suitable winter clothing.
- ✧ 5-7,000 yen to buy a second-hand bike. In Tsukuba it is necessary to have a bicycle to have easy transportation to any part of the city, even within the campus the distance between the classrooms and dining rooms are very large, it can take around 30 minutes to cross from one end of the university center to the other. foot. (Plus 6 thousand yen in light repair and new tire)
- ✧ 15 thousand yen to pay for the insurance requested by the university.
- ✧ 4 thousand yen in Japanese books (you can get books already used by other students in the past semester, up to 70% cheaper than a new one).
- ✧ 5 thousand yen to buy some furniture, racks, rice cooker (100% elementary too) and dishes to cook.
- ✧ For trips to the south or north of Japan, a trip of up to 3-4 days can cost in total between 30,000 yen to 40,000 yen. Including transportation, Tsukuba-Tokyo, Tokyo-Kyoto, Osaka etc, meals, accommodation, internal transportation, souvenirs (omiyages), kimono rental, yukata etc.
- ✧ For these trips I strongly recommend the night buses that leave from Shinjuku Station in Tokyo; It is the cheapest way to travel within Japan. Prices can be from 1400 yen (one way only) to 5000 yen which would be the most expensive (almost the same price as plane depending on the season). The link to access the booking page for these buses in English: <https://www.kosokubus.com/en/>. The page is called "Kosoku Bus".
- ✧ I also recommend looking for buses in Japanese, as there are usually companies that only make reservations in Japanese, and many of them are up to twice as cheap as normal companies.

JASSO Scholarship

For those who are beneficiaries of the JASSO scholarship, 80 thousand yen per month is provided to a Japanese bank account (this account is made when arriving in Japan, and the University of Tsukuba is the one in charge of doing the procedure for the students).

Personally, and taking a look at the expenses involved in studying in Japan, 80 thousand yen per month, is enough only to cover the primary expenses such as rent and food in the case of the rooms of 36 thousand yen and 44 thousand yen per month. Leaving very little money left for other expenses, such as outings, travel, other things of basic necessity.

Traveling in and out of Japan is usually very expensive, so as a personal recommendation, if you want to live or can only live in Japan with the JASSO scholarship or another scholarship less than 80 thousand yen per month, I strongly recommend living in the CHEAPEST dorm in University. At the time of doing the exchange procedures, the University of Tsukuba allows you to choose the dormitory in which you want to live. If you are still assigned a more expensive one than you wanted, you can change rooms when you arrive in Tsukuba, in the dormitory office.

Another option that I recommend is looking for a part-time job, so that you can live more comfortably and also have more possibilities to travel.

Part-time job

If you want to work in Japan, whether or not you have a scholarship, you have to keep several important points in mind:

- ✧ When you arrive in Japan, in immigration they ask you directly if you have plans to work in Japan, if so, they put a stamp on your "Residence Card / Resident Card / Zairyuu caado" that will allow you to work up to 28 hours per week. If they don't ask you, you can tell them that you want to work and they will put the stamp on your passport. Without this stamp you cannot work, and when looking for work it is the first thing contractors check.
- ✧ In the event that you have not been able to receive the immigration stamp from the airport, you will have to go to the immigration office that is in Mito, the closest city, or to Tokyo, to obtain said stamp.
- ✧ Another important point is that, if you are looking for work, you have to take into account that the payment system is monthly, all the salary for the month is paid in a single payment, and it is usually at the end of each month. There are some places where they have a certain day of the month to make the payment. So you have to keep in mind that your salary can go up to a month later or depending on when you enter or the company, it can seem like two months. If your need for money is urgent, I recommend looking for a job as soon as possible, since you also have to do an interview.

Travel abroad

In the student visa it is explicit that this only allows one entry to the country. Even so, there is nothing to worry about, since you can go abroad without problems; when doing the check-in of your bags, try to ask for the “Re-entry Form” at immigration before boarding the plane. Without this document, you will not be able to enter Japan again, so it is important to take good care of it during your trip abroad. If you are going to leave the country, you have to notify the university or your advisor, the dates on which you will travel, where you will go and if you go with someone, they will ask for that person's information as well.

What were my experiences and good points of my exchange?

Definitely my best experiences I have had in my life I lived in Japan. One of the things that I liked the most was participating in many university circles and clubs. Mainly I entered a Kyudo (Japanese archery) circle in which I was able to practice archery, an activity that I consider very traditional. Thanks to this circle I was able to see the culture closer, since they had a different style of archery than what I was doing in university classes.

