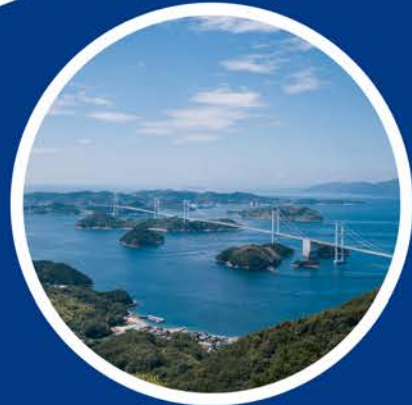


SHORT-TERM SUMMER PROGRAM

DISCOVERING JAPAN

CULTURE • SOCIETY • SUSTAINABILITY



1. Program Overview

Discovering Japan: Culture, Society and Sustainability

The Okayama University Short-Term Summer Program offers international students a unique opportunity to explore Japanese culture, society, and everyday life through academic lectures, cultural experiences, and field visits. During this two-week program, participants will immerse themselves in Japanese history, traditions, and contemporary society while exploring the cultural and natural landscape of the Okayama region and the Seto Inland Sea. Through a combination of lectures, workshops, excursions, and intercultural exchange activities with Okayama University students, participants will gain insights into different aspects of life in Japan, including social customs, regional communities, and cultural traditions. The program integrates academic learning with cultural exploration, allowing students to deepen their understanding of Japan while experiencing both traditional and modern elements of Japanese society and interacting with Okayama University students.

About Okayama University

Okayama University is one of Japan's leading national universities, with academic roots dating back more than 150 years. The university is known for its strong commitment to education, research, and international collaboration. With a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, Okayama University provides students with diverse academic opportunities across many fields of study. The university actively promotes global learning and welcomes students from around the world through various international exchange programs and short-term academic initiatives. The Institute of Global Human Resource Development plays an important role in fostering intercultural education and global engagement at Okayama University. Through its programs, the institute aims to develop globally minded individuals who can contribute to international cooperation and cross-cultural understanding. Located in the city of Okayama, the university offers an ideal learning environment with a welcoming campus atmosphere and convenient access to major cultural and historical destinations in western Japan.

About Okayama and the Seto Inland Sea Region

Okayama is located in western Japan and faces the Seto Inland Sea, one of the most scenic and culturally rich regions of the country. Known as the "Land of Sunshine" because of its mild climate and many sunny days, Okayama has long been an important cultural and transportation hub connecting different regions of Japan. The area surrounding the Seto Inland Sea is famous for its beautiful coastal landscapes, numerous small islands, and vibrant local communities. Historically, this region played a key role in maritime trade and cultural exchange, which helped shape its distinctive cultural traditions. Okayama is also home to several important cultural and historical sites. One of the most famous landmarks is Korakuen Garden, considered one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan. Located next to Okayama Castle, the garden reflects traditional Japanese landscape design and offers a glimpse into the aesthetic values of the Edo period. Another

highlight of the region is the historic merchant town of Kurashiki, known for its picturesque canals, traditional white-walled warehouses, and well-preserved architecture. Today, Kurashiki is both a cultural heritage site and a lively center of tourism and local culture. The nearby islands of the Seto Inland Sea provide a unique opportunity to experience the relationship between nature, local communities, and regional culture. The islands are known for their scenic beauty and distinctive island lifestyles. Because of its rich cultural heritage, welcoming atmosphere, and convenient access to major cities such as Kyoto, Osaka, and Hiroshima, Okayama offers an ideal environment for international students to explore Japanese culture and society.

2. Program Description

The academic program includes a series of lectures and workshops delivered by faculty members of Okayama University. These sessions introduce students to various aspects of Japanese history, culture, society, and regional life. Through lectures, discussions, and interactive activities, participants will gain a broader understanding of how historical traditions, social institutions, and cultural values shape contemporary Japanese society. Please note that the program schedule and course contents are tentative and may be subject to minor adjustments.

- **Japanese History and Culture**

This lecture introduces key historical developments that shaped Japanese society and cultural traditions. Students will explore major historical periods and cultural influences that continue to shape contemporary Japanese identity. The lecture also examines how historical heritage, traditions, and social values are reflected in modern Japanese culture and everyday life.

