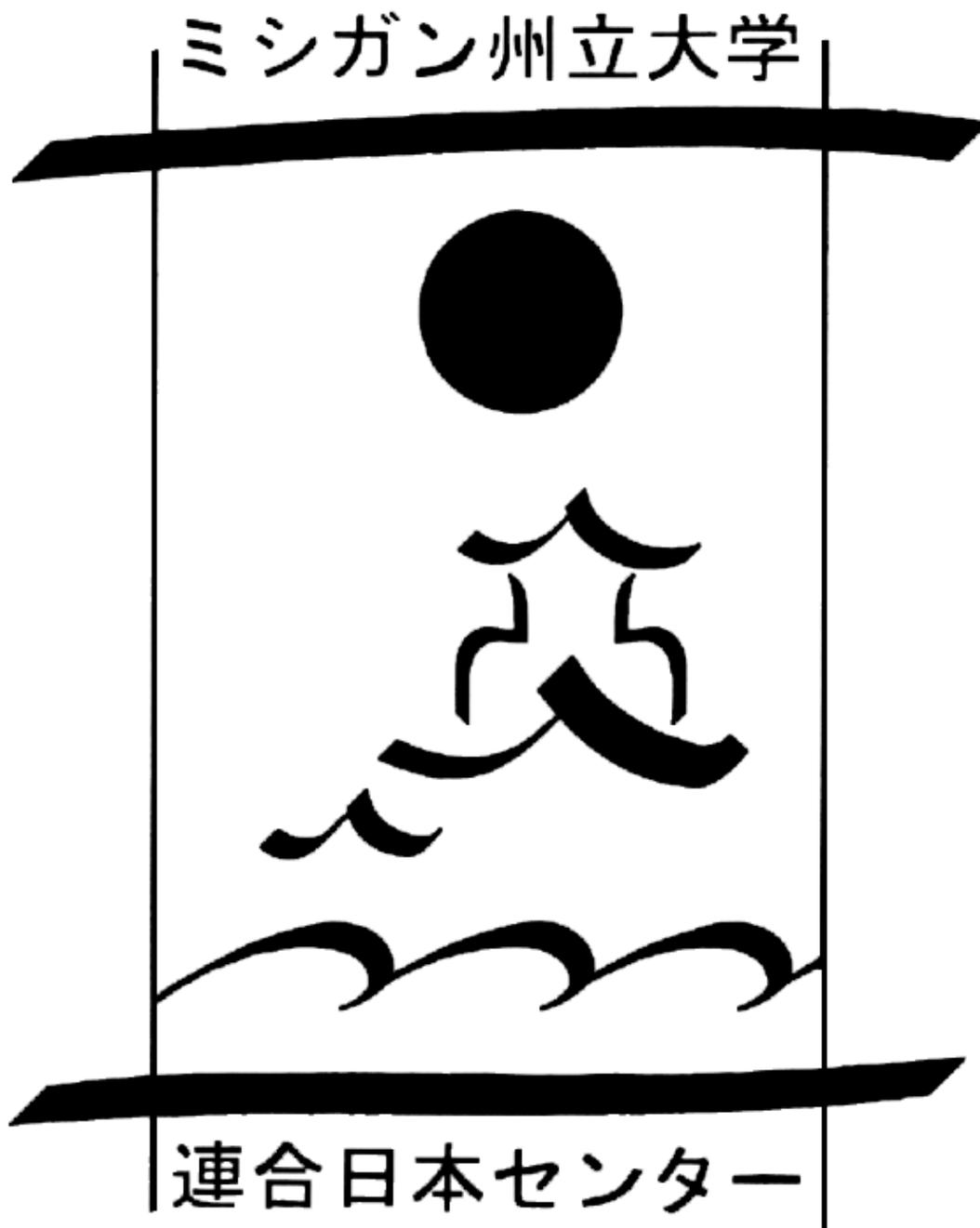


STUDENT HANDBOOK



JAPAN CENTER FOR MICHIGAN UNIVERSITIES

ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター

Important Information!

<u>Phone Numbers</u>	<u>Calling From Japan</u>	<u>Calling From the US</u>
Main Hikone Office Phone:	0749-26-3400	011-81-749-26-3400
Duty Phone (24/7 Emergency Assistance):	090-4306-3400	011-81-90-4306-3400
JCMU Office in Michigan:	001-1-517-355-4654	1-517-355-4654
US 24/7 Emergency Assistance Line:	001-1-517-353-3784	1-517-353-3784
Medical Emergencies (HTH Worldwide):	001-1-610-254-8771	1-610-254-8771

Dialing Directly to the Residence Hall Rooms:

011 - 81 - 749 - 26 - 7 + (room number)

Don't forget the time difference!

Due to daylight savings time, there is a 13-hour difference between March and October and a 14-hour difference between November and February. Japan is ahead of the US.

Address in Japan:

Japan Center for Michigan Universities
1435-86 Ajiroguchi
Matsubara-cho
Hikone, Shiga 522-0002 JAPAN

ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター
522-0002
滋賀県彦根市
松原町網代口 1435-86

Receiving Letters and Packages:

Each student will have his or her own mailbox in the academic building. All letters will be sorted and placed in mailboxes. When a package arrives the student will receive a notice in their mailbox. Packages can be picked up at the main desk in the academic building.



Japan Center for Michigan Universities

Student Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome from the Program Coordinator

Dear JCMU Students:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Japan Center for Michigan Universities.

Your time studying abroad in Hikone, Japan will be one of the most exciting and challenging experiences of your life. At JCMU, you have the opportunity to build an understanding of the Japanese people, language, culture, and society. JCMU will facilitate this learning through a combination of classroom study, field trips, cultural activities, home stays, internships, and various other activities.

By broadening your understanding of Japanese language, culture, and society, you will deepen your understanding of yourself as an individual, enabling you to grow both as a student and a person. We also want to help you find ways to connect the JCMU experience to your future plans and goals. It is essential to remember, however, that this is an extremely rigorous program. You will be challenged to new levels academically and personally. Though JCMU staff will be there to help you every step of the way, it is essential for you to give your personal best. Your time at JCMU is an investment: the more you put into the program, the more you will get out of it.

This Student Handbook is a general guide for you and your parents on what to do to prepare for the program and what to expect once in Japan. While it is intended to provide current information, it does not supersede any part of the Statement of Responsibility, the Student Health/Emergency Treatment Authorization, or any Michigan State University regulations. If you have any questions or concerns as you prepare for your trip, please don't hesitate to contact us at the East Lansing JCMU office.

Sincerely,



Kate Simon
Program Director

USA	Japan
JCMU Program Office	Japan Center for Michigan Universities
International Center	1435-86 Ajiroguchi, Matsubara-cho
427 N. Shaw Lane, Rm. 110	Hikone, Shiga 522-0002 JAPAN
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035 USA	Phone: (011) 81-749-26-3400
Phone: (517) 355-4654	Fax: (011) 81-749-24-9356
Fax: (517) 353-8727	
E-mail: JCMU@msu.edu	
Updates and additional information: www.jcmu.isp.msu.edu	

Please note: The contents of this handbook are subject to change without notice. Please contact the JCMU Program Office or consult the website for updated information.

A Brief History

On the 20th anniversary of their sister-state relationship in September 1988, the governments of Shiga Prefecture and the State of Michigan signed an agreement to create the “Japan Center for Michigan Universities” (JCMU). In collaboration with the Shiga and Michigan governments, the fifteen state-supported universities in Michigan formed a consortium for the express purpose of administering JCMU and governing its academic programs. Shiga Prefecture provides the grounds and the buildings of the Japan Center, as well as on-site staff to work closely with JCMU’s staff in designing and carrying out cultural exchange activities. In 1998, the newly created University of Shiga Prefecture also became a JCMU partner.

The creation of JCMU represents a unique commitment on the part of Shiga Prefecture and the State of Michigan to promote international education and to prepare the citizens of both countries to deal with the realities of our changing world. It also represents an unprecedented level of cooperation among the universities in Michigan and elsewhere in an effort to develop and implement programs of mutual interest.

Fundamental to all JCMU activities is a commitment to cultural exchange at the local (state and prefecture) level and to an academic program that upholds the highest academic standards and is accessible to students from all areas of Michigan, the USA, and the world.

Our current programs include:

- Japanese Language and Culture Program (Fall, Spring/Winter, or Academic Year)
- Intensive Summer Japanese Language Program
- Comparative Health Care in Japan Program (Summer)
- Environmental Science in Japan Program (Summer)
- Hospitality Business and Tourism in Japan Program (Summer)
- Internship Program (Summer)
- May Short Programs

Hikone, Japan

The Japan Center for Michigan Universities is located in Hikone, a city of approximately 100,000 people situated on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa. Hikone is a castle town, tracing its origins to the early seventeenth century, when a cluster of samurai residences and commercial establishments grew up at the foot of the castle of the local lord. The original castle buildings survive, as do many of the traditional industries. Off the beaten tourist track, Hikone preserves much of its charm and traditional values. At the same time, Hikone is a 45-90 minute train trip from the large cosmopolitan cities of Kyoto, Nagoya, and Osaka. Students will thus have ready access to a wide range of cultural resources.

Hikone and Shiga Prefecture are famous for natural beauty and historic landmarks. Located almost in the center of Honshu, the largest island of the Japanese archipelago, Shiga has long been important strategically and economically. It lays at the crossroads of the major east-west and north-south transportation routes. It is important both culturally and historically as a province immediately adjacent to the ancient capital city of Kyoto. Shiga is the site of innumerable temples and private villas built over the centuries by the court and military aristocracy. Today the prefecture government is positioning Shiga as an important national tourist and high technology region in order to achieve future economic growth, while preserving the natural beauty for which the region is famous.

The Center Facilities

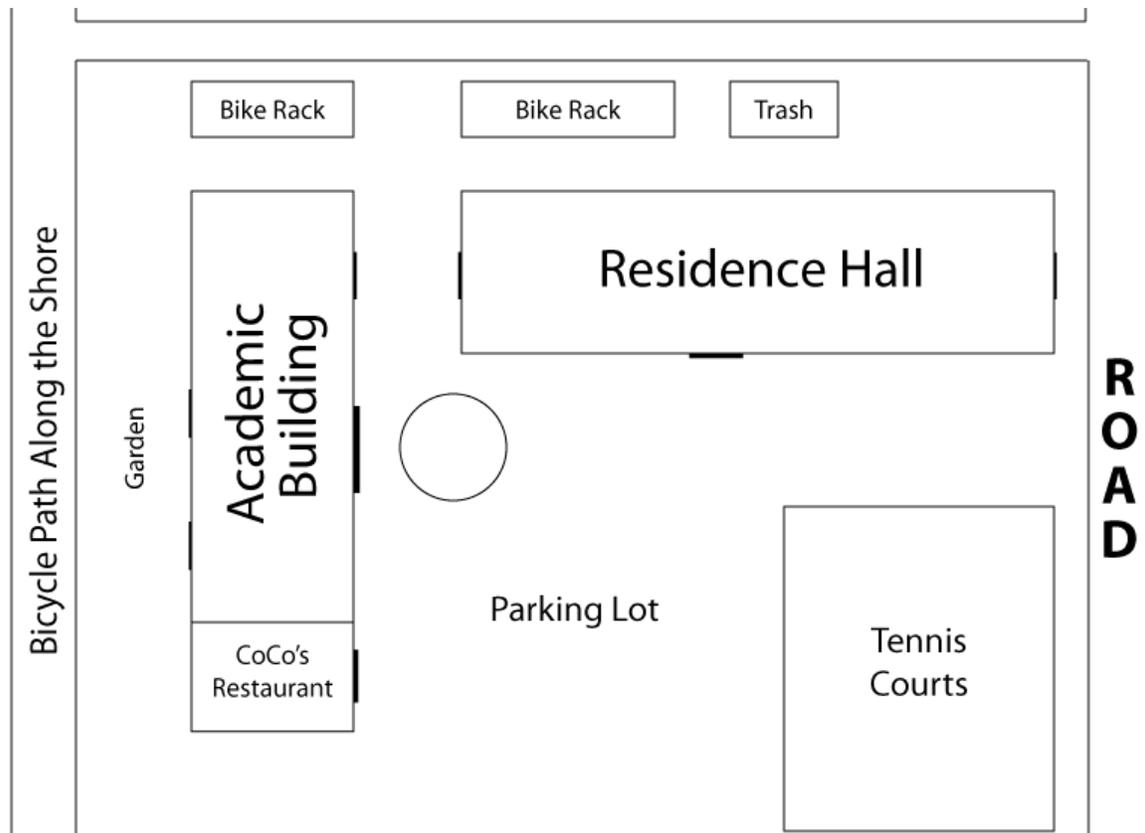
JCMU is situated on Lake Biwa, the largest freshwater lake in Japan, with sweeping views of the lake and distant mountains to the north, south, and west.

