



**Doshisha University,  
Kyoto, Japan**



**Study Guide by Students for Students**

This study guide is an information brochure created by students for students and is intended to give prospective double degree students the opportunity to benefit from former students' experiences, knowledge, and tips. It will be updated continuously and passed on to students from generation to generation. However, there is no guarantee that its contents are correct or complete.

We hope you enjoy reading this guide and look forward to your constructive input.

*Status as of September 2015*

## 1) Overall impression

On the whole, I really enjoy student life at Doshisha. Not only does the university itself offer plenty of opportunities (in terms of the range of subjects, guest lectures, language tuition, etc.), but life off-campus (sightseeing, social interaction, night life) is also extremely vibrant and exciting.

## 2) Making preparations

Minimal preparation is required for the year abroad, not least because Doshisha provides excellent help and support.

### *a. Administrative matters*

Before traveling to Kyoto, you have to apply for a student visa from the Japanese Embassy in Bern. You need to do this at least a month or so before your departure.

First of all, you will receive an e-mail from Doshisha containing some forms to fill in, which you then need to send back to Doshisha by mail. Doshisha will then initiate the necessary steps to ensure that you are granted provisional permission from the Japanese authorities to undertake a year abroad. You will also receive some official documents by mail, which you can use to obtain a definitive visa from the Japanese Embassy in Bern allowing you to travel to and stay in Japan.

### *b. Finding information*

You do not have to do much to find information. As already mentioned, Doshisha will provide you with all the information you need. If you do have any questions or uncertainties, however, you can always send an e-mail to Doshisha and you will receive a reply by return mail within 12 hours. The contact at Doshisha (see details below) is always the same, which makes it very easy to communicate and share information.

## 3) Contacts/responsibilities

### *a. International office*

Office of International Students: <http://ois.doshisha.ac.jp/en/index.html>

Prospective International Students: <http://intad.doshisha.ac.jp/en/index.html>

### *b. Faculty of Law*

Fumie KURIHARA (Ms.)  
Program clerical staff

Prospective Leaders' Programmes  
Faculty of Law/Graduate School of Law  
Doshisha University

Address:  
Imadegawa-dori, Karasuma Higashi-iru  
Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto 602-8580 JAPAN

TEL: +81 (0)75-251-3511  
FAX: +81 (0)75-251-3064  
Email: [ji-ddp@mail.doshisha.ac.jp](mailto:ji-ddp@mail.doshisha.ac.jp)  
HP: <http://law.doshisha.ac.jp/plp/>  
Facebook: <http://facebook.com/doshishauniv.gradschllaw.plp>

Office Hours: 9am to 5pm (UTC+9)  
Monday through Friday excluding Japanese national holidays

#### **4) Finding a room/accommodation**

Doshisha will suggest some accommodation options in an e-mail.

It is not possible to live on the campus itself. However, a few student residences nearby are recommended. Another possibility is to rent an apartment yourself.

I opted for a student residence (Dormy Hyakumanben) not far from the Imadegawa campus. There are around 100 students living here, mostly Japanese but also a few international students like me. They are all male, because women are not allowed in this student residence. I really like it here as the residence has a lot to offer. In addition to a *sentō* (a Japanese communal bath house), breakfast and dinner are provided by a team of Japanese cooks – and this is included in the price of accommodation. The overall monthly costs come to just under CHF 700, which is very affordable compared to Switzerland.

#### **5) Arrival**

Personally I would advise people to travel to Kyoto a week or two before they are due to begin their studies. This gives you time to settle into your student residence or apartment and take care of little things such as opening a bank account, buying a bike, getting a cell phone, etc.

#### **6) Telephone**

You can, of course, buy a cell phone. All that really matters, however, is that you have a Japanese phone number. I took out a one-year contract with a Japanese phone company for CHF 20 a month. I then used the SIM card provided in my Swiss cell phone. This option gives you three gigabytes of Internet access per month, which is more than enough, and incoming calls are free. You pay around CHF 0.10 per minute to make outgoing calls.

#### **7) Bank account**

You can open a bank account, but you don't have to. Credit cards from Swiss banks generally work in Japan without any problems, whereas debit cards can only be used at selected banks. However, it is no problem using a Swiss debit card to withdraw cash at any 7-Eleven convenience store (open 24/7), for example, which can be found on every street corner in Japan, although a CHF 5 fee is charge per withdrawal. It is therefore worth taking out larger amounts in one go (the maximum amount you can withdraw at any one time is JPY 100,000, which is around CHF 850).

You only need to open a Japanese bank account if you are in paid employment in Japan, as salary payments can only be transferred to Japanese bank accounts. In my case, I had to open a Japanese account because I was working as a teaching assistant at Doshisha, so I was earning a monthly income. Opening a bank account is free of charge and if you want to do so

Doshisha will provide you with a letter, which you simply have to present at the bank counter along with your Swiss passport. The process only takes a few minutes and before you know it you will have a bank card and the documents that go with it.

## **8) Transport**

Kyoto has excellent transport links, with both buses and a subway system. The prices are also kept to a reasonable limit, so a day ticket valid for all buses in Kyoto costs around CHF 4. A half-hour journey (to Osaka, for example) on the subway also costs around CHF 4.

Personally, however, I would recommend buying a bicycle (a new bike will cost you CHF 90), especially for traveling to and from the university every day.