- **Japanese Religion and Life Events I**

This lecture explores the role of religion in everyday life in Japan, focusing on the influence of Shinto and Buddhism. Students will learn about the cultural meaning of important life events such as birth celebrations, coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The session highlights how religious traditions remain closely connected to social customs and cultural practices in contemporary Japan.

- **Japanese Religion and Life Events II**

This lecture explores the history of Confucianism and Christianity in Japan and their influence on Japanese society and cultural values. Students will learn about the cultural significance of these traditions and how they have interacted with existing religious practices in Japan. The session further examines how religious traditions continue to shape social customs, life events, and everyday life in contemporary Japanese society.

- **Gender and Society in Japan**

This lecture examines how gender roles in Japan have evolved over time and how these changes are reflected in modern Japanese society. Students will explore topics such as family structure, work culture, social expectations, and the changing roles of men and women. The lecture also introduces historical perspectives and contemporary discussions related to gender and social change in Japan.

- **Tourism in Japan**

This lecture explores the historical development of tourism in Japan and the diversity of travel experiences available across different regions of the country. Students will learn about cultural tourism, heritage tourism, and regional tourism initiatives. The session also explores how tourism contributes to regional development while helping to preserve cultural traditions and local heritage.

- **Workshop: Designing a Travel Itinerary in Japan**

In this workshop, students will work in small groups to design their own travel itinerary in Japan. Participants will research destinations, cultural sites, and travel routes based on their interests. Each group will present their travel plan and explain the cultural and historical significance of the places they selected.

- **Administrative System and Education in Japan**

This lecture provides an overview of Japan's administrative system and the structure of governance at national and local levels. Students will also learn about the organization of the Japanese education system and the role of educational institutions in Japanese society. The lecture highlights how public institutions influence social development and everyday life.

- **Workshop: Understanding Japanese Institutions and Society**

This workshop introduces students to the role of institutions in Japanese society. Through group discussions and collaborative activities, participants will examine how government structures, educational systems, and social institutions influence daily life in Japan. Students will also compare institutional systems in Japan with those in their home countries.

- **Understanding Social Life in Japan**

This lecture explores social values that influence both education and professional life in Japan. Students will examine how discipline, cooperation, and responsibility are valued in Japanese society in contexts such as schools and workplaces. The lecture also discusses how these values shape communication styles, teamwork, and expectations in Japanese society.

- **Japanese Space and Ways of Living**

This lecture introduces Japanese culture through the perspective of space and everyday living, focusing on elements such as architecture, the house, and the garden. The session provides insight into how lifestyle and living spaces reflect cultural values in Japanese society over time, from traditional to contemporary contexts.

- **Chado Workshop: Tea Culture and Tradition**

This workshop introduces the philosophy and cultural significance of *chado* (the Way of Tea), the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Students will learn about its aesthetics, etiquette, and historical background. Participants will also experience elements of the tea ceremony and gain a deeper understanding of its cultural meaning.

- **Regional Communities, Agriculture, and Sustainable Development in Japan**

This lecture focuses on rural communities and agricultural traditions in Japan, particularly in regional areas such as the Okayama region. Students will learn about agricultural practices, local food production, and the importance of rural communities in maintaining cultural landscapes. The lecture also discusses challenges faced by rural regions in contemporary Japan.

- **Rural Communities and Agricultural Landscapes in Japan**

This lecture explores how agriculture has shaped the landscapes and social structures of rural Japan. Students will learn about traditional farming environments, regional agricultural products, and the relationship between agriculture and local culture. The session also examines how rural communities adapt to social and economic changes while preserving regional traditions.

- **Survival Japanese Sessions**

Participants will attend Survival Japanese sessions designed to help them communicate in everyday situations during their stay in Japan. Students will learn basic expressions and useful phrases for daily communication, including greetings, simple conversations, and cultural etiquette. These sessions help participants feel more confident interacting with local people.

3. Field Visits and Cultural Excursions

Field visits are an important component of the program and allow students to experience Japanese culture and regional life beyond the classroom. Through these excursions, participants will explore historical sites, cultural landmarks, and regional heritage in the Okayama region.