The Center's facilities include:

- An academic building including faculty and administrative offices, classrooms, language laboratories, library, study areas, and a public restaurant
- A residential building with furnished apartments (an inventory list is available in the *Living in Japan* section), as well as a computer room, lounge areas, exercise room, and laundry facilities (free washers and coin-operated dryers)
- A lakefront garden
- An outdoor tennis court
- A roofed bicycle garage - bicycles are available for each student
- Wheel chair ramps to both the academic and residential building

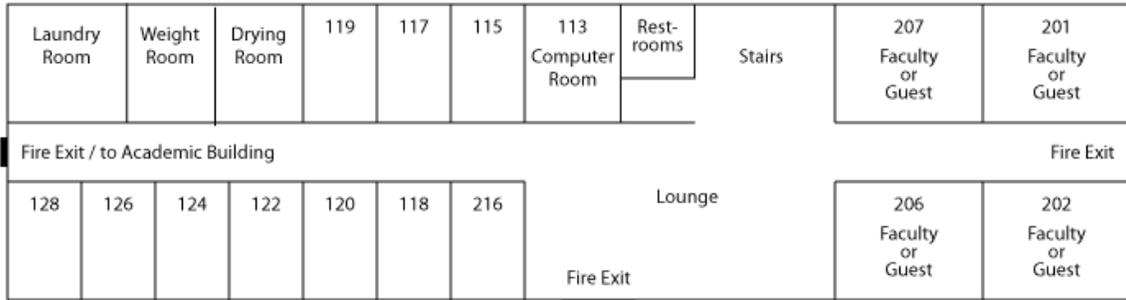
The student apartments are designed for double occupancy, with a private bedroom-study and a shared kitchen and bath. One student apartment is specially designed to be fully accessible to wheelchair users.

The campus:

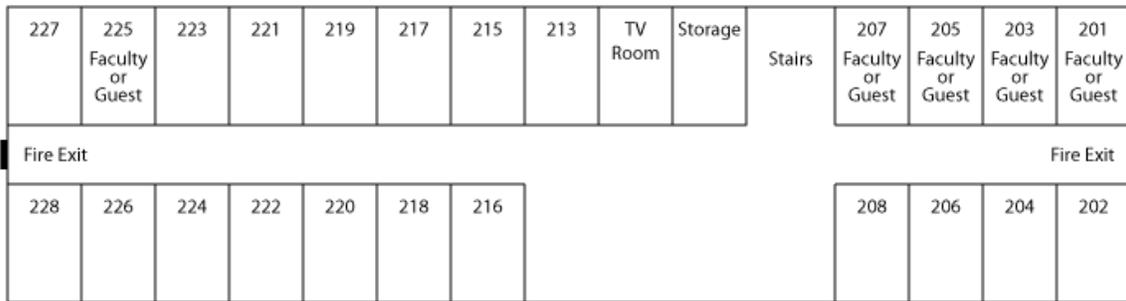


The Residential Building floorplan:

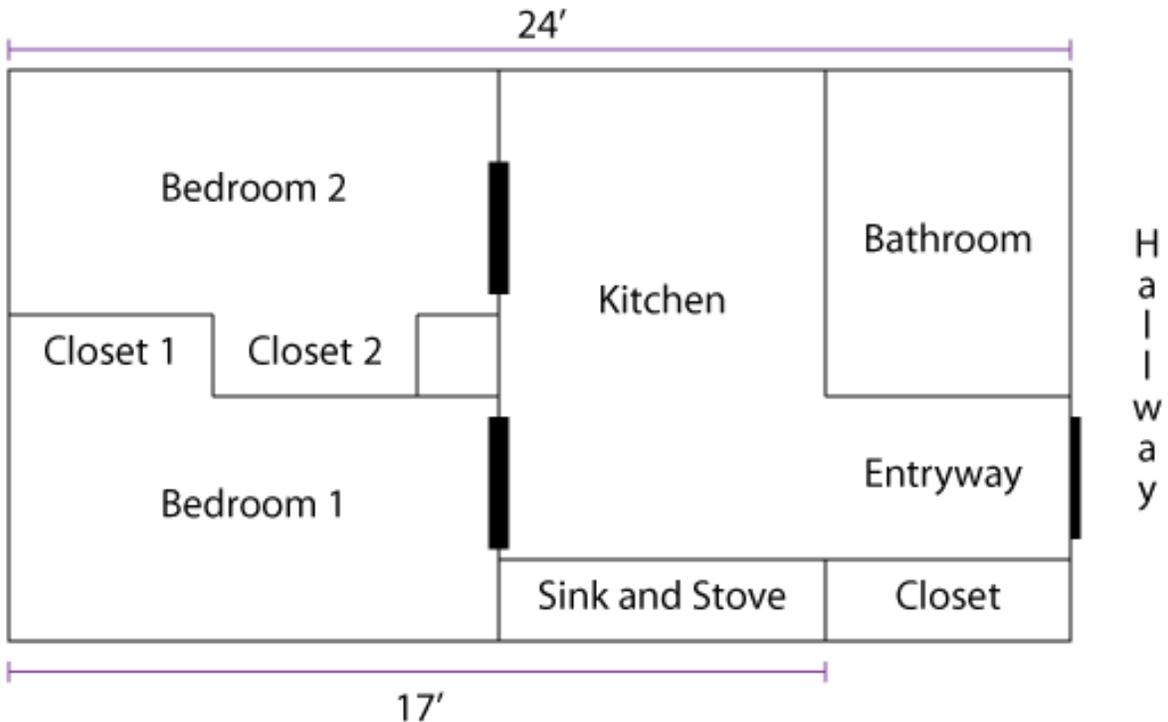
First Floor



Second Floor



The apartments:



Program Schedules

Spring Semester 2012

Jan 4	Wed	Arrival/Move-in
Jan 5	Thu	Orientation
Jan 6	Fri	Placement Test
Jan 9	Mon	National Holiday
Jan 10	Tue	Classes Begin
Feb 24	Fri	Spring Break
Mar 20	Tue	National Holiday
Apr 18	Wed	Final Exam
Apr 20	Fri	Closing Ceremony
Apr 21/22	Sat/Sun	Move-out/Departure

May Short Course Programs 2012

(Dates may vary by program.)

May 7	Mon	Arrival/Move-in
May 8	Tue	Orientation/Classes Begin
May 19	Sat	Move-out/Departure

Comparative Health Care and Hospitality Business & Tourism 2012

May 7	Mon	Arrival/Move-in
May 8	Tue	Orientation/Classes Begin
June 1 & 2	Fri & Sat	Move into Homestay
Jun 15	Fri	Internship Ends
Jun 16	Sat	Move-out/Departure

Summer Internship Program 2012

May 7	Mon	Arrival/Move-in
May 8	Tue	Orientation/Classes Begin
May 26	Sat	Move into Homestay (if applicable)
May 28	Mon	Internship Begins
July 27	Fri	Internship Ends
July 28 & 29	Sat & Sun	Move-out/Departure

**Summer Intensive Language and
Environmental Sciences in Japan 2012**

June 1	Fri	Arrival/Move-in
June 2	Sat	Orientation
June 4	Mon	Placement Test
June 5	Tue	Classes Begin
July 16	Mon	National Holiday
Aug 2	Thu	Final Exam
Aug 3	Fri	Free Day
Aug 4	Sat	Closing Ceremony
Aug 5	Sun	Move-out/Departure

Fall Semester 2012

Sept 3	Mon	Arrival/Move-in
Sept 4	Tue	Orientation
Sept 5	Wed	Placement Test
Sept 6	Thu	Classes Begin
Sept 11	Tue	PM: Opening Ceremony
Sept 17	Mon	National Holiday
Oct 8	Mon	National Holiday
Nov 9	Fri	Fall Break
Nov 23	Fri	National Holiday
Dec 12	Wed	No Japanese Classes
Dec 13	Thu	Final Exam
Dec 14	Fri	Closing Ceremony
Dec 15	Sat	Move-out/Departure

Spring Semester 2013

Jan 7	Mon	Arrival/Move-in
Jan 8	Tue	Orientation
Jan 9	Wed	Placement Test
Jan 10	Thu	Classes Begin
Jan 14	Mon	National Holiday
Feb 11	Mon	National Holiday
Mar 20	Wed	National Holiday
Apr 17	Wed	No Japanese Classes
Apr 18	Thu	Final Exam
Apr 19	Fri	No Japanese Classes
Apr 20	Sat	Closing Ceremony
Apr 21	Sun	Move-out/Departure

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

Health Concerns and Insurance

Student Health and Emergency Treatment Authorization Form:

JCMU requests students to disclose information regarding any health condition, medication, disability, allergy or dietary restriction in the *Student Health/ Emergency Treatment Authorization Form*. This form is provided to students after acceptance to the program. It is in violation of American Disabilities Act (ADA) to deny a student admission to an academic program for which they are otherwise qualified on the basis of disability. ADA also protects individuals with many pre-existing health conditions from similar discrimination. JCMU separates the application process from the disclosure of this information to protect students' rights. Nonetheless, in order for JCMU to help you manage any health conditions, medications, disabilities, allergies or dietary restrictions and to plan for any medical emergencies while you are abroad, it is essential for you to disclose as soon as possible **any** condition that might directly or indirectly affect your stay in Japan. Properly managing pre-existing conditions will hopefully allow you to have a trouble-free experience abroad.

Physical Examination:

A physical examination, and completion of the "Medical Certificate," is necessary to apply for a *College Student* type visa. (*College Student* visas are necessary for Academic Year students. Please see Passports & Visa section for more information.) Even if another visa is used, it is a good idea to have a thorough physical medical exam by your physician before you leave for Japan. This is to make sure that there are no health problems of which you might be unaware, and helps to prepare you to deal with ongoing health conditions (e.g., allergies, diabetes, etc.) while you are in Japan. For similar reasons, it is strongly recommended that you see a dentist and an optometrist before going to Japan.

Medications:

If you take any medications even occasionally, or if you regularly use a special over-the-counter medication, bring a supply with you. Although the Japanese have a highly sophisticated pharmaceutical industry, you might not be able to find the precise equivalents of prescription drugs there. In general, Japanese medications differ from American products in that they are subject to different regulations from those in effect in the US, and that they are marketed with the diet and physiology of a Japanese populace in mind. Whatever medications you take to Japan, you should **always** take them in the original containers.

Common over-the-counter medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen-based pain relievers and cold medicines are available in the Hikone area but often at a higher cost than you would pay in an American discount drugstore. (Note: Even if you are not prone to colds in Michigan, you may find yourself succumbing to colds in Hikone due to the close living and learning environment of the Japan Center. We recommend bringing a supply of *vitamins* and *cold medicine*.)

Please visit the JCMU website for guidelines on bringing both prescription and over the counter drugs with you to Japan: http://www.isp.msu.edu/jcmu/Medication_Importation_Japan.htm.