In the university they taught Kyudo with a rougher style, which is more of a “battle”, on the other hand, in the Kyudo circle, they practiced a softer and more aesthetic style, the movements had to be more careful and were based more on time and the correct way to do the movements before releasing the arrow. It didn't matter much if you missed your target.

Another circle that I really enjoyed was Yosakoi Soran's. Yosakoi is a traditional dance performed at large events, especially at Japanese summer festivals (Matsuri).



** Yosakoi Soran circle "Kirikirimai", photo from the day of my debut at Kashima Jingu temple, various groups from Yosakoi from different parts of Ibaraki prefecture also participated in this event. The dances were dedicated to the god of Yosakoi.*



** After an archery competition*

I strongly recommend to participate in as many circles and clubs as you can, as you will be able to learn a lot about Japanese culture and make Japanese friends.

Many foreigners hardly enter these circles because they do not have much confidence in their Japanese, or because they do not speak Japanese at all, and they think that because of that they will not be able to enjoy and make friends. In many circles there are students who like to go out and share with foreigners, and most of them know how to speak English, most of the members of these circles are friendly and care that you understand everything and feel integrated into the group.



** My Kirikirimai debut in Kashima Jingu*



**Kasuga Kyudo Circle.
At the farewell ceremony of the previous leaders and senpais.*



** Kiririmai's presentation at the Tsukuba coming of age (Seijinshiki) ceremony*

There are also two clubs that I personally want to recommend to you:

Omochi Language Club-おもち:

In this club you can talk to other foreigners from anywhere in the world. Usually the first round of conversation is done in English so that everyone gets to know each other and starts talking about their country, language, culture, etc., after taking a short break, the conversation session in Japanese begins. Because many people from all countries do not have much experience in the language, which is divided into three groups: beginners, intermediate and advancing. At each table there are around 4, 5 foreigners and at least 1 or 2 Japanese to share, and have a cultural exchange.

At the end there is always a dinner in a restaurant near the place to continue the conversation for those people who want to stay longer. This club is a great option if you want to make friends with Japanese who are interested in other cultures and also with other foreign students from many parts of the world.

It has the advantage that mostly English is spoken. In addition, this club carries out activities at important events such as Welcome Party, Halloween Party, Christmas Party, etc. These events usually cost between 300 yen to 500 yen to enter, and you can eat all the food and drinks at the event.

Link to the Facebook page where they publish new events and announcements:
<<https://www.facebook.com/Omochi.Tsukuba>>



** Food at the Christmas party*



** Taiko Performance, at the welcome party*



** Sake tasting, at the welcome party, 2019*

Campur Tsukuba:

This is a club that is also held once a week (on Wednesdays) and each week there is a small exhibition about a certain country, which are generally South Asian countries. First, an explanation is made about the history, culture, language and food of the country, there is usually a tasting of typical dishes and at the end there are quizzes about the exhibition, and the winner is awarded a prize. There are also traditional games of the country, in which everyone can participate and have fun. Link to the Facebook page where they post new events and announcements:

< <https://www.facebook.com/tsukuba.campur.5> >



** Tsukuba Idol Dance Performance
at Campur Final Event, 2020*



** Hot Cakes Design Contest*

Troubles I had during my exchange. Who did I consult?

I think the part that was most problematic for Latin American students was getting used to the changing “cost of daily living” in Japan. In Latin America the cost of living is not very expensive if we compare it with Japan, on the contrary, it is very cheap. At first it is difficult to adapt to the change of money and the "correct" use of money. But as time goes by, and trying to take care of money as much as possible, you end up getting used to the high Japanese cost of living.

I also had a problem with paying my rent, somehow, apparently I “skipped” a month's rent in the first few months; that imbalance dragged on until it could no longer be delayed, and since I had already thrown away all my proof of rent payment, I could not prove that I had actually paid that month. So that I recommend that you keep all proof of payment of rent and insurance in a safe place and do not lose or throw them away for any reason, you may need them at some point.