- **Korakuen Garden and Okayama Castle**

Participants will visit Korakuen Garden, one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan and an outstanding example of traditional Japanese landscape design from the Edo period. Located next to the garden is Okayama Castle, a historic landmark that reflects the political and cultural history of the region. The visit provides students with an opportunity to learn about the historical development of castle towns and the cultural heritage of Okayama.

- **Kurashiki Historical District**

Participants will explore the historic merchant town of Kurashiki, famous for its picturesque canals, traditional, white-walled warehouses, and preserved architecture. The Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter represents an important example of Japan's cultural heritage and demonstrates how historical towns are preserved while supporting modern tourism and local cultural activities.



- **Seto Inland Sea Islands**

Participants will visit one of the islands in the Seto Inland Sea, a region known for its scenic coastal landscapes and unique island communities. This excursion provides an opportunity to observe the relationship between nature, local livelihoods, and cultural traditions in coastal Japan.



4. Intercultural Exchange and Student Activities

An important component of the program is intercultural exchange with students from Okayama University. These activities provide participants with opportunities to interact with local students, share cultural perspectives, and discuss similarities and differences between their societies. Through guided discussions and collaborative activities, participants will learn more about student life in Japan and gain insights into contemporary Japanese society from the perspective of local students. Intercultural exchange sessions encourage open dialogue and mutual understanding, allowing participants to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds while exploring new ideas and perspectives. These activities also provide a friendly and informal environment where participants can build connections and friendships with their Japanese peers.

5. Tentative Program Schedule

A tentative schedule of the program is provided below. The schedule includes lectures, workshops, field visits, intercultural activities, and free days for independent exploration.

Period	MON	TUE	WED JULY 1	THU JULY 2	FRI JULY 3	SAT JULY 4	SUN JULY 5
8:40-9:30				Arrival / Check-in 9:00 - 17:00	Opening Ceremony	Excursion I	Free Day
9:40-10:30					Orientation		
10:40-11:35					Campus Tour		
11:40-12:35					Follow-up (15 minutes)		
12:35-14:15							
14:20-15:15							
15:30-16:20							
16:30-17:20							
-							
-							
Period	MON JULY 6	TUE JULY 7	WED JULY 8	THU JULY 9	FRI JULY 10	SAT JULY 11	SUN JULY 12
8:40-9:30	Japanese History and Culture	Japanese Religion and Life Events I	Survival Japanese	Regional Communities, Agriculture, and Sustainable Development in Japan	Administrative System and Education in Japan	Free Day	Free Day
9:40-10:30	Japanese History and Culture	Japanese Religion and Life Events I	Survival Japanese	Regional Communities, Agriculture, and Sustainable Development in Japan	Administrative System and Education in Japan		
10:40-11:35	Survival Japanese	Japanese Space and Ways of Living	Tourism in Japan	Survival Japanese	Excursion II		
11:40-12:35	Survival Japanese	Japanese Space and Ways of Living	Designing a Travel Itinerary in Japan	Survival Japanese			
13:20-14:15	Chado Workshop: Tea Culture and Tradition	Understanding Japanese Institutions and Society					
14:20-15:15	Chado Workshop: Tea Culture and Tradition	Understanding Japanese Institutions and Society					
15:30-16:20	Follow-up (15 minutes)		Intercultural Activity I	Intercultural Activity II			
16:30-17:20			Intercultural Activity I	Intercultural Activity II			
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Period	MON JULY 13	TUE JULY 14	WED JULY 15	THU JULY 16	FRI JULY 17	SAT JULY 18	SUN JULY 19
8:40-9:30	Japanese Religion and Life Events I	Excursion III	Gender and Society in Japan	Rural Communities and Agricultural Landscapes in Japan		Check-out 10:00 - 14:00	
9:40-10:30	Japanese Religion and Life Events I		Gender and Society in Japan	Rural Communities and Agricultural Landscapes in Japan			
10:40-11:35	Survival Japanese		Reflection Session	Survival Japanese	Presentations		
11:40-12:35	Survival Japanese		Reflection Session	Survival Japanese	Presentations		
13:20-14:15	Understanding Social Life in Japan			Follow-up (15 minutes)	Follow-up (15 minutes)		
14:20-15:15	Understanding Social Life in Japan			Closing Ceremony			
15:30-16:20	Follow-up (15 minutes)		Intercultural Activity II		Reception		
16:30-17:20			Intercultural Activity II				
-			Follow-up (15 minutes)				
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 Academic Courses	 Japanese Courses	 Workshops, Reflection Sessions
 Activities	 Excursions	 Administrative Events