Accident and Sickness Insurance:

All students participating in JCMU study abroad programs are covered by an accident and sickness program administered by HTH Worldwide Insurance Services, Inc (HTH). All students are automatically enrolled by the JCMU Office. Please note that this program only covers students while they are abroad and will not cover students if they are in the United States. We recommend students maintain their US insurance policy so they will be covered when they return to the US. Students and parents should carefully review the policy to ensure they fully understand the coverage and its limitations:

Refer to http://studyabroad.msu.edu/forms/0809_HTH_policy.pdf to review the full policy. Refer to http://www.isp.msu.edu/jcmu/students/new_students/health_insurance.htm for a one-page summary of coverage and a detailed insurance description, including information about obtaining coverage outside of the program dates, which is highly recommended should you choose to arrive early or stay on to travel in Japan or other parts of Asia.

Your insurance ID card will be sent to the email address you provided on the application and should always be carried with you while you are abroad. Should you need reimbursement for medical expenses, submit the claim form and receipts within 90 days.

Flight and travel insurance are **not** included as part of the program fee. Flight insurance may be purchased at most international airports. Flight insurance covers you only when you are on the airplane and will not remove the need for more inclusive coverage. Should you wish to secure travel insurance for your luggage and other personal effects or cancellation coverage, an insurance agent or travel agent can provide you with this information.

Money and Budgeting

The Basics of Currency in Japan:

Japan is still a cash based society. The exchange rates fluctuate every day, but a good rule to remember is 100 yen is approximately 1 USD.

It is a good idea to carry a minimum of \$100 in US currency for incidental expenses incurred *en route* to and from Japan. (Once you arrive in Hikone, tuck it away until you are ready to come home.) As a general principle, do not convert more dollars to yen than you can reasonably expect to use during your stay in Japan. Money is always lost in the conversion process, as banks set different rates for buying and selling currency, as well as charge a service fee. Airports in particular tend to have bad exchange rates. You will generally get a more favorable rate in exchanging dollars to yen in Japan than in the US.

During your first few weeks in Japan, you will quickly learn how to budget for daily living and other activities based on your personal lifestyle habits. You will see from the Cost of Living link on the previous page that items are, for the most part, more expensive in Japan than in the US.

To get a general idea of what things cost in Japan, please visit <http://www.tokyoprices.com/>

Managing Money from Abroad:

For a variety of reasons, it can be beneficial to arrange to give POWER OF ATTORNEY to a parent or close relative for the period that you are overseas. Power of attorney enables your designee to handle business and legal matters on your behalf, such as paying bills, depositing financial aid and personal checks, etc. In the past, students have had a hard time with things such as class scheduling and financial aid departments because they did not have the relevant information. As you know, some information will not be given out freely over the telephone or to anyone but you unless you grant power of attorney.

IMPORTANT: Take care of all of the details with your academic counselor, financial aid office, and your bank **before** you leave. Make sure that your bank, financial aid office, and designee have a copy of the Power of Attorney document. Some banks and other institutions require another form along with the standard power of attorney form. Check to be sure.

International ATMs:

Using an International ATM to withdraw money from your U.S. bank account may be the easiest way to access your funds in Japan. Most ATM cards with a 4-digit PIN will work, though it is advisable to double-check with your bank just to make sure. There are ATMs available in many convenience stores in Japan, including 7/11. There is a 7/11 with an international ATM about 15 minutes from JCMU by bike which is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

While most U.S. ATM cards work at 7/11, some cards do not work, in which case using the post office ATMs is recommended. International ATMs are found in most post offices in Japan, though they have strict hours. There are three post offices in close vicinity to the Center and in general, post offices tend to be near major train stations as well. Remember, there will be a service fee on top of whatever your bank charges.

Credit Cards:

Credit cards are very useful when an emergency arises when traveling, but credit card use in Japan is not as common as in the United States. Unfortunately, most stores and restaurants, which are in the majority in Hikone, normally will not accept credit cards.

A VISA account can be very handy in Japan, both for making purchases and for cash advances. The bill will be automatically converted to dollars (often at a rate equal or better than what you would get exchanging cash at a bank), and charged to the account in the US. If your parents plan to give you an allowance while you are in Japan, this may be the most economical way to access those funds. However, don't depend on using your VISA because it is not accepted everywhere.

Traveler's Checks:

Traveler's checks are one of the safest forms of money to carry when traveling, but are quickly becoming obsolete. In Japan, American Express or Visa checks are probably your best bet. They are difficult to cash in Japan; inside the airport is the generally the best option. You may be able to purchase traveler's checks through AAA or your local bank or credit union; however, most banks don't issue travelers checks anymore.

Opening a Bank Account in Japan:

It is possible to establish a bank account with a Japanese bank after your arrival. If you wish to open an account, please contact the JCMU Program Office.

Transferring Money from the US to Japan:

The easiest way to receive money in Japan, besides depositing money into an account from the US that can be accessed by ATM, is a *US International Postal Money Order* issued by the U.S. Postal Office. They can be purchased for under \$5 for up to a \$700 Money Order. It can be sent by regular or express mail and cashed in at the main post office in Hikone. Avoid using personal checks or any other kind of money order. Never send cash!

Program Fee Payment and Financial Aid:

Payment is due before the beginning of the program. Make certain that everything is in order and clarify the procedures for the release of financial aid checks for the period when you are out of the country. These offices may require a letter in advance from you authorizing the release of checks to a parent, etc. and may require that you provide them in advance with a copy of the "power of attorney" letter. Check with your office of financial aid to make sure the awards will be available when you expect them to be.

Cultural Adjustments

While you are on the grounds of the JCMU campus -- in the classroom and apartment spaces -- you will be sharing these spaces with fellow students, staff and faculty. JCMU will be your *uchi* (home) environment, where you can be at your most informal. Even here, however, the constraints of community living and constant interaction with the local population call for a certain discretion and decorum in personal attire. Torn or dirty clothing, revealing outfits (short shorts, halter tops, spaghetti straps) or sloppy appearance are **not acceptable**.

As you select the clothes to bring, keep in mind that slacks and skirts should be loose enough to be comfortable sitting on the floor, with your heels tucked underneath you. In the hot and humid months you will need to bring cool, comfortable clothes. Cotton T-shirts are perfect! Women should be *conservative* with bathing suits. Also, keep in mind that most public toilets in Japan are simply porcelain trenches in the floor, over which you must squat.

Your appearance is in many ways a sign of your respect for the Japanese community in which you live. When you leave the Center even for informal activities you should remember that Japanese people will be observing you. The sister-state relationship makes JCMU students *honored* within Hikone, and Shiga, as sort of “student ambassadors.” You should always be dressed neatly, cleanly and modestly, and perhaps less informally than when you are in the Center. Men should be clean-shaven and well groomed, with clean, neat clothing. Women should be equally well groomed, as well as modestly and neatly dressed at all times. Remember that you are presenting an image--not only of yourself and your family, but also of the Center, your university, and the US in general.

Formal Clothing:

There will be “formal” occasions when the JCMU students are the official guests of the Shiga government or other local organizations; be prepared to dress appropriately for such events in warm and cold weather. However, you need not bring a closet full of “formal” clothes: former students advise that one outfit (per season) will be adequate. Dry-cleaning costs in Hikone are relatively inexpensive.

Footwear:

Shoes are very important. Almost everyone finds that they do more walking in Japan, and that shoes wear out much faster. It is difficult to find shoes that fit American feet properly (Men will have difficulty finding shoes bigger than a size ten).

The shoes you find in Japan tend to be either somewhat shoddy synthetic types, or extravagantly expensive imported leather. Neither kind will provide the kind of arch support you are accustomed to in a sneaker, which you will need for all the walking you will be doing. Moreover, shoes take an extra beating because you will be constantly taking them on and off. Slip-on type shoes (both sneakers and leather loafers) make it easier to get in and out of one’s shoes. Shoes are not worn inside homes, nor in temples, shrines, or in many public buildings.

JCMU maintains a no-shoes-indoors policy. Inside JCMU, you will need two different kinds of footwear. For public spaces (the lobbies, library, hallways and stairs) you will need something that will not leave any black mark on the floors. Moccasins or flip-flops are ideal for this purpose. Remember, if you need a large size slipper it will be difficult to find in Japan. Bring a pair.

You should have different slippers for your own room, partially for the practical reason of protecting its wooden flooring, and partially because of the Japanese tradition of psychologically distinguishing between the cleanliness of public and private spaces. For the privacy of your room, the ideal solution is Japanese slippers.

For outdoor use, you might want to have two pairs of slip-on type shoes, perhaps one being sandals or flip-flops, which dry much faster than sneakers, and one pair of indestructible walking/hiking shoes. A low-heeled pump will suffice for “formal” occasions.

Gift-giving:

Gift-giving is an important aspect of both personal and business relationships in Japan; learning what sort of gift is appropriate for what sort of occasion can be a daunting task. As participants in the JCMU program, you are, to some extent, exempt from this complicated business by your social and economic status as students. You are not expected to respond in kind to all the favors that will be done for you.

There are other, meaningful ways to express gratitude, such as pitching in with household chores when staying in Japanese homes, and writing thank-you letters. American style “Thank You” cards are not commonly found in Japan, so consider taking a box with you.

Japanese with whom you interact on a frequent basis--a host family, or friends--will probably appreciate your sharing with them something that tells them about your life. Make an effort to prepare a packet of color photos of your family, home, and college; these will be wonderful conversation starters. When selecting presents to

distribute, aim for something lightweight, unbreakable, locally manufactured (made in USA), and, as much as possible, unique to your hometown, college, state or country. These gifts should NOT be expensive. It is really the thought that counts. A simple present can be dressed up with nice wrapping paper.

Some gift suggestions from previous students are:

- Your home university memorabilia (hats, t-shirts, etc.)
- Key chains
- Pens, pencils, stationery
- Scarves (brand names are popular with everyone)
- Children's games in English
- Birthday cards
- Books, maps, puzzles or postcards of your state or famous sites in the US

Electrical Power:

In western Japan, including Shiga Prefecture, electrical power is set at 100V 60Hz (100 volts, operating at 60 cycles per second); the norm in the US is 115-120 V 60Hz. Many electrical appliances manufactured for use in the US can be used in Hikone without the use of a transformer, but they will operate at only about 85% power. Also, plugs in Japan are not 3 pronged, so you will need to bring with you a 3-prong to 2-prong converter. These can be found at most stores in the US in the household hardware aisle.

Computers, whether laptop or desktop variety, can be operated with no difficulty.

Comparing Climates

One Extreme – Hot and Humid:

By around March and early April, Japan begins to warm up quickly. Students arriving in Hikone during the summer and fall will find the climate hot and quite humid. Summer students should be prepared for **very** high temperatures and higher humidities. Late August through November is “typhoon season.”

The Other Extreme – Damp and Frigid:

The air dries out in October/November and Japan rivals the US for autumn color. Cold rains and occasional snow keep winter extremely moist. It is cold in the residence halls from mid-November to mid-March. Among the proposed solutions for coping with damp, penetrating cold, we recommend considering the following:

- Flannel pajamas
- 1 or 2 sweatshirts
- Long underwear
- For warm pants, try fleece pants, or heavy jeans
- For women: warm tights
- Several pair of warm, thick socks, i.e. rag-wool-type
- Warm waterproof jacket/coat
- Warm gloves, preferably waterproof, for bicycling
- A hat and/or scarf for windy days
- Turtleneck shirts to layer under other clothes
- Warm crew neck sweaters
- Warm waterproof boots
- Sturdy water-resistant walking/hiking shoes that fit over thick socks
- Flannel sheets for twin size beds

Although the temperature extremes in Hikone are much more moderate than those of the Midwest, you will be more *vulnerable* to the weather. The high cost of energy makes it prohibitive to maintain a year-round constant indoor temperature. **Note: there is no central heating or cooling in the Center residence hall, nor is there any insulation.** This is common in most buildings in Japan. In JCMU classrooms and apartments, expect air- conditioned

temperatures to be no cooler than about 75 degrees Fahrenheit, and heated interiors to be no warmer than 65 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit. In practical terms, this means that you *will need clothing for a range of climatic conditions*; do not expect to make it through the winter with T-shirts and jeans. During the late spring, summer and early fall months, make sure you bring light clothing that breathes well. The principal means of transportation in Hikone is the bicycle. It might be a good idea to bring a water bottle with you in the warmer months and when the weather gets cooler a rain parka and warm gloves for riding your bicycle in the rain is a must.