As I mentioned earlier, I also suffered a severe accident on my bicycle where I was thrown and hit my head on the concrete and had to be taken by ambulance to the Tsukuba University Hospital. Despite the fact that they only performed wound washing with gauze, and a CT scan of my head, their original amount was 24 thousand yen (220 dollars), and thanks to the insurance from Japan, I only had to pay 7 thousand yen (100 dollars). So I

recommend that you be very careful not to have any road accidents, because Japanese medical expenses are very high, and Japanese insurance does not cover all the costs.

For any questions, queries, problems, you need to have contact with the Global Commons office, since they are the ones in charge of the Trans-Pacific Program and carry out the procedure and exchange process for Latin American students. Some of the emails where you can communicate are:

- latinamerica-pj@un.tsukuba.ac.jp Global Commos Office
- eiguchi.laura.ga@un.tsukuba.ac.jp Laura Eiguchi (Internacional Associate)

My recommendations within the city of Tsukuba

- ✧ Probably the best restaurant in Tsukuba for me is “**Tontokoton / とんとこ豚**”, it is a Tonkatsu food restaurant, fried pork or seafood. This restaurant is reasonably priced and features a Student Menu on weekdays, where dishes are mostly only 1000 yen.

It is served in Teishoku food, that is a set with various complements, such as rice, miso soup, salad and cabbage. The portions are quite large, and you can eat everything without problems. The store is open from 11 am-2pm and from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm, and they accept reservations.



** Some of the richest dishes with a lot of variety*

- ◇ The second one is not specifically from Tsukuba, but you have several franchises in various parts of the country: “Shabu Shabu- Shabu yo / しゃぶしゃぶ・しゃぶ葉” restaurant. It is a Japanese variant of hot pot (Chinese fondue). The style of the dish is related to sukiyaki, as both use finely cut meat and vegetables, and are often served with dipping sauces. However, they differ radically in taste: shabu-shabu is tastier and less sweet than sukiyaki. For two hours you can enjoy this dish with vegetables to taste and unlimited meat. The cost of this place is a bit steep, and depending on the type and variety of meat you want to eat, you can also include a buffet of drinks and desserts for 300 yen more. In total it can cost between 1700-2500 yen.



- ◇ Third, I recommend “Zeyo / ゼヨ”, a curry-udon restaurant that has national recognition and has been featured in various reports and in newspapers. Curry-udon, that's how it sounds, eating udon with a curry “soup / paste” with a pork chop and chives on top. My reason for recommending this place is both for the flavor of the curry and the smooth texture of the pork chop. In addition, there is a promotion for students where you can order a croquette with sauce and mayonnaise and rice for just 10 yen more, and up to 30 yen more for a crab cream croquette.

Transportation to Tsukuba from the airport

When a new semester begins and new exchange students arrive, the University of Tsukuba reserves bus tickets so that all students, one or two days after arriving at the airport, go straight to the dormitories all together. Students are to meet at the point indicated upon arrival. In the case of not entering the meeting point at Narita airport, there are many information points where you can ask in both Japanese and English.

In any case, the person in charge of the exchange students or the designated tutors will be present waiting to give support and guidance to the buses. The point to keep in mind is that there is a limited number of tickets per day, and the last bus leaves around 5:30 pm or 7pm, arriving in Tsukuba in about an hour and a half. However, it must be taken into account that it is not possible to arrive very late to the university dormitories, since the administration is possibly only open until a certain time. As it is a day when several foreigners arrive, they generally extend the extension hours to attend to the students and take them to their rooms.

Experiences of other exchange students from Latin America

SARA BERNACHE

Biology student at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico

Exchange period: October 2019- April 2020

Since I was aware of Japanese culture, it attracted me a lot. This was when I was 5-6 years old and over time this interest also grew, and I hoped one day I could go. Just 2 years ago I found out that a friend from university had requested an exchange to Japan, specifically to the University of Tsukuba. At that moment I began to consider going on an exchange as well, I started researching and ended up doing the paperwork to go to the University of Tsukuba.

In general, they were good experiences; Tsukuba is a very quiet place, you can go everywhere by bike, wherever you are there are spaces full of nature. I met people with whom I connected, I learned a lot about Japan, its culture and the people; although not everything was as I expected, I am not complaining, it is one of those experiences that cannot be easily compared.

A big disadvantage, especially if you come from a Latin American country, is the cost of living, but if you organize, you survive and from time to time you give yourself a few luxuries. Another thing that, although it did not affect me much, because I almost always used my bike was the bus transport, which is usually very expensive.