6. Final Project and Student Presentations

Participants will work in small groups on a final project titled “Discovering Japan.” The project encourages students to reflect on their experiences during the program and to explore different aspects of Japanese culture, society, and everyday life based on what they have learned through lectures, excursions, and intercultural activities. Students will work collaboratively to analyze their observations and discuss topics such as cultural traditions, social customs, regional communities, and contemporary life in Japan. Each group will prepare a short presentation summarizing their insights and reflections. These presentations will take place during the final session of the program and will provide an opportunity for participants to share their perspectives and experiences with the entire group.

7. Program Dates

Program Period:

July 3 – July 17, 2026

Arrival (Check-in):

July 2, 2026 (Thursday)

9:00 – 17:00

Departure (Check-out):

July 18, 2026 (Saturday)

10:00 – 14:00

Participants are expected to arrive at and depart from the university dormitory within the designated check-in and check-out periods. Detailed information regarding accommodation and arrival procedures will be provided after admission to the program.

8. Language of Instruction

The language of instruction for the program is English. Participants are expected to have sufficient English proficiency to follow lectures and actively participate in discussions and program activities. Applicants whose first language is not English are expected to have English proficiency at approximately CEFR B2 level or equivalent.

9. Number of Participants

Maximum: 20 students

Minimum: 10 students

If the minimum number of participants is not reached, the program may be cancelled.

10. Certificate and Transcript

Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a Certificate of Completion, an Academic Transcript, and 3 academic credits from the Institute of Global Human Resource Development, Okayama University. All classes and program activities are mandatory. The syllabi will be provided upon acceptance to the program. The courses and activities are organized into three components, each carrying one academic credit.

11. Grading System

Courses and activities will be evaluated in accordance with the grading system outlined below.

Grade	Mark (%)	Result
A+	90–100	Pass
A	80–89	Pass
B	70–79	Pass
C	60–69	Pass
F	0–59	Fail
Pass	–	pass

12. Accommodation

Participants will stay in university dormitories located on the Okayama University campus, providing convenient access to classrooms and other university facilities. Accommodation will be in shared rooms for two participants. Detailed information regarding accommodation arrangements will be provided after admission to the program.

13. Program Fee

The program fee for the Okayama University Short-Term Summer Program is 280,000 JPY.

The fee includes:

- Tuition

- Accommodation in university dormitories
- Course materials
- Cultural activities
- Excursions included in the program
- Overseas Travel Accident Insurance

The fee does not include:

- Airfare
- Transportation to and from the dormitory upon arrival and departure
- Meals
- Personal expenses

14. Travel Insurance

The included insurance covers only the program period (July 2 to July 18). Participants are advised to arrange insurance for any period outside these dates on their own and at their own expense. Detailed information will be provided to selected applicants after admission to the program.

15. Application

Applications for the summer program should be submitted via the online application form using the QR code below.



The application timeline is as follows:

- Applications must be submitted via the online form by **May 8**.
- Applicants will receive notification of results by e-mail by **May 15**.
- By **May 20**, selected applicants are required to respond and submit a copy of their passport.
- **In early June**, applicants must complete the payment of the program fee.

Detailed information regarding the payment process and the cancellation policy will be provided to selected applicants upon admission to the program.

16. Visa Information

Applicants who require a visa to enter Japan are responsible for obtaining the appropriate visa prior to travel. Applicants are advised to check the visa requirements applicable to their nationality and, if necessary, apply for a visa at the nearest Japanese embassy or consulate. A visa support letter will be provided after acceptance to the program

17. Contact Information

For further information about the program, please contact:

International Education and Student Mobility Division
Academic Affairs Department
Okayama University
Email: ou-program@adm.okayama-u.ac.jp