Another factor to keep in mind as you plan your wardrobe is the laundry facility at the Center. The Laundry Room is equipped with manually operated washing machines, which use cold water only, and are free of charge. There are also clothes dryers, but they have limited capacity and produce limited heat. The advantage of low heat is that clothes are not as prone to shrinking; the disadvantage is that it can take multiple drying cycles to dry thicker items like jeans. Most students hang their laundry to dry in the “drying room.” In humid weather, it can take days for heavy jeans or sheets to thoroughly dry. One solution is to choose clothing made of synthetic fabrics, or blends, rather than all natural fibers such as cotton or wool, and to choose lightweight clothing, which can be layered, rather than heavy garments and thick fabrics. **Note:** Due to the fact that autumn in Japan can be warm, humid, and rainy, mildew can be a problem especially with clothes. It is recommended to purchase some desiccants for your closet and drawers. These can be purchased at many stores and will help remove the moisture in your clothes.

Rain gear:

Rain gear is an essential for any time of the year; ideally, it should allow adequate protection when riding a bicycle. Rain gear can be found in Japan at reasonable prices. Umbrellas are essential, too, and you can find them at any price in Japan. It is suggested that you bring a folding umbrella and rain gear.

Weather Resources:

For quick, easy access to weather information about Hikone and Shiga prefecture please refer to these English websites which provide temperatures in both Fahrenheit and Celsius:

<http://www.wunderground.com/global/stations/47761.html>

<http://weather.weatherbug.com/Japan/Shiga-weather.html>

Packing for the Trip

Essential Items:

- Good walking or hiking shoes
- Backpack or cross-body bag for short trips and commuting by bike
- Rain gear
- Camera
- Guidebooks and maps in English
- A good cookbook
- “Thank You,” holiday, and birthday cards
- Indoor slippers
- Favorite toiletries

Personal Items:

The following are personal items that students have found to be expensive (or unavailable):

- All contact lens supplies: saline, enzyme, chemicals, etc. (Take what you need for the first two months, send the rest).
- Glasses or contact lenses: bring an extra pair. (Be sure to bring a copy of your prescription with you.)
- Deodorant: many former students complain that Japanese deodorants do not work, so make sure to bring your own from the US. Previous students have even had to have family members send them deodorant from home, which is costly and time-consuming.
- Favorite perfume/cologne and skin cleansing products

Remember, if you wish to bring liquids, gels, or aerosols in your carry on, there may be restrictions on how much you can carry. For more information on what you can bring, please check the airline you intend to fly with and <http://www.tsa.gov>.

Clothing:

Life in Hikone requires somewhat different clothing than life on your home campus, for climatic and cultural reasons. With the exceptions noted below, it is best to take or send to Japan the clothing you will need for the academic year. Remember everything you take over, you will have to take back. Do not over-pack; one or two weeks' clothing for each season is fine. It is a good idea to pack light clothing that can be layered. Students coming for the fall or academic year will find long-underwear and a couple of sweaters to be useful.

Although a wide range of clothing is available in Japan, it may be difficult to find something in your size, or in the styles you prefer. Women who are 5'6" or under and men who are 5'10" or under and of very slim or medium build should be able to find clothes that fit in Japan. If you are taller, or stocky, it will be *much* more difficult to buy new clothing in Japan. Keep in mind that the prices of clothing are often more expensive in Japan.

Towels:

Thinner towels are recommended because they will dry easily. You can buy much thinner towels in Japan, which will dry quickly, at reasonable prices. **If you plan to buy towels in Japan, however, please bring at least one bath towel with you to use immediately, before you are able to go shopping.**

Non-perishable Food:

Generally, you will be able to find most everything you will need. If there is some food item that you simply cannot live without, you might want to leave a little space in your luggage. You may also consider sending some supplies to yourself before you leave the USA or leave a list with family and friends for "care packages" to send later on. In general, the cost of food is greater in Japan than in the United States.

TRAVELING AND BAGGAGE

Passports and Visas

Check your passport expiration date to make sure your passport will be valid for the duration of your stay.

A US passport is an extremely valuable object; tampering with a passport or allowing its use by another person is a federal offense. When traveling to Japan, always keep your passport in a very safe place along with your wallet and airline ticket. Do not pack your passport. Passport holders can be bought and come in handy for holding embarkation cards and airline tickets as well.

Visas:

Depending on which program(s) you will be participating in, you will need one of the following visas for entry into Japan:

- **Semester** students will be issued a six month **Cultural Activity Visa**.
- **Academic year** students will be issued a one year **College Student Visa**.
- **Summer/May Short** students will be issued a 90 day **tourist visa** (automatically granted to American citizens upon arrival)

Obtaining a Visa:

Once you have been accepted into the JCMU program, you will be asked to fill out a number of forms to submit passport photos. It is important that you complete these forms and return them with your photos promptly. JCMU will submit these materials to the Immigrations Office in Japan. The Immigrations office will then issue a Certificate of Eligibility (CoE). When JCMU receives your CoE, we will contact you and request that you send us your passport and a signed *Release of Liability* form. JCMU will send your passport, CoE, *Release of Liability* and visa application to the Detroit Consulate General of Japan. The Consulate will return your passport with visa to your home address.

Rules regarding use, transference, and renewals of visas are very restrictive. Students considering multiple programs should contact the JCMU-East Lansing office as soon as possible to arrange for the appropriate visa.

Baggage and Shipping

Keep your baggage to a reasonable minimum. Remember that they sell most things you need in Japan; and that every extra item you take becomes a crutch that prevents you from learning to deal with Japan in an innovative way. Students from past years on the program advise that because living space in Japan is limited, too many possessions can inhibit you.

Airline Regulations:

The regulations vary for each airline. ***Please review the rules that accompany your airline ticket, or contact the airline directly for current information.*** Generally, two pieces of check-in luggage and one “carry-on” are allowed per customer, within certain weight and dimensional restrictions. On most international flights the maximum weight of each checked piece of luggage is 50 lbs (23 kgs). Maximum size is 62 inches/158 cm, using linear measurement (length plus height plus width). *Be sure to check with your airline for their specific regulations.*

For your own protection, all baggage should be identified ***on the inside and the outside*** with your name, home address, telephone number, and destination abroad. You may wish to protect your baggage with personal property or baggage insurance.

Carry-on Luggage:

Each passenger is generally allowed one piece of carry-on luggage plus a briefcase/laptop computer/purse. In addition, each passenger may carry a coat, umbrella, cane or other “special” item. Please check with your airline for their specific regulations on weight, size, and number of allowed carry-on pieces. All items not needed in flight should be checked. Medicine, keys, important papers and travel documents (passport) should be carried on board by the passenger.

The Japan Center staff requests that all students bring an overnight pack consisting of the following items in case your luggage is lost in transit or bags shipped from the airport take longer than expected:

- Towel
- Toiletries
- Indoor Shoes
- Rain Gear
- At least \$300 for the first week and for the cost of travelling to the Center

Registering Foreign-Made Items before Departing the US:

US Customs regulations require, prior to departure, you to register any foreign-made goods you are taking to Japan and are planning to bring back with you that you purchased in the States. Otherwise, it is assumed that they were purchased overseas and duties may be imposed. In our experience, this is rarely a problem; customs agents are familiar with current models of cameras, for example. However, if you have something other than standard electronic equipment --such as a Japanese bicycle, or pearls-- it may be best to register these.

Before you leave the US, it would be worthwhile to learn about current US Customs regulations so that you know what you can and cannot bring back and if there will be any duties imposed on what you bring or send back.

Shipping Luggage:

Many international travelers have too much luggage to haul up and down train station stairways. If you are in this situation, one option is to ship your bags from the airport to JCMU. This is a common and reasonably inexpensive option in Japan. This service is available in the lobbies of Kansai, Nagoya, and Narita airports and costs about \$20 per bag. You can fill out the application form in English, and you can usually use your credit card to pay. Bags usually arrive the following day, but delays are not unknown. You should bring essential items with you on the train. Please use the JCMU address.

If you are meeting with the staff escort, you may have to ship one or more pieces of your luggage, however, you will do this together as a group.

Expectations While In Transit

Items to Keep With You at All Times:

- Passport
- Airline Ticket
- Money: cash and debit/credit cards
- Phone numbers/addresses for the East Lansing JCMU office, the Center in Hikone, family and friends

On the Airplane:

The long flight across the Pacific is strenuous. The air is dry, and many people suffer from mild forms of dehydration, including irritated sinuses and throat. Drink lots of water or juice, but avoid stimulants (coffee or tea) and alcohol because these have a dehydrating effect. Keep throat lozenges handy. Chewing gum, mints or other small snack items also come in handy.

On the flight you will be asked to fill out a form which you will be handing in at Immigration Control upon landing. This form is the entry card and it can be confusing. It consists of two parts, a “Disembarkation Card for Foreigners”

and an “Embarkation Card for Foreigners.” For the moment, fill out the “Disembarkation Card” only and leave the “Embarkation Card” blank. DO NOT SEPARATE THE TWO CARDS; the immigration officer will staple your “Embarkation Card” into your passport, for use when you leave Japan. If you have any questions, flight attendants are normally very happy to help.

Filling out the Disembarkation Card:

Fill in only the blocks inside the bold, black line. Write your “Family Name” and “Given Name” in the spaces provided; for “Nationality,” write “USA” or your home country; for “Date of Birth,” be sure to provide figures in the order specified (day, month, year). Give your home address, including street & number as well as city, state, zip and country. For “Occupation,” write “Student.” For your address in Japan, write “Japan Center for Michigan Universities, Hikone, Shiga.” After filling in your passport number, write in the name of the airline and flight number of the trans-Pacific flight. Your Port of Embarkation is the city where you boarded the trans-Pacific flight (for most students, Detroit). For “Purpose of Visit,” write “Study of Japanese language and culture” or other accurate description of your JCMU program.

Immigration Processing:

When you arrive at the airport in Japan, you will go through immigration. Here you should hand over the entry card that you received on the plane. Serious demeanor is called for whenever dealing with government representatives, especially in Japan. You will find that they take your entry into their country extremely seriously.

A new measure recently introduced by the Japanese government as terrorism prevention is the fingerprinting and photographing of all foreign persons entering Japan. All persons over the age of 16 are required to be fingerprinted and photographed. Refusal to do so will result in denial of entry into the country.

Japan-Rail Pass

The Japan Rail pass allows you to use any Japan Railways (JR) services for a specific number of days, depending on the amount of money you pay. Only foreigners visiting Japan on a 90-day tourist visa can purchase a Japan-Rail Pass. The pass cannot be used for the new super express Nozomi Shinkansen service, but is good for everything else (including other Shinkansen trains), and the only additional surcharge levied on the Japan Rail Pass is for overnight sleepers. This pass is acquired by purchasing a voucher from travel agencies before leaving the United States, and then the rail pass is redeemed in Japan. The clock starts to tick on the pass as soon as you validate it, which can be done at certain major railway stations or at the JR counter at Narita or Kansai Airports if you are intending to jump on a JR train immediately. The pass is valid only on JR services; you will still have to pay for private railway services. See www.japanrail.com for more information.

ARRIVAL IN JAPAN

Meeting the Staff Escort

All students arriving at the designated airport, on the designated day, and before the designated time can meet a JCMU staff member at the airport outside baggage claim. Attendance will be taken. This is exactly why it is critical for you to give us your flight itinerary ahead of time. A judgement call will be made by the staff member to ship baggage or not, which the group would do together if deemed necessary.

Students will travel with the staff member to the Center either by charter bus or train. Please note travel from the airport to the Center will be at the student's own expense.

If you are not planning on meeting the staff escort, you are expected to travel to the Center on your own. If this is the case for you, read the information under "Traveling to the Center from Major Airports," and then contact the JCMU program office with any questions.