I have to admit that one of the things I liked the least about my exchange was the classes in Japanese, not because they were bad as such, but personally, I'm not used to teachers letting you read the theory and in class alone exercise. Usually it is the other way around here in Mexico, the teachers teach you the theory and you practice with exercises at home. This did not happen in all classes, I also had other teachers (mainly foreigners) and their classes were similar to what best suits me and as I am more used to and I enjoyed them a lot.

Mainly they did not give me the JASSO scholarship and once there you can feel the currency exchange. There is also a lot of bureaucracy in everything, since you arrive and in things that are unnecessary for me, but even without knowing the language, they usually offer you support for these activities. Since I mention it, I went without knowing much Japanese and there I learned much more, but sometimes it is difficult to communicate and not many people speak English. For example, there were times where I got lost, and asking was not an option; The good thing is that in many places there is internet and with that you survive. Also when you take the metro there are too many lines and in order not to get lost you also need internet and checking the routes. Finally, it was not a big inconvenience, but when choosing subjects there is practically only one schedule per class and I came across Japanese classes, which were mandatory for me, so I couldn't take all the ones I wanted.



In the city of Tsukuba, there is Mount Tsukuba and depending on the season you can see very beautiful landscapes and you can also visit the temple and if you are lucky you can see frogs (it is the representative animal of the area), in autumn the trees turn yellow to intense reds, in winter they are likely to see at least a little snow and in spring there are plums and cherry trees; In spring they usually sell ume snow (plum) and it is one of the richest flavors I have ever tasted. There are also several onsen in Mount Tsukuba, go, no matter how embarrassed you are, you are going to enjoy it, I was also sad at the beginning, but it went away quickly because it is really worth it.

NATALIA YUMI SATO

Student of School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil

Period of Exchange: October 2019- April 2020

I'm Natália Yumi Sato, 23 years old, I'm from Brazil and I study at the University of São Paulo (USP), School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. I had the opportunity to go to Japan and study at Tsukuba University through the Trans-Pacific Human Capital Development Program, a program aimed at exchanging students from Latin America and Japan. I chose Tsukuba University because of recommendations from friends and because I was very interested in studying at a university that is center and highlight of so many researches, besides the city itself being famous for its National Research and Development Institutes.



The 6 months I spent in Tsukuba were a great learning experience, not only for academic growth but also for personal growth. Getting in touch with people from different countries made me see the world in another way, it is very gratifying to know and talk about the culture beyond the borders we are used to. I was able to practice Japanese and English every day, which certainly added a lot to my academic and professional life.

At first, I had difficulties to communicate and to solve bureaucracies, such as registering on the City Hall, paying for health insurance, opening a bank account, but my friends and colleagues were always available to help with any doubts I had, often accompanying me.

I made great friends from all of the world, traveled, studied and also had a lot of fun. Tsukuba is a very welcoming city and very different from the busy and urban center of Tokyo, and even São Paulo, where I live in Brazil.

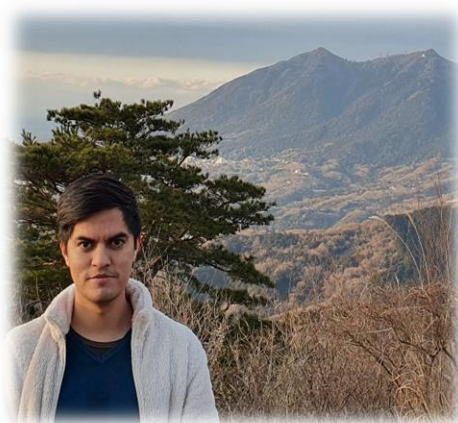
One little advice I want to give to future international students in Tsukuba is: know how to ride a bike, “she” will be your best friend throughout your stay in Japan. And of course, enjoy everything the University has to offer: clubs of dance, instruments, sports, seminars and cultural events. All of this will leave a special memory for the rest of your life.

CARLOS VIVEROS TORRES

Master's student in Asian and African Studies, Japan specialty at the Colegio de México, Mexico

Exchange period: October 2019- April 2020

I had already had the opportunity to visit the university before the stay and I had liked the abundance of nature, the large size of the campus and the state of the facilities. On the other hand, being in a small city, the atmosphere was very quiet, but it was connected by train and bus to Tokyo, which was very convenient. As a student of a master's program focused on Japan, I was struck by being near Mount Tsukuba, which was an important religious site and was mentioned in the literature. If you are interested in culture or history, the whole area around the mount is full of interesting places: temples, shrines, castle ruins, houses from the early 20th century, ancient megalithic tombs, etc. It is possible to travel all this by bicycle thanks to the existence of the bike path and the fact that there are few people on the streets.



