

# NKU Academic Exchange in Gifu, Japan



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Spend an academic year studying at

## Gifu University!

A brief introduction...



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## **NKU Academic Exchanges**

The Office of Education Abroad offers academic exchanges as a study abroad option for independent and mature NKU students interested in a semester or year-long immersion experience in another country. The information in this packet is meant to provide an overview of the experience available through an academic exchange in Gifu, Japan. However, please keep in mind that this information, especially that regarding visa requirements, is subject to change. It is the responsibility of each NKU student participating in an exchange to take the initiative in the pre-departure process with regards to visa application, application to the exchange university, air travel arrangements, housing arrangements, and pre-approval of courses. Before and after departure for an academic exchange, the Office of Education Abroad will remain a resource and guide for participating exchange students.

### **Japan**

Japan is home to almost 128 million people spread out on over 3,000 islands. The four main islands, Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku, account for 97% of Japan's total land area. Over 70% of the country is forested, mountainous, and unsuitable for agricultural or residential use. The beauty of nature, undisturbed by humans, will surround and astound you. Legend attributes the creation of Japan to the sun goddess, from whom the emperors were thought to be descended. In acknowledgement of this, the characters that make up Japan's name translate to "sun-origin" and give Japan its nickname of the "Land of the Rising Sun." Japan's culture has evolved greatly over the years from its traditional ways to its current culture, which includes influences from Europe, North American, and the rest of Asia. About 99% of the population speaks Japanese as their first language and most private and public schools require students to take courses in both Japanese and English. The parts of its culture that Japan exports to the world are only a fraction of what is available to those who can speak and read the language. A major economic power, Japan has the world's second largest economy and is a major leader in the development and implementation of technology. Japan's ancient traditions and advanced technologies blend to create an exciting environment.

### **Gifu**

The city of Gifu is blessed with the natural beauty of high mountains and clear rivers. With a population of over 400,000, Gifu, about 200 miles west of Tokyo and 20 miles north of Nagoya, is the capital of the Gifu prefecture in central Japan. Due to its significant location, the city has historically been a region where the various cultures of Japan have merged. Gifu has also played an important role in Japan's history as various warlords used the area as a base in an attempt to unify and control Japan. Along with a wide range of museums, shrines, and Gifu castle set high above the city, Gifu's most popular attraction is "ukai," a thousand year-old fishing practice that uses trained cormorant birds. Gifu is the only place where this tradition has continued uninterrupted for 1,300 years. In addition to modern industries upon which Gifu's economy rests, the city has a wide array of traditional industries including paper crafts like chochin (lanterns), ougi (fans) and kasa (umbrellas). A wide array of festivals and events take place in Gifu throughout the year, creating a warm and festive atmosphere. Some celebrations have long histories, honoring Gifu's past and Japan's traditions, while others are more modern. The climate is typical of most of Japan - hot and humid in the summer and dry and cold in winter. Changes in climate throughout the year mean that you can enjoy Japan's distinct four seasons.

## Gifu University

Gifu University is one of Japan's medium sized national universities with around 8,000 students, including almost 400 international students. If your Japanese level of proficiency is not sufficient for faculty lectures, intensive Japanese language courses at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels are offered by the International Student Center. These courses concentrate on various aspects of grammar, conversational skills, and daily expressions necessary for your life and study in Japan. Placement into the varying levels of these courses is based on the results of a placement test. For students with advanced Japanese language skills, courses can be taken focusing on topics to give students a deeper understanding of Japanese society and culture. The academic year is divided into two semesters: The first from April 1st through September 30th; the second from October 1st through March 31st. There is a long summer break from August 1st to September 30th. Given the semester start and end dates, students who take part in the Gifu exchange must do so for the whole academic year.

## Housing

Exchange students studying at Gifu University generally stay at the International House. The cost for a single bedroom at the International House is very affordable compared to normal Japanese standards. Each room comes furnished, though you should plan on providing your own bed linens. This building has a common kitchen, dining room, and laundry room on each floor.

## Transportation

Japan has an efficient public transportation network, especially within metropolitan areas and between the large cities. Japanese public transportation is characterized by its punctuality, its superb service, and the large crowds of people using it. Gifu's central location means that it is one of the central transportation hubs in Japan. Two major rail lines connect Gifu to Japan's national and international transportation infrastructure. In addition to the convenient train system, there are also many inter-city and local bus routes that transport passengers efficiently throughout the city and region. Biking is another option for travel around Gifu. Bicycles can be bought second hand or rented for shorter periods of time.

## Visa and Health Insurance

Foreigners who wish to study in Japan **will** need a student visa from a Japanese embassy or consulate outside of Japan in order to enter the country on a status of residence that permits long term studies. A valid passport, acceptance by an educational institution in Japan, and evidence of financial support are required to qualify for a student visa.

It is the responsibility of each individual to enroll in "National Health Insurance" once in Japan. After registering as an alien, enroll in National Health Insurance at your local municipal office or ward office. The insurance premiums vary depending on your previous year's income and the insurance covers 70% of your medical expenses.

## Useful Links

Gifu University: <http://www.gifu-u.ac.jp/English/>

Embassy of Japan Information: <http://www.embjapan.org/>

CIA World Factbook: <http://www.cia.gov>

# General Living Expenses Gifu University, Japan Academic Year Estimated Budget

Please use the following budget only as a general guide for expenses for one academic year. Also note that expenses are estimated and subject to fluctuate according to currency rates\* and general economic inflation.

Tuition (2 semesters)	\$7,128	(undergraduate, in-state tuition for 12-16 hours per semester)
Passport and Visa	\$160	
Round-trip airfare	\$2,000	
Housing	\$1,500	
Books and supplies	\$550	
Local transportation	\$1,600	
Health insurance	\$500	
Food	\$3,000	
Personal spending	<u>\$4,000</u>	(shopping, entertainment, travel, etc)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,438</b>	

\*July 2010 currency rate: **1 U.S. dollar = 88.5 Japanese yen**