Traveling to the Center from Major Airports

Nagoya / Centrair International Airport (NGO)

The Central Japan International Airport (NGO) at Nagoya, also commonly known as Centrair, is currently our preferred arrival terminal for JCMU. After you collect your luggage, you will enter into the lobby of the Passenger Terminal Building. Here you are able to ship your luggage to Hikone (at the far end to your right) and exchange your American dollars into yen.

The trip to JCMU can take anywhere between 1 and 2.5 hours, depending on the train you take. Take the stairs and moving sidewalk to the Access Plaza and buy your ticket from the JR desk to Maibara. The Haruka train will take you directly to Maibara in about an hour but doesn't run as often as other trains, which take a bit longer and require a transfer at Nagoya Station. Once you arrive in Maibara, you can get a taxi directly to JCMU (tell the driver you want to go to "Mishigan Sentaa").

There is more than one railway running out of Centrair and the one you take will effect which way you get to JCMU. The simplest method besides the Haruka is to take the Centrair- Meitetsu Line from Centrair to Nagoya Station. In Nagoya you will have to switch trains to the JR Tokaido Shinkansen to Maibara, or you can take an Express train. Ask for more detailed information at the Information Counter at Centrair and in Nagoya.

Once at JR Nagoya Station you will see a large entrance for the Tokaido, Chuo, and Kansai train lines. Enter here, and look at the bilingual signboard for the Tokaido Line. You want a train that goes to Maibara. They usually leave from platform 5 or 6. Take the Tokaido train line from Nagoya Station to Maibara Station. The train has bilingual announcements and electronic signboards to tell you what the next stop will be. Get out at Maibara.

Leave Maibara Station via the West Exit. Take a taxi to JCMU. Tell the driver you want to go to the "mishigan sentaa." We are located next door to the Hikone View Hotel (taxi fare = ¥1,600 to ¥2,000).

Osaka / Kansai International Airport (KIX)

Once you've exited customs and exchanged money, make your way to the second floor (2nd F), exit the terminal, and proceed across the walkway to the Kansai Airport Station across the bridge. From this train station, you have a few options to get you to Hikone. The easiest of these is JR West's *Haruka Limited Express* train which makes two daily runs all the way to Maibara with a stop in Hikone. The advantage of this train is that it is much faster than other options and it is a direct route to Hikone. You will not have to change trains anywhere if you are able to take the *Haruka Limited Express* that goes directly to Maibara. The cost is, however, slightly higher than other options.

The other (and slightly cheaper) option is to take a train to Kyoto Station and change trains there to Hikone. You can take a *Haruka Limited Express* train from KIX to Kyoto (which takes about 75 minutes), then, from Kyoto Station, you will transfer to a train on the Biwako Line (track #2) that will be listed as going to **Maibara** or **Nagahama**. Both of these stops are past Hikone, so you can board any train with these destinations. The trip to Hikone takes about 50 or 90 minutes, depending on whether you board an express train or a local train. Train departure times are posted on the platform.

Another variation of this is to take a *Haruka Limited Express* train to Shin-Osaka, and again, from there transfer to the Biwako line headed toward Maibara. Both Hikone and Maibara Stations are near JCMU, so you can take a taxi from either of them to get to the Center. (Tell the driver to go to “Michigan Sentaa.”)

The easiest way to purchase tickets is to ask at the information counter just off the JR Station lobby at the end of the row of ticket vending machines. Tell them you want to go to Hikone, and they will make the necessary arrangements. *JR will accept credit card, though the automatic ticket machines do not.* The cost usually ranges from ¥2,500 to ¥5,000 per person.

Tokyo / Narita International Airport (NRT)

From the Narita Airport in Tokyo, you must get onto the Narita Express train to Tokyo Station (about one hour). Once you arrive at Tokyo Station, take the Shinkansen to the Maibara Station on the Japan Railways (JR) line. The cost should be around ¥12,500 and it will take about 2 hours and 40 minutes. For train timetables, see the Japan Rail Website (<http://www.japanrail.com>), or other timetable websites such as <http://www.hyperdia.com>.

LIVING IN JAPAN

Communication

Calling to Japan:

There will be a telephone in each student apartment. The bill for *local* phone expenses is included in the JCMU housing fee. You may not make international calls from your room unless you use an international calling card. You can easily obtain an international calling card from the Lawson convenience store across the street, however, the instructions are in Japanese.

Calls made from the US to Japan (on either MCI or AT&T) are expensive, though they are generally cheaper than calls originating in Japan, so it is a good strategy when calling home to make a short call, and have your parents and friends call you back, if they do not mind.

Japan is 13 hours ahead of the Eastern Standard Time Zone during Daylight Savings Time (summer) and 14 hours ahead during Standard Time (winter). Family and friends may dial directly to reach students at the Center, by dialing the international access code (011), the country code for Japan (81), the area code for Hikone (749), the local exchange number (26) and 7 + the number of your room: 011 - 81 - 749 - 26 - 7 + (room number).

Skype:

If you bring along a computer with speakers and a microphone, try downloading **Skype**, an internet calling program. You can buy “minutes” and use this program to call a telephone from your computer, or let others “call” your computer from their phones. This program is cheaper than a calling card because it uses the internet to carry the calls until it reaches its destination area, then only a local charge is issued.

Cell Phones:

Students in the past have been able to get Japanese cell phones using pre-paid options, however most cell phone companies in Japan no longer have pre-paid phone service. Getting a long term plan is a feasible option for academic year students, however students must have an alien registration card to purchase a long term plan and it takes a minimum of one month after arrival to get this documentation.

One option recent students have recommended is renting an international cell phone before leaving the US to use while in Japan. Those students recommend PicCell Wireless:

https://www.piccellwireless.com/latest/whereareyou.php?sell_to_id=6.

Internet Services:

The Residence Hall and Academic Building are equipped with wireless internet technology, and all bedrooms have Ethernet ports. Students should bring their own Ethernet/LAN cable. Please be aware that the internet, wireless in particular, is slower than what you may be used to the States.

Internet access from the Center is a privilege and not a right. All personal computers must be registered, and students will be asked to observe JCMU computer policies as well as the proper use policies established at MSU (<http://www.msu.edu/au/>). Internet access may be limited under certain circumstances as determined by the Resident Director.

Ground Transportation

Bicycles:

Bicycling is the main mode of transportation for JCMU students. Most places in the local area are accessible by bicycle and train. Each JCMU student is issued a bicycle, helmet, and a bike lock to be used during the program.

IF YOU CANNOT RIDE A BIKE, YOU MAY FIND TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE GROCERY STORE, TRAIN STATION, AND ELSEWHERE DIFFICULT.

JCMU students must wear a helmet when riding bicycles **at all times**. According to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, "Depending on the type of impact and the severity of injury, the reduction in the risk of head injury as a result of wearing a helmet has been shown in several studies from all over the world to be in the range of 45 per cent to 85 per cent." If a student is found to be riding a bicycle without a helmet, there are penalties that are stipulated in the bike loan agreement each student must sign upon receiving a bike.

Due to limited bike parking space at the Center, students are not permitted to bring their own bike to Japan or purchase a bike while in Japan unless special permission is granted. For example, individuals over six feet tall might find they are more comfortable on a large frame bike brought from the States or wheelchair users may wish to bring a handcycle. Students who wish to do this **must** make prior arrangements with the Student Services Coordinator in Japan.

Local Hikone Locations:

Below are approximate distances from the center to several locations in the city.

[1.6 km = 1 mile]

Lawson Convenience Store - 250 m

Beisha Grocery Store - 2.8 km

Post Office - 2.4 km

ATM inside 7/11 Convenience Store - 3 km

Shiga University - 3 km

Hikone Castle - 3.2 km

Hikone Train Station - 3.6 km

University of Shiga Prefecture - 6 km

Hikone Hospital - 6.8 km

Living in the Residence Hall

Ground Rules:

JCMU is a living learning facility in which students are living alongside JCMU faculty and staff as well as Japanese students from the English language program and others engaged in teaching and scholarly activity. To promote a healthy balance of private, social and intellectual life, we request that respect and consideration for all residents and the building to be maintained at all times.

Keeping the residence hall lobby and TV room neat is both a courtesy to your fellow residents, and helps maintain a good public image for JCMU. Guests and tour groups that visit the Center base their impression of the residence hall and its residents on the appearance of the residence hall's common areas. Do not leave glasses, cups, or other kitchen items on the lobby tables or in the TV room. Please dispose of any garbage in the appropriate containers (e.g. burnable, non-burnable, cans, and bottles).

Some of the basic JCMU rules are as follows:

- The possession and consumption of alcohol is forbidden in all Common Areas.
- Please keep the volume of stereos and other amplified sounds at a level that cannot be heard beyond the confines of the individual's room.
- Please refrain from excessive noise or disruptive activities in the corridors, the Lobby, and near the exterior of the buildings.
- Unauthorized social events should not be held in the Residential Building Lobby.
- JCMU is a smoke free environment. Smoking in all buildings is prohibited.
- Daily Quiet Time is observed between the hours of 10 PM and 8 AM. Visitors must leave by 10 PM.

The residence hall doors will be locked from 10:00 PM until 8:00 AM. The doors can be opened from the inside but shut and lock automatically from the outside. Faculty and students wishing to enter the residence hall after hours must use the residence hall side entrance using a push-button combination lock. Students will be given the combination and are expected not to give the combination to non-residence hall residents.

Students are provided with housing from the Move in Day through the Move out Day(s). Students are not permitted to stay at the Center outside these dates unless they are staying on for the next program in which case they may stay during the break. This policy is strictly enforced.

A small computer lab is located in the JCMU residence hall and is accessible to residents 24/7. Larger computer labs are located in the academic building. Detailed rules are posted in the computer labs. Some of the basic computer lab rules include:

- Do not use the kitchen or bathroom in the computer room.
- Do not download or view pornography.
- Do not change the computer settings, or install software without authorization.
- Do not keep personal files on the machines. Unauthorized software (including personal files) may be deleted without notice.
- Laptop users: Do not connect directly to the hub at the laptop station.

Important Note on Utilities: Each student room is supplied with a fan for the summer and a space heater for the winter. There is also a built-in air conditioner/heater unit. However, electricity in Japan is very expensive, so students are asked to only use the air conditioner/heater unit when they are in their room. Basic utility use is factored into the housing/program fee, however, students will be charged for excess utility use in their room.

Learning to use less electricity is a difficult adjustment for many students – the adjustment can feel extremely frustrating at times, but keep in mind; it is part of the cultural experience. People in Japan are careful to only heat or cool the room they are in, and have learned to layer their clothing up or down to stay comfortable.

Guests:

JCMU does not allow guests to stay in the residence hall. **Friends or family members visiting Japan will need to find alternative lodging.** The Hikone View Hotel, located next door to the Center, is available for guests of JCMU students. In a community like Hikone, visitors who cannot speak Japanese will require an escort at all times. Assuming the role of chaperone, tour guide, and interpreter places an *enormous* burden on JCMU students; at the very least, it will be an impediment to participation in the Program and academic progress. For the students' own welfare, ***visits from family and friends are strongly discouraged until the program is over.***

Answers to commonly asked questions:

- Your girl/boyfriend cannot sleep over in your room.
- Having an extra bed in your room does not entitle you to let people spend the night.
- Crashing in the lobby (or the TV room, laundry room, hallways, etc.) constitutes spending the night in the residence hall, and is not allowed.
- Home stay students may only spend the night in the residence hall (with authorization from the Resident Director) in the event of a typhoon, snowstorm, or other extreme weather conditions. Missing your last train because you were out partying with friends is not a valid excuse to stay in the residence hall.
- Allowing someone stay in your apartment without authorization will result in penalties and/or sanctions.
- Guests must leave the residence hall by 10 pm so the genkan (front entrance) door can be locked.

Garbage Sorting:

The Japanese have an extensive garbage and recycling sorting system. In fact, residents and citizens are fined for not properly sorting trash. We ask that all students are sensitive to this and adjust to sorting their trash while living at the Center. Sorting will be described and explained during orientation. You must separate your trash and throw it away in the appropriate bins behind the residence hall.