*** With Mount Tsukuba in the Background**

As an exchange student, it was nice to find various circles and clubs that allowed you to socialize with other people. Especially recommended are Omochi, which functions as a space to practice Japanese and English, and Campur, which is dedicated to promoting the culture of international students through entertaining activities. In both, it is possible to meet other foreigners, but also Japanese students and make friends. It gave me the impression that the University of Tsukuba has a large international community and that you can meet people from all over. Also, in general, the people are friendly.



*** At the Omochi welcome party**

The only problems I had were the cold in the winter, since the air conditioning in my room seemed not to work, and the attitude of the staff

who did the bedding. From there on out, I found flexibility and support. The library is a very comfortable space to read and do homework, especially the upper floors. In addition, it has very interesting books in its collection. However, it seemed to me that compared to the Waseda library, for example, it does not have as many specialized humanities materials.

Finally, although the city is small, it has very good restaurants, both Japanese food, and many other regions of Asia. Similarly, it has a variety of supermarkets, bookstores, etc.

MARIA JOSE VARGAS ALVAREZ

Student of Natural Sciences at the University of Chile, Chile

Exchange period: October 2019- April 2020

For some years now, I have been interested in Japan and its culture, so when I decided to do a study exchange, this country was my first choice. In the case of my University, it has a student mobility agreement with 3 Japanese universities, so at the time of applying I had to decide between them. It was not an easy decision, all three were renowned universities, but I ended up leaning towards the University of Tsukuba for two reasons: the lines of research it has in the area of Sciences and the abundant nature that surrounds it.

Regarding the first, I must say that I was not disappointed, in truth the quality of science in Tsukuba and the infrastructure they have is incredible, not only within the University, but also in the city itself, where you can visit places like Jaxa and the Botanical Garden.

In addition, before making my decision, I looked for what natural attractions are around it, and the truth is there are not few.

Among them the most striking for me is Mount Tsukuba since I am fond of tracking, there you can play sports and see beautiful sunsets. In addition, the surroundings of the city are quiet and safe for running and cycling no matter what season of the year it is, although it is better not to do it when there is a typhoon.



In general, I had a very good experience in terms of treatment and studies, so I think that my great difficulties were the language and the shame it gives me to speak in another language, that is why the exchange was very important, to overcome my linguistic insecurities, something that improved a lot thanks to this experience. Inside the university, speaking English was enough, but outside of it the need to speak Japanese was greater and I think it is necessary to force oneself to practice, something that was difficult for me to start doing, so if you are planning to go to study in Japan I advise you to speak all the Japanese you can, don't miss the opportunity. I know you may feel uncomfortable, but you have to try, Japanese are very nice when you try to speak in their language.

Something that I must admit that was constantly becoming a bit of a problem was eating because I am a vegetarian. Japan is not ready for vegetarians yet, for vegans even less. So you must prepare yourself to have few options when going out to eat, luckily I love Soba and Udon, dishes that in their base presentation do not have meat and that you can accompany with tempura vegetables (ñami), I think 50 % of my meals outside of my room were these two dishes.



SERGIO GALINDO ALBERTO LEON

*Master's student in Biomedical Engineering at the Universidad de los Andes,
Colombia*

Exchange period: October 2019- September 2020

From the engineering area of which I am part, Japan has always been a constant and permanent reference, so when I was offered the possibility of making an exchange to this country, I did not hesitate for a single second and my answer was an immediate yes. I am currently part of the Master's program in Biomedical Engineering at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, so the topics of prosthetics and robotic rehabilitation have been topics of constant interest. Tsukuba is a clear reference in this area. It is where the Cyberdyne company, which designs and builds one of the best exoskeletons for rehabilitation (HAL suit) was founded, it is where the research laboratory of this company is located and precisely the University of Tsukuba is the Alma Mater of its founder. It was not a



surprise to find one of these exoskeletons at the main entrance to the city hall, but it was a great surprise that they offered me to research for a year in the Cybernetics laboratory where most of the research on engineering topics focused on health is given. and human beings. Furthermore, Tsukuba is recognized as the city of science! On the other hand, to be honest, I did not know the culture of Japan at all and I thought that it would be a country that I would die without knowing. As a Latin American, I considered it a country that I would hardly go to, so for me it represents the opportunity to get to know Japan in depth and, also, learn from one of the best laboratories in my area.

