

Exchange winter semester 2022/2023 report

NUCB Business School (Graduate School)

Nagoya, Japan

My name is Lorenz and I was able to spend my exchange semester in Nagoya, Japan from September 2022 until the end of January 2023. I hope this report can give you a good idea about the entrance procedures, the university and of course also about life in Ja

Before coming to Japan

In order to stay one semester in Japan you will need a visa for entering the country. The student visa will be valid for a whole year. However, certain (formal) requirements are required if you want to leave and re-enter the Japan within this period of time. The visa application was a smooth process for me. NUCB was a great help with several info meetings and will answer any email within reasonable time. The first meeting was quite early to optimally prepare you for the whole procedure. Among several documents (like for instance passport pictures and several forms) you will receive a letter from NUCB which contains the CoE, Certificate of Eligibility, which is necessary for your visa as well as for entering the country at the Japanese airport. After applying for the visa it took approximately two weeks for the embassy to issue the visa. Do not worry if you do not hear from NUCB for some months. They will have the info sessions far ahead of time and will keep every issue in mind so I can assure you, you will not be forgotten in the process.

Before coming to Japan you will be assigned for one of the three dormitories. If you want to change your dormitory it is very unlikely, that NUCB will change their plans. However, every dormitory has its own merits and demerits. Prices vary between all of them, and the full amount has to be paid in advance (for me it was round about 3000 EUR). They will also include a deposit in case of any damage.

Life will be much easier if you get a Japanese SIM card. It is super easy and cheaper than in Germany. I used the website <https://www.sakuramobile.jp/> to order my SIM card. Sakura mobile offers SIM cards for international use so I would recommend you check out this website. You can preorder your SIM card and pick it up at any airport or let them send it directly to your hotel. I came a week early to Japan to spend some days in Tokyo and received the SIM at my

hotel. It was already there when I arrived, and everything worked right away. It was a very convenient experience.

If you want to experience the Japanese culture and adjust to the way of living you can come a little bit earlier to Japan and spend some time at other places before coming to Nagoya.

Arriving in Japan

When I arrived at Narita airport in Tokyo in September 2022 COVID restrictions were still prohibiting tourists to enter the country. Hence, the procedure was a little bit more complicated, but I am going to skip this part since restrictions have been eliminated by now. You will have to hand in your CoE and will receive your residence card which will be your ID for your time in Japan. You should always keep it with you. Despite all the restrictions the entire procedure was quite fast.

Finding the way to your hotel is easy since Japanese people are always very helpful. Although communication in English might be difficult, Japanese people will always try their best to help you, sometimes only in Japanese. After receiving your SIM card it is very easy to get around. "Google Maps" worked very well. Furthermore "Google Translate" (like signs are translated into English) and easy to use. Using the shinkansen is a great way to get around. It is a little bit expensive in comparison to other alternatives like highway buses for example. But especially in the beginning it offers convenient transportation and also is a real Japanese experience. Train tickets are easy to buy at the train station. A large "shinkansen" which will help you purchasing tickets.

NUCB

The Nagoya University of Commerce and Business Graduate School is a business school right in the middle of Nagoya. It is a tall building with small lecture halls. There are videos on youtube which show you around campus. Do not get confused with the graduate school which is farther outside Nagoya. It is a much bigger campus with many more students. The Graduate School is just the one tower in downtown Nagoya with no real outside space. Hence, you might spend most of the time inside the building.

The Office

The office is on the first floor next to the impressive lobby. All the staff members are very helpful and will answer every question for you. You will probably already know some faces from the info sessions. When arriving at the campus on Monday one of the office will drive you to your accommodation and guide you through the dormitory. Usually the meeting is close to the introductory meeting. During that meeting you will have a long meeting at campus with all the new exchange students to get certain forms for registering at the Nagoya ward office etc. Do not worry, they will guide you through that process and might even do some parts for you. The Japanese bureaucracy might be a little overwhelming, but the staff will guide you through the process. Everyone is obligated to get a Japanese health insurance which will be covered in that meeting as well. Apart from all the useful information you will get, this meeting is a good opportunity to meet all the other exchange students.