Apartment Furnishings:

Student apartments at the Center come furnished with the following equipment, assuming double occupancy. You may find some minor variations.

<u>Furniture</u>	<u>Utensils & Plates</u>	<u>Kitchen Equipment</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
Tatami platform beds (2)	Chopsticks (2 sets)	Refrigerator (1)	Bath brush (1)
Bottom futon [mattress] (2)	Forks (2)	Gas stove (2 burners)	Toilet brush (1)
Futon covers (2)	Spoons (2)	Rice cooker (1)	Broom (1)
Sheets (2)	Teaspoons (2)	Toaster oven (1)	Dust pan (1)
Top futon [comforter] (2)	Butter knives (2)	2 qt. sauce pan (1)	Dish sponge (1)
Blankets (2)	Rice scoop (1)	4 qt. sauce pan (1)	Fire extinguisher (1)
Pillows (2)	Ladle (1)	Frying pan (1)	Garbage cans (2)
Pillow cases (2)	Spatula (1)	Kettle (1)	Iron (1)
Book shelves (2)	Drinking glasses (2)	All-purpose kitchen knife (1)	Storage boxes (2)
Desks (2)	Mugs (2)	Cutting board (1)	Clothes hangers (2 sets of 3)
Desk chairs (2)	Tea cups (2)	Dish-drying rack (1)	Thermos (1)
Desk lamps (2)	Teapot (1)	Sink basket (1)	
Cupboard (1)	Dishes in 3 sizes (2 sets)	Trash boxes (2)	
Dining table (1)	Rice bowls (2)	Trash can (1)	
Dining chairs (2)	Soup bowls (2)		

Living in a Home Stay

The opportunity to participate in the JCMU sponsored Home Stay Program with a Japanese family offers the student an environment in which one can develop language skills, get a better understanding of daily life, and gain insight into the values and customs of the Japanese people. JCMU's Home Stay Coordinator will conduct interviews with interested students after arrival in Japan. Every effort is made to match students with suitable families according to their interests, expectations, and language levels, so that home stay might develop into a warm relationship.

Students who sign up for a home stay are committed for the period of time of their home stay and will not be provided housing in the JCMU residence hall. Students in the past have often wanted to cancel their home stay because they found it less convenient to commute to school rather than live at the Center. Home stay families go to a great deal of trouble in preparation for a student home stay. Last minute home stay cancellations by students create a bad impression in the community and significantly reduce the number of families willing to provide a temporary home for JCMU students. It is important to expect to interact with the family as much as possible and share your interests in Japanese culture and American culture.

Daily Commute:

The average commute for the home stay participant is approximately one hour each way by train and bicycle, and the Center will cover the cost of commuting on *class days*, if you have to use a train. You will need to take a train no later than 7:30 - 8:00 A.M. each morning in order to be on time for class.

Meals, Allergies, and Dietary Restrictions:

Your home stay includes 2 meals per day. Whenever you do not plan to eat meals at your home stay, especially dinner, you must let your host family know otherwise they will prepare you a meal and assume you will be eating at home. Please realize that the host family cannot always make special arrangements in order to meet certain dietary restrictions.

Japanese Language Proficiency:

Since many host families have limited English language skills, preference is given to students at the third level of Japanese and above. In general students who are first level Japanese students will be placed in a family that has an English-speaking member. Students who plan to stay two semesters or have level-two proficiency will be placed in a family with limited English capabilities.

Single Host Parents:

There are a few individuals who look forward to hosting JCMU students and appreciate the company.

Telephone & Internet Use:

Telephone charges are not included in your home stay. You will be required to pay for all telephone calls, especially long-distance. Some families may not have internet access at home. However, all students are able to access internet at the Center.

Bedroom:

You will have a room to yourself at your home stay; however, you are responsible to keep your room as clean and neat as possible.

Expenses:

Unless your host family invites you to travel or go sightseeing, you must pay for your own expenses, including any admission fees or tickets.

Emergencies:

Always carry the phone number and address of your host family in the event that you have an emergency or are delayed. Leave a telephone number with your host family for emergencies.

House Rules:

A successful home stay experience is based on accepting and adjusting to the family's house rules. Each home stay family will have different house rules that are consistent with the family's existing schedule and lifestyle. Please remember that you are a guest in their home and abide by their house rules.

If you plan to stay overnight somewhere or be late in returning home, you must tell your host family where you are going and when you plan on returning. Home stay families will often come to see you as a member of the family and will care for you and worry about you just as your own parent might.

Independent Travel During the Program

Independent travel in Japan and visits from family and guests, etc. are not acceptable excuses for missing classes. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grades. Class-attendance records are required by the Ministry of Justice and could affect continuation or renewal of visas.

The JCMU academic calendar is designed to allow opportunities for individual travel in Japan, both during and after the academic term. As noted above, however, individual travel may not conflict with classes or other scheduled program activities.

Because JCMU (as the agent for Shiga Prefecture) is legally responsible for your welfare in Japan, JCMU staff needs to know where you are whenever you are not staying at JCMU. You **MUST** notify the JCMU Resident Director (or a designated alternate), in advance, and provide an itinerary of dates of travel, destination, and contact telephone numbers for while you will be away.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Student Conduct

The JCMU academic programs involve far more than participating in classes in an overseas setting; they are truly cross-cultural encounters demanding full attention for the duration of your stay in Japan. The boundaries that divide classroom activities from private life are blurred at the Japan Center, where faculty and students live and work together. Along with the mental stimulation and mutual support of life in a tightly knit academic community, there come, of course, certain individual and group responsibilities which keep the community functioning and productive. **Students are expected to be actively involved in the day-to-day maintenance of the Center facilities. Students are regarded as official representatives of their universities and their states and as such are expected to behave with appropriate decorum, both inside and outside JCMU.**

Statement of Responsibility:

You have signed a *Statement of Responsibility* form for this program. This is a document outlining your obligations and responsibilities to the program. Please read it carefully. Michigan State University's general student regulations also apply to JCMU students, in the absence of JCMU-specific policies. These regulations may be found on the MSU Web Page under Spartan Life. (<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/default.pdf>)

Any behavior that endangers another person or property is of particular concern. The following behaviors may result in immediate dismissal from the program and suspension from your home university:

- Physical or sexual assault
- Harassment
- Possession or use of controlled substances
- Setting a fire or possession of explosives
- Possession of a weapon, including BB guns and knives
- Theft
- Defacing or destruction of property

Disciplinary actions should be commensurate with the seriousness of the offense and designed for the guidance and correction of behavior. Repeated violations justify increasingly severe penalties.

Legal Issues

In addition to the moral and practical aspects of student conduct at the Center, there are important *legal concerns* that must be taken into account. Many students are granted visas to reside in Japan under the official sponsorship of JCMU and Shiga Prefecture. The Resident Director of JCMU assumes the responsibility of serving as "guarantor" for these program participants.

These participants thus bear a *reciprocal responsibility* to the Resident Director for their behavior in Japan. Students with "student visas" (generally those starting in the fall semester) also have a reciprocal responsibility to the President of the University of Shiga Prefecture. **In both cases, students must be scrupulous in observing the mores of the community, the rules of the Program, and the laws of the country.** Failure to do so endangers the trust established between the governments of Shiga and Michigan, and the continuance of the program itself. Some specific rules on *drugs, employment and driving* require special mention here. These restrictions are rigidly enforced to protect students as individuals from being jailed or deported, and to protect JCMU itself from censure.

Drug Use:

Illegal drug use in Japan carries much heavier consequences than in the United States. Laws are harsher and more strictly enforced, and public opinion against drug use is much stronger. ***Anyone violating the prohibition on drug use will be dismissed from the program without further warning. Students with other substance abuse problems (even with legal substances such as alcohol) may also be sent home.***

Employment:

In general, students are not allowed to work during their stay at JCMU. JCMU students' *sole purpose* for coming to Japan is to study Japanese language and culture. Unauthorized employment could jeopardize the student's continued stay at JCMU. Students may, however, participate in non-paid internships.

Driving:

JCMU students are not allowed to own or operate motorized vehicles. The restriction on driving a motorized vehicle while in Japan relates to the Japanese concept of liability, which is both broader and more severe than in the US. An accident while driving would affect not only the driver, but also the organizations of which he or she is a member--the Japan Center and the Shiga Prefecture Government. Neither the Japan Center nor the Prefecture can accept the social censure and fiscal liability that even a minor accident could bring.

ACADEMICS

Registration and Credits

It is important to consult with your academic advisor regarding your study abroad plans. You should have an understanding of the impact of JCMU's courses on your academic progress. We assume that you have discussed the JCMU Program with your academic advisor(s) and study abroad advisor. It is a good idea to touch base with them once more before departing for Japan to verify that everything is in order.

Students from JCMU member universities will register at their home universities since registration of JCMU students is handled a little differently at each of the participating universities. Therefore, specific questions should be addressed to your own university coordinator. MSU and Lifelong Education students report to the JCMU Program Office at MSU. Those wishing to have the credits transferred to another institution must request a transcript from the MSU Registrar (<http://www.reg.msu.edu/>). **This is not done automatically.**

Curriculum

Students must be enrolled as full time students at JCMU (at least 12 credit hours as undergraduates during the academic year and 10 during the summer semester). The JCMU curriculum includes:

Intensive Japanese Language:

Regardless of prior coursework in Japanese, students will be placed in language courses based on a placement test administered after arrival in Hikone. At all levels of instruction, the opportunities and special needs that arise from studying Japanese in Japan are considered. Credit awarded depends on home university policies, prior Japanese coursework and other factors. See your advisor for details.)

Elective Courses:

In addition to the Intensive Japanese Language course, during the academic year each student takes at least one elective. Each semester a variety of electives are offered by the JCMU Resident Director, visiting scholars, and through Shiga University and the University of Shiga Prefecture, our partner institutions.

Independent Study Projects:

Students are welcome to pursue independent study projects. To receive academic credit for Independent Study, ***an academic faculty member from your home campus must approve the project in advance in writing.*** Arrangements must be made and written approval received from your academic advisor before you leave for Japan. Additionally, in order to insure that the project can receive the resource support necessary for its successful completion in Japan, prior review and written approval for the project is required from the JCMU Resident Director in coordination with the JCMU Internship Coordinator. Of special importance is advance notification of any library materials that are either expected or desired to ascertain their availability in the Center's still developing collection.

Textbooks, Class Instructional Materials and Library Resources:

Most textbooks and instructional materials will be provided. A small but growing number of reference and research materials are available at the Center's library.

Attendance:

Class attendance is mandatory. Because of the intensive nature of all programs, more than twelve unexcused absences (twelve class hours, not days) in a term will not be accepted under any circumstances, and the student will automatically be dismissed from the program. Students also have to keep in mind that, by being absent, they will miss other opportunities to take quizzes or tests, to turn in homework and so forth, in addition to learning new materials in class.

Students are expected to be punctual. Being late five minutes or more is unacceptable, and may count against one's attendance grade. Tardy policies will be posted in the syllabus for the course.

Excusing any absence or lateness due to sickness, weather, public transportation problems or other reasons will be decided by the JCMU Resident Director in consultation with the Japanese Language Coordinator. Consultation with the JCMU Resident Director must occur no later than the day following the absence.

Assignments:

Late assignments will not be accepted. If you know in advance that you will be absent, you may hand in your work before the due date. Incomplete or poorly done assignments (as judged by the instructor) will not be accepted.

Tests/Quizzes/Examinations:

Quiz days will be announced in the weekly syllabus. Test and examination days will be outlined at the beginning of each term. There will be no make-up quizzes, tests or examinations ("making up" here means taking a quiz both *before* and *after* the scheduled time).

Miscellaneous:

The use of English in Japanese language classrooms is strictly prohibited without prior permission requested in Japanese and given by the instructor. Example: Sumimasen, Eigo de ii desu ka? (Excuse me, is English okay?) Speaking English is forbidden anywhere in the academic building during the morning session for Japanese language students.

The following are forbidden in the classroom: food, drink, gum chewing, and wearing hats of any kind.