My first month in Japan was somewhat lonely, although I made a couple of friends in the laboratory where I worked, I usually did not go out with other people and was unaware of the number of events and activities that the university organizes for international students. I regret not joining more clubs and activities from the start so please join us from day one. After this I began to share more with other students and especially a group of Latin Americans who ended up being my best friends. I also decided to join the table tennis club and unofficial Japanese classes and this totally changed my life in Japan. I got to know what it is like to be part of a club, train, dine and celebrate together and also start to learn some Japanese and its culture. Some of the things that I enjoy the most and will remember will be going to a nearby town to a fireworks competition, spending Halloween in Shibuya traveling with my friends to Kyoto, celebrating my birthday in Tokyo, seeing the first sunrise of the new year on Mount Takao, participate in a tea ceremony and taste a lot of Japanese food in the company of many good people.

Academically, my progress after a year has been incredible. My project is about developing a passive foot prosthesis for people with below-knee amputation. When I arrived in Japan my ideas were really bad and in fact not achievable (what a shame). Little by little I was able to learn about mechanics, biomechanics, simulation, manufacturing and after 6 iterations, prototyping and experimentation I was able to develop a functional prototype that fills me with pride. My advisor has been very patient and guided me step by step to develop what I now hope will be the start of my doctoral project. The laboratory is a fantastic place where there is a large amount of human, material and financial resources to achieve any project and that is something that is difficult to achieve in the academy. In addition, it is full of people of different nationalities who are generally very friendly and open to collaborate in the investigation and also to celebrate.

As negative points, the COVID-19 pandemic clearly stalled, modified and limited the amount of experiences of an exchange such as attending summer festivals, traveling a little more and sharing with other people in the traditional way. On the other hand, I must say that I underestimated the cost of living in Japan and at some point I found myself in a tight spot regarding money so, it is necessary to be responsible with finances in Japan. Additionally, outside of my laboratory or the university there are few people who speak English so, for me, arriving without knowing any Japanese, this was a complication day after

day. It is recommended, although not absolutely necessary, to know some Japanese before coming (however, it is learned on a day-to-day basis after several months).

Finally, a couple of stories that will be memorable for me for the rest of my life. First is to spend the new year on Mount Takao: we decided to spend the new year on top of this mount and underestimated the cold. We had a difficult night where we were constantly shivering and the only source of heat was ourselves hugging each other, however, we managed to spend the night and were able to observe the first sun of the new year accompanied by a beautiful and unexpected view of Mount Fuji. It was literally the sun of a new dawn and the symbol that we would survive. Second, spend the night watching movies, chatting and sharing food from our countries to realize that hours later it had already dawned and it was a new day. In Japan there are no reasons to stay at home, so the houses are usually small. There is much to know and do, much to share. Japan is one of the safest, most diverse and picturesque countries in the world and that must be taken advantage of.

Thanks and farewell messages

Doing an exchange on the other side of the world may seem bleak and causes panic and fear for many people, but the moment you are here, you realize that it was the best decision you could have made. By being here you can learn a lot of new things every day. At Japan, a country so different from Latin America, you are very surprised by the abysmal changes or clashes of cultures that may occur, but with patience and an open mind, any obstacle can be overcome.

It is necessary to have good communication with the people around us in case we have a problem or crisis, and to know that we have someone who can help us and that we are not alone. Being in such a different country it might seem that we are alone, but in reality we have many people who are willing to help and support us at all times.

Another piece of advice I can give is that once you are here, enjoy every day, every detail and every moment, because time goes by so fast and you won't know when you last did something you enjoyed. Try not to stay so long at home, go out and know every corner of the city, there will always be a new place that awaits you, and do not be afraid to participate in events and/or clubs or circles for fear of the language barrier, there will always be someone to help them integrate.

I say goodbye with a hug and thanks to the University of Tsukuba for allowing me to carry out this exchange, in which I could grow as a person, exceed my limits, fulfill my goals and meet so many wonderful people.

この一年間筑波大学で留学させて、どうもありがとうございました。



日本に来て一番良い思い出になった写真
Photograph of the best memory that I will
have of Japan