The NUCB leadership program is an international program which will not include Japanese people. You will not find any Japanese person in your class except some of the professors. However, you will get to meet many people from all over the world, not only Europe. Hence you will have the opportunity to get to know many people from various countries.

Courses

Courses at NUCB are structured in a different way. You will have weekday (Tue-Fri) and weekend (Sa-Su) courses each of which consists of 4 days. The University's teaching method bases on case studies which have to be prepared in advance for each course. The course method mainly is about reading a case about a certain incident in a company and discussing the issues in class. Some courses require a homework for each day, a homework before class and some require a final report after the course. The evaluation of your performance will be mostly based on your participation in class and written reports will only make a part of your final grade.

A regular day in class consists of a group session in the morning and a class session over the whole day. You can also choose some intensive courses which will take three consecutive days with longer class sessions. Group sessions are basically going through all the cases for the day and comparing your own conclusions with your classmates. Afterwards, issues will be discussed with the whole class.

Prior to your arrival you will receive an excel sheet with all the courses you can take. They do not offer a large variety of courses. For instance I wanted to choose mainly finance courses but most of the courses that were offered were management classes. However, what I found quite

appealing is the fact that you will have class every second week (except you choose a weekend course). Hence, you will have a lot of free time for travelling and exploring Japan.

Accommodation

NUCB has three different dormitories. One is in Higashiyama, Meito and Chiyoda. Chiyoda has small rooms and is a little bit cheaper than the others, has no public room for meeting friends but therefore lies very close to the city center and the university. Meito is the one which is farthest away from the city also cheaper than Higashiyama and also accommodates some bachelor students. It was allocated at the Higashiyama accommodation which is the most "luxurious" one. It is a little bit more expensive but includes a small gym, theater room and daily breakfast from Tuesday to Friday. Furthermore, your room will be cleaned once every two weeks. However, it is 45 minutes from university. Every accommodation has some advantages so there is no way of ranking them.

Nagoya

Nagoya is more like a business city. I did not meet that many tourists and it makes you feel like you can experience an authentic Japanese city. It is between Tokyo and Osaka so you can easily take the shinkansen or the highway bus and visit those places on the other side. You can do day trips to smaller villages and destinations in nature which are a good alternative to the busy life in the city.

In Nagoya you have everything you need. It does not seem like a very traditional city like Kyoto for instance, but the Nagoya castle and some smaller areas give you a hint of the historical buildings. You can find big shopping malls and many restaurants at the train station while most of the nightlife is going on in Sakae which is close to campus. However, you should prepare for long subway rides which take at least 40 minutes if you travel somewhere from one of the farther accommodations.

The weather in summer can be very hot and in winter it will be quite cold. Although Nagoya is close to the sea it barely rains.

My personal opinion

In my opinion the courses and the way of teaching at NUCB does not meet the standards from Goethe University. The focus on the discussion and participations is more about bringing people to step out of the comfort zone and teaching them soft skills like communication, self confidence and doing presentations. In addition you will study less theory based content. Sometimes false comments from students were not even corrected by the professor. I was quite annoyed at the beginning about the subjective student evaluation by the professor. However, I recognized that all those soft skills that you learn in this semester are highly valuable and will help you in your daily life. So I would recommend you to experience this kind of teaching method to learn something different than at Goethe University. In conclusion I can also say that the workload is much less and if you are comfortable with talking in front of people good grades are feasible.

I really enjoyed my time in Japan. I made a lot of good international friends. Sometimes it was difficult to communicate with Japanese people, so I would recommend you to take a basic Japanese course at the university or at "Japanisches Sprach- und Kulturzentrum" in Frankfurt at the "Hauptwache". It will simplify your life. Furthermore, you will have plenty of time to travel and really get to know Japanese culture which is a once in a lifetime experience.