The course strives for a high level of accuracy in the student's Japanese. To that effect, students should expect to be corrected in class. This should not be taken personally and should not inhibit one's participation in class. This measure is to ensure students practice only correct and productive Japanese.

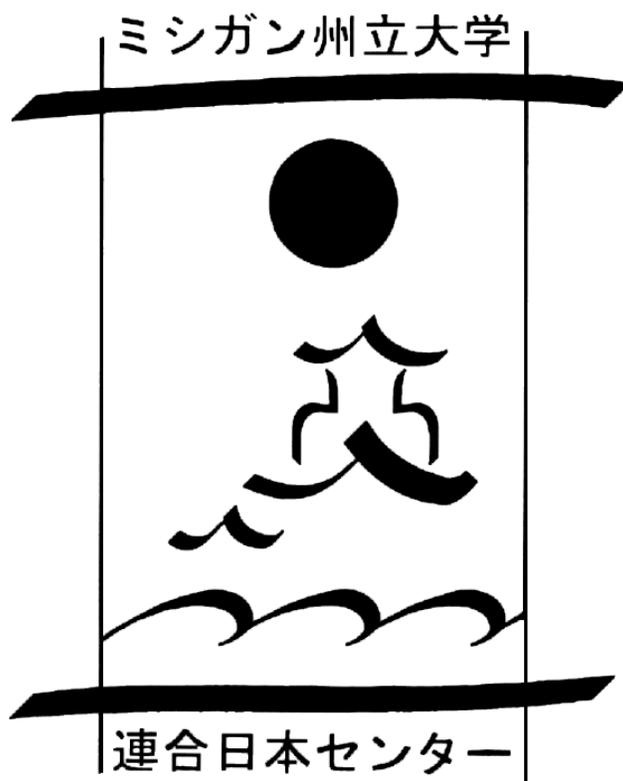
Students are expected to come to class prepared. Preparation for class makes a significant difference in the ability of the class to progress. Please familiarize yourself with the new lesson, vocabulary, and grammar prior to the class. Any questions raised during your study will be answered in class.

Students are expected to study 3-4 hours outside of class daily.

Letter Grades and the MSU Numerical Equivalent:

A	4.0	B-	2.5	D+	1.5
A-	3.5	C+	2.5	D	1.0
B+	3.5	C	2.0	D-	0.5
B	3.0	C-	1.5	F	0.0

HANDBOOK APPENDIX



JAPAN CENTER FOR MICHIGAN UNIVERSITIES

ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター

Getting to JCMU

...an easy reference guide

The basics...

Japan Center for Michigan Universities
1435-86 Ajiroguchi
Matsubara-cho
Hikone, Shiga 522-0002 JAPAN

ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター
522-0002
滋賀県彦根市
松原町網代口 1435-86

Phone Numbers

Main Hikone Office Phone:

Duty Phone (24/7 Emergency Assistance):

JCMU Office at Michigan State:

MSU 24/7 Emergency Assistance Line:

Medical Emergencies (HTH):

Calling From Japan

0749-26-3400

090-4306-3400

001-1-517-355-4654

001-1-517-353-3784

001-1-610-254-8771

Calling From the US

011-81-749-26-3400

011-81-90-4306-3400

1-517-355-4654

1-517-353-3784

1-610-254-8771

From the airport...

All students arriving on the designated day at Centrair-Nagoya Airport (NGO) by the appointed time will be met by JCMU staff, who will accompany you back to JCMU. Please remember, you must pay for your own transportation!

If you are not flying into Centrair-Nagoya Airport (NGO) by the appointed time on the arrival day, you will need to find your way to JCMU on your own. See the student handbook for directions to JCMU from major airports in Japan.

Expect the unexpected...

If your flight is delayed or changed please contact the JCMU staff as soon as possible. They can help you form a plan for getting to JCMU. We also recommend you contact your family to let them know you are safe.

The Hikone staff strongly recommends purchasing a small amount of Japanese currency before departing for Japan (around \$100 to \$300). The airport you fly out of may be the easiest place to do this. This money is useful for paying for your transportation to the Japan Center, paying for excess luggage to be shipped, and getting you started during your first few days in Japan. Major railways do take credit cards (at the ticket window rather than the ticket machines), but cab drivers usually do not.

Most Information Centers have staff who can speak some English. If you need assistance, don't hesitate to stop by the information center.

Helpful Japanese phrases...

“How do I get to (Hikone/JCMU/the train station/taxi)?”

(Hikone/Mishigan sentaa/eki/takushii) ni dou yatte ikimasu ka?

(彦根・ミシガンセンター・駅・タクシー) にどうやって行きますか。

“How much does it cost?”

Ikura desu ka?

いくらですか。

“Is credit card okay?”

Kurejitto kaado de mo ii desu ka?

クレジットカードでもいいですか。

CULTURE SHOCK

Going abroad requires that you adjust to the same sorts of things as if you would move to another part of the United States: being away from family and friends, living in an unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, adjusting to a different climate, and so on. These changes alone could cause high stress levels, but you will also be going through cultural adjustments and you may experience “culture shock.” In another cultural context, you will often find that your everyday “normal” behavior becomes “abnormal”. The unspoken rules of social interaction are different, and the attitudes and behavior that characterize life in the United States are not necessarily appropriate in the host country. These “rules” concern not only language differences, but also wide-ranging matters such as family structure, faculty-student relationships, friendships, gender and personal relations.

One way to handle these social and personal changes is to understand the cycle of adjustment that occurs. You can expect to go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement as you are overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. This initial period is filled with details of getting settled into housing, scheduling classes, and meeting new friends, and a tendency to spend a great deal of time with other U.S. students, both during orientation activities and free time.

As this initial sense of “adventure” wears off, you may gradually become aware that your old habits and routine ways of doing things are no longer relevant. A bit of frustration can be expected, and you may find yourself becoming unusually irritable, resentful and even angry. Minor problems suddenly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may grow somewhat depressed. Your stress and sense of isolation may affect your eating and sleeping habits. You may write letters, send e-mails, or call home criticizing the new environment and indicating that you are having a terrible time adjusting to the new country. Symptoms include anxiety, sadness and homesickness.

However, the human psyche is extremely flexible and most students weather this initial period and make personal and academic adjustments as the months pass. They may begin to spend less time with U.S. Americans and more time forming friendships with local people. They often forget to communicate home.

Finally, when the adjustment is complete, most students begin to feel they are finally in tune with their surroundings, neither praising nor criticizing the culture but becoming, to some extent, part of it.

Culture Shock Survival Strategies

Recognizing the existence of and your vulnerability to culture shock will certainly ease some of the strain, but there are also several short-term strategies you can use beforehand as well as on-site when you recognize culture shock and are faced with the challenge of adjustment.

- **Become more familiar with the local language**

Independent study in the local language should facilitate your transition. Continue your study of the foreign language before and throughout your program. Rent and watch foreign films to become accustomed to the rhythm and sounds of the language of your new home. Do not become so concerned with the grammar and technicalities of a language that you are afraid to speak once you are abroad.

- **Know your own country**

You will find that people around the world often know far more about the United States and its policies than you do. Whether or not you are familiar with current events, particularly foreign policy, expect to be asked about your opinions and to hear the opinions of others. Start preparing now by reading newspapers and news magazines.

- **Examine your motives for going**

Although you will certainly do some traveling while you're abroad, remember that your program is not an extended vacation. Set realistic academic goals, particularly if you are studying in another language. Reduce your expectations or simplify your goals in order to avoid disappointment or disillusion, but don't forget to study!

- **Recognize the value of culture shock**

Culture shock is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.

- **Expect to feel depressed sometimes**

Homesickness is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don't let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new culture that surrounds you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.

- **Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times**

You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Even if they speak English in your host country, communication may be difficult! Moreover, people will do things differently in your new home, and you will not always think their way is as good as yours. Once you accept that nothing you do is going to radically change the different cultural practices, you will save yourself real frustration. Remember that you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.

Culture Shock Survival Strategies

- **Expect to hear criticism of the United States**

If you educate yourself on U.S. politics and foreign policies, you will be more prepared to handle these discussions as they occur. Remember that such criticism of U.S. policies is not personal. Don't be afraid to argue if you feel so inclined. Most foreign nationals are very interested in the U.S. and will want to know your opinions.

- **Do not expect local people to come and find you**

When was the last time you approached a lonely-looking foreign student with an offer of friendship? Things are not necessarily any different where you are going. If you are not meeting people through your classes, make other efforts to meet them. Take advantage of the university structure and join clubs, participate in sports, attend worship services, participate in volunteer and service-learning projects, and attend other university-sponsored functions. Maintain a sense of meaning to your life and allow time for leisure activities.

- **Keep your sense of humor and positive outlook**

Almost all returned study abroad students have wonderful stories about how much fun they had during their time abroad. If you have a terrible, frustrating day (or week) abroad, remember that it will pass. Time has a way of helping us remember the good times and turning those horrible times into fascinating stories!

- **Write a journal**

One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between U.S. and the other cultures is to regularly write a journal. As you write, you'll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. When you return home you'll have more than just memories, souvenirs, and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

- **Adopt coping strategies that work for you**

Keep in touch with friends and family but not to the point you are consumed with calling and e-mailing that you miss out on the study abroad experience. Exercising can also contribute to improved mood and better sleep.

- **Talk to someone if you have a serious problem**

The Student Services Coordinator or the Resident Director and the JCMU staff are near at hand to counsel students with serious problems. They have first-hand experience with adjustment abroad and can be a real friend in times of need. Share smaller problems with other students since they are going through the same process and can provide a day-to-day support group.

ALCOHOL USE AND MISUSE

Many of the injuries sustained by study abroad students are related to drunkenness and the associated condition of temporary stupidity.

Although alcohol misuse may not carry the same legal penalties as use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for you, your participation in the program, your safety on site, and the future of the program. **Remember that you are serving as an ambassador of JCMU, Michigan, and the United States.**

Alcohol misuse will not be tolerated on JCMU study abroad programs.

You may be tempted to slip into - or maintain - patterns of alcohol misuse while abroad. Such use may occur for a variety of reasons: a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used in your new surroundings; cheaper costs than what you may find here; a lower minimum drinking age; more lenient laws regarding alcohol; or a desire to experiment or fit in. Alcohol abuse and misuse are not tolerated globally and will not be tolerated on JCMU study abroad programs. Violation of local laws and/or MSU regulations or policies may result in (i) immediate dismissal from the program; (ii) academic withdrawal from the semester in progress; and (iii) disciplinary action upon return to campus.

If you attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings in the United States, please notify the JCMU Office so we can assist you in locating the AA abroad.

Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to self or others. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol. Alcohol misuse is present when:

1. A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption;
2. A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
3. A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
4. A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals that is the result of alcohol consumption;
5. A student engages in destructive behavior toward property that is the result of alcohol consumption;
6. A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying;
7. A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption;
8. Students in a group encourage or ignore a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol; or
9. Students who transport quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

Students are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours. Student groups are encouraged to discuss issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group with the faculty leader or resident director. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

If a student becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, others are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency medical service, faculty leader or the Resident Director immediately, in order to protect the health and well-being of the affected student. Peers are encouraged to make the responsible choice to notify program or emergency personnel quickly. The person (or persons) making the call will not be subject to disciplinary action.

If you plan to drink – do it moderately. Do not endanger yourself, others, property, or the future viability of the program. Know when to say “no,” stay with your friends, and look out for each other!

Health Considerations when Traveling to Japan

MSU Travel Clinic: travelclinic.msu.edu

Immunizations

Consider:

- **Hepatitis B:** if you are likely to have exposure to blood or body fluids (i.e. health worker) or an STD (i.e. sexually active).
- **Japanese encephalitis:** if you plan to spend a prolonged time (over 4 weeks) in rural areas during June- September, or on Ryuku Island from April to December.
- **Influenza:** if you are over 50, have an immunocompromising condition, chronic respiratory disease, or plan to become pregnant while traveling.
- Updating all **routine immunizations** (MMR, Chicken Pox and Hep A&B) to assure that you are current, before traveling.

NOT needed:

- Rabies
- Yellow fever
- Malaria meds
- Typhoid, unless very risk averse (this disease is unlikely)

Other Health Risks in Japan

- **Tuberculosis:** if staying more than 3-4 months, consider a pre and post trip test.
- **Lyme disease and Tick Borne Encephalitis:** use tick precautions (repellents, long pants), especially in Hokkaido, Nagano, Fukui, and Saitama in warmer months.
- **Nematode (fluke) infestation:** when eating undercooked fish.
- **Blood transfusions:** Rh negative blood is hard to get, since most Asian people are Rh positive.
- Melamine tainted products, particularly in milk, frozen yogurt, instant coffee, coffee creamer, ice cream, chocolate cookies, and candy. For an update of affected products, go to www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/melamine.html

Taking Medications to Japan

Illegal:

- Over the counter medications commonly used for colds and allergies, such as pseudoephedrine
- Some prescription stimulants (ritalin)
- Some narcotic medications (coedine)
- Visit the [JCMU website](http://www.jcmu.edu) for list of meds that require import certification and for more detailed information on taking medications to Japan.

Remember to ...

- Complete your health form honestly and accurately.
- Identify any unusual risks or questions you have.
- Respond, if called or written by travel clinic staff.
- Check with your primary care physician to update medications and regular vaccines, discuss management of any chronic problems while away, etc.
- Visit the Travel Clinic Website: travelclinic.msu.edu
- **Have a great trip!**

Marketing Study Abroad: How to Sell Your Overseas Experience to Employers

by Jean-Marc Hachey of workingoverseas.com - International Careers Advisor for Transitions Abroad

Imagine the day when you will be graduating from university and searching for professional work. Because you studied abroad, and you built up related international credentials, you may have aspirations to find a professional job overseas. Alternatively, you may have decided to look for domestic employment and you want to know how to market your international expertise to employers who have no international experience whatsoever. In both of these cases, this article is here to help you get the best punch form your study abroad experience.

Take Inventory of Your Experience

If you have studied abroad, you are well on your way to developing a solid International I.Q. This is a unique package of skills possessed by people who have lived abroad and these are the skills sought out by international employers. Before writing a resume, you need to review what international skills you have gained from your study abroad experience. The following will help you assess what new skills you acquired.

▶ **Study Abroad Courses:** If you studied for less than one full semester abroad, the subject of your studies is less important than the broader international experience you have had. Nonetheless, take note of your courses and be prepared to situate the general environment of the school you attended while abroad. Was it a highly accredited academic program, or was it a study and travel session? Was the student body international or predominantly students from your own country?

▶ **Professional Experience Abroad:** Hopefully you supercharged the international value of your time abroad by doing a few extra things that will look good on your resume. Employers want to know that you successfully accomplished tasks in a new environment. Did you lead a student team? Did you complete projects within a multicultural student environment? Did you meet professionals in your field while abroad? Did you organize a social event? Did you work: part-time, with a professor, or as a language coach? Did you volunteer in your field? Did you overcome a bureaucratic hurdle by making use of professional skills? Audit your time abroad for professional experiences and be prepared to describe them in your resume and when meeting employers.

▶ **Country-Specific Skills:** Can you speak about the specific cultural traits of your study abroad host country nationals? If not, you can easily read up on this now by consulting the numerous books written on country-specific cultural traits and published for example by Intercultural Press (www.interculturalpress.com). Imagine the impact on potential employers when you are able to contrast the work habits of your German hosts with U.S. citizens. You also gain points with employers if you traveled independently or lived with host nationals. In all these cases, prepare descriptions that support your professional and intercultural skills.

▶ **Universal Cross-Cultural Skills:** While abroad, you developed a unique set of cross-cultural skills that are portable. You can take these and apply them to any new country. You are familiar with culture shock and can professionally describe it. You understand the cycle of stress and exhilaration of moving to a new place. You are more adaptable, open minded, and observant. You can spot cultural differences and change your behavior to accommodate local norms. You have a better understanding of yourself and you can use this self-knowledge when making decisions in a culture other than your own. You are curious, brave, and have a sense of adventure. At the same time you are streetwise and can function in unfamiliar environments.

▶ **Language Skills:** You already know that language skills are important for international and domestic employers. Even obscure language or basic language skills indicate a propensity for language learning and

learning in general. When communicating with employers, indicate the level of reading, writing, and speaking skills you acquired. Always describe what you can do as opposed to what you can't.

▶ **General Work Skills:** When speaking to employers, recognize the value of the general skills you developed while abroad. You are adept at managing change; you are independent and have self-discipline while being sensitive to the needs of others. There are dozens of work characteristics developed abroad: resourcefulness, versatility, persistence, observant and calm demeanor, diligence, multifaceted skills in communications, broad and strategic thinking, ability to deal with ambiguities, courage, ability to take on challenging work, open-mindedness, flexibility, resourcefulness, tact, listening and observing skills, ability to deal with stress, sense of humor, awareness of interpersonal politics, respect for protocol and hierarchy, loyalty, and tenacity. All of these skills are valuable to you when contacting domestic as well as international employers.

How to Explain Your International Experience

You are already aware that, with the exception of others who have lived abroad, very few people are interested in or able to understand your study abroad experience. Be cautious when discussing your international experience when meeting prospective employers. Here are a few tips to help you down this delicate path:

▶ **Be professional in describing your study abroad experience.** You are probably fairly animated about the challenges you faced when overseas. Practice rewording your description of job responsibilities in a more businesslike manner. Be formal. Be articulate.

▶ **Use the language of your future work.** You may have to give up the expatriate jargon that has become second nature to you. Avoid using too many names and titles that will be foreign to your prospective employer. Avoid detailed geographical descriptions. Speak in terms familiar to your audience. For example, use "adjustment" instead of "culture shock"; use "able to deal with change" instead of "cross-cultural adaptability"; use "interpersonal skills" instead of "cultural sensitivity"; use "effective listening skills" instead of "cross-cultural communications"; use "political astuteness" instead of "diplomacy."

▶ **Speak of your successes, your accomplishments.** Do not discuss insurmountable challenges or why you did not succeed at something. Employers, especially those with no international experience, will not be able to judge the context and could form erroneous conclusions about your capabilities.

▶ **Avoid shocking stories.** Do not go into bizarre tales or misadventures. The harder your overseas experience, the more cautious you should be in talking about the difficulties you encountered.

▶ **Network with other returnees.** Actively seek out others who have recently returned from abroad and can provide mutual support during your job search. Find these people on the Internet and through the organization that sent you overseas.

How to Boast About Your Skills

It can feel awkward to boast about your own skills. Non-North Americans in particular have a cultural aversion to selling themselves to employers. Here are a few tips to make the act more palatable when networking with employers:

▶ **Say what others say about you.** "My previous supervisor relied on me mainly to..." "My student-colleagues appreciate working with me because..."

Say why you were successful. I can attribute my successes to being able to "In my previous position, I was commended for..." This project was successfully managed because I..."

▶ **Say how you do things.** When managing a project, I always pay close attention to "I am well known for my skills in..." "My general approach in these circumstances is to..."

Write and Elevator Pitch

There are multiple situations where you need to answer the question: "Tell me about yourself." Imagine that you have one short elevator ride to explain to a potential employer who you are. A 2-paragraph professional description of yourself, written before you write your resume, will help you figure out the high-level attributes of the professional you. These are your "main" selling points; focus on highlights only. Decide on a theme to bring it all together. Your first paragraph should be your hard skills (work, study, volunteer experience). Build a theme around international experience if looking for international work. The second should be about your skills (what makes you succeed in your work environment). This second paragraph is the most challenging. Ensure that it ties in all together supporting your major theme.

Develop a Stock of Career Stories

Everyone who has studied abroad has their own list of "wild and shocking" stories to share with friends. These edgy cross-cultural experiences are fun to share, but not with potential employers. You need to modify them or devise a new set of cross-cultural career related stories about your study abroad experience. Craft these stories ahead of time, and build them to reinforce professional skill sets. Here are a few examples:

- ▶ **Describe your role when working with student teams while abroad.**
- ▶ **Describe your encounters when meeting professionals working in your field.**
- ▶ **Speak about personal encounters that gave you insight into the local culture.**
- ▶ **Speak about the link between your country and the host country, especially in terms of the work place.**

Describe your professional skills through a story about a cross-cultural encounter that went wrong. You only need three or four of these pre-scripted career stories when job searching. One story alone is often enough to demonstrate a whole grouping of your professional skills, maturity, insightfulness, sound judgment, cross-cultural knowledge, etc.

Education Credentials in Resumes

Younger professionals should write about their education more extensively than mid-career professionals. Write about your educational career as if it were a job. You are not doing justice to yourself if you devote only two lines to your study abroad experience. Start with the normal header information, but follow it up with bullets outlining the experience you had while abroad and the skills you developed. Refer to this article's "Inventory of Your Experience" section for examples of what to write.

Other bullets to consider when describing your study abroad or other study experiences are: Significant Projects, Field Studies, Cross-Cultural Mentoring, Team Leadership, Awards. If you studied at a world-renowned school or with a famous professor, reference this. Indicate how you overcame financial challenges by perhaps working while abroad. If you traveled while studying abroad, or if you had close cross-cultural contact, write a bullet about this.

Do not list courses taken, but always list "Areas of Interest." This tells employers much about your professional personality and these most likely point to your top skills since we tend to be good at what we enjoy. If you are applying for international work, consider grouping all your international experience (work, volunteer, study abroad, international courses, travel and languages) under one heading for greater impact.

Dealing with International Employers

Don't mix personal goals with career goals. Never announce to potential international employers that your career goal is to live in Paris or to travel extensively in Asia. Employers want to hear about goals that match their skill requirements. Tell employers that you want to apply the unique set of international skills you developed while studying for two years in Spain. Tell employers that you want to work in an environment that requires you to make use of the insights and knowledge acquired while accomplishing work within a multicultural team environment. Tell employers that you want to apply the experience and skills you developed as an effective communicator while studying economics for two years in London. The focus is on skills, not on your personal goals.

Dealing with Employers with No International Experience

Employers with little or no international experience may have misconceptions about job seekers who have international credentials such as study abroad and international travel. While not all employers believe the following myths about returnees, you may want to keep them in mind.

Employer Assumptions

- ▶ **Returnees have emotional re-adjustment problems.**
- ▶ **Returnees are too exotic.** They have adopted alternative lifestyles and can't be team players. They are excessively individualistic and independent. Their differences are threatening.
- ▶ **Returnees are flighty.** They don't really want permanent jobs or long-term responsibilities. They will soon be off traveling again.
- ▶ **Returnees have health problems.** They may have strange tropical diseases.

Your Solutions

- ▶ **Do not overstate or dwell on your re-entry adjustment problems.** Stress positive aspects of your overseas and re-entry experience.
- ▶ **Do not say that you plan to return overseas.**
- ▶ **State that you are happy to be back.** This is your home. You are anxious to join your peers in the world of work.
- ▶ **Demonstrate your business acumen.** Draw attention to your effective work habits, adaptability to new technologies, willingness to be a team player, understanding of Western leadership style.
- ▶ **Avoid wearing souvenir clothing or jewelry.** Dress in smart, businesslike clothing. Focus on fitting in.
- ▶ **Show your attachment to home.** Mention your enthusiasm for things like home cooking, a particular university, or a sports team. Talk about the pleasures of finally reading home country newspapers again.
- ▶ **Mention the clean bill of health you received for your recent physical.**

A Last Word

If you have studied abroad, you know the broad value that this type of education brings you. It is undisputable. You have now returned home, a stronger you. You have insights into the world that others who have not traveled do not have. You are conscious of a wider set of ideas about humanity. Your planet is smaller, your insights are larger. Whether you are speaking to domestic or international employers, your study abroad experience will always provide you with strengths and vision that are almost unattainable under circumstances other than living abroad. Your intellect is stimulated and your mind has been freed when you live in close proximity to people who have a culture different from your own. Good luck and best wishes in your long career of continued learning.