Not just Kyoto, but the whole of Japan is easily accessible in terms of transport. With the *Shinkansen* (Japanese high-speed rail network with travel speeds of 300 km/h), you can get to Tokyo in three hours, for example, or to Hiroshima in an hour. For traveling further afield (to Okinawa, for instance), the best option is to book a flight (an Osaka-Okinawa round trip by air costs CHF 120).

## **9) General information about the university/university life**

Doshisha has two campuses: Imadegawa and Kyotanabe. Double degree students spend all their time on the Imadegawa campus, as this is where the Graduate School of Law and the Law School are. The campus is well laid-out and beautifully designed, including some green spaces and trees, which gives it a welcoming feel. There are also several cafeterias on the campus, as well as a FamilyMart convenience store and a book store.

Aside from studying, you can also apply to be a teaching assistant here, which I can highly recommend – partly for the experience, but also as a way to earn some money.

You can also attend a free Japanese course (for two hours a week). By the time you have completed this course at the end of the year, you can expect to be able to hold a simple conversation or at least be capable of ordering food at a restaurant.

## **10) Teaching/studying at university**

### ***a. General***

Studying at Doshisha is very different from studying at UZH. The main differences are that there are significantly fewer students studying each subject at Doshisha and studies here are geared toward active interaction during classes rather than traditional lectures given by professors.

### ***b. Degree program structure***

Students need to achieve 30 credits to successfully complete a degree program at Doshisha. All course units at Doshisha count for two credits, which corresponds to a module worth six ECTS at UZH. A two-credit unit involves one and a half hours of lectures per week. Students are also required to produce a Master's thesis.

Since you can count five six-ECTS Master's modules from UZH (each worth two credits at Doshisha) toward the 30-credit total you need, you only have to obtain a further 20 credits at Doshisha, which equates to 10 two-credit course units.

Personally, I chose to attend eight two-credit modules in the first semester alone: i) Thesis Tutorial, ii) Corporation and Business Law, iii) International Business Law, iv) International Arbitration, v) American Criminal Law, vi) International Commercial Arbitration, vii) Research & Writing, viii) Introduction to Japanese Law.

I also started my Master's thesis during my first semester at Doshisha, even though it doesn't have to be submitted until July (second semester).

### *c. Tuition/classes*

Compared to UZH, far fewer students are enrolled on individual subject-specific courses at Doshisha. Half of the subjects are studied by just five to ten students, while the rest even involve one-to-one tuition with the relevant professors. 90% of courses are taught in English and one in Japanese, with two interpreters providing simultaneous interpretation. It is up to you to decide whether you want to attend all courses in English. For the sake of experience, I wanted to complete one module in Japanese, but this is not obligatory.

At Doshisha, students do not finalize their choice of subjects until the semester is underway. However, the university sends out an e-mail containing detailed information about the range of subjects on offer a good couple of months before the study program is due to start.

Active participation in classes is encouraged and for most subjects this is taken into account in the grades awarded.

### *d. Resources*

Professors hand out resources free of charge during classes.

All students at Doshisha are allocated a personal study space where they can go and work. This will be in a room with around five to 10 other study spaces for students (mostly Japanese), making it very easy to meet and interact with other students and get to know Japanese culture.

### *e. Examinations*

The examination system at Doshisha differs from the one at UZH in that, for most subjects, the official assessment is based on submitting essays/assignments during the course of the semester, actively participating in class, and, in some cases, giving presentations in classes rather than on taking an exam at the end of the semester. Personally I am a fan of this system, as I think it offers a better way for students to learn and improve their legal English than simply studying for exams at the end of the semester.

## **11) Free time/leisure**

### *a. Culture, information resources, benefits, events, etc.*

Doshisha organizes various events for international students, so there is no difficulty finding opportunities to meet other (international or Japanese) students. These range from cooking events and open lounges to organized excursions. Here are some example of events that have been organized in the past:  
<https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/international/communication/event.html>.

There is also an International Community Lounge on campus, where students can go at any time to meet other people (<https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/international/communication/lounge.html>).

### ***b. Going out, parties***

There is always something going on in Kyoto itself, especially in the Sanjo/Gion-Shijo area (3 km from Doshisha), where you will find countless bars and clubs. Here are just a few examples: [http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g298564-Activities-c20-Kyoto\\_Kyoto\\_Prefecture\\_Kinki.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g298564-Activities-c20-Kyoto_Kyoto_Prefecture_Kinki.html).

Osaka is also well worth visiting. It takes around 30 minutes to get there by subway. Here is just selection of what is on offer there: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g298566-s402/Osaka:Japan:Nightlife.html>.

### ***c. Excursions***

Once the capital of Japan, Kyoto boasts a huge variety of attractions. Here is an excerpt from a Wikipedia article about the city: "Almost every major city in Japan was destroyed by bombing in the Second World War. Only Kyoto – with its 1,600 Buddhist temples, 400 Shinto shrines, palaces, and gardens – was spared as a mark of respect. It is therefore one of the best preserved cities in Japan. [...] A significant number of Japan's most famous buildings and monuments can be found in Kyoto, many of which were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. This makes Kyoto the most popular tourist destination in Japan." I don't think any further explanation is needed. Here is also a compelling short video about Kyoto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd1wzlwKJ0>.

Aside from Kyoto, there are of course countless other Japanese cities that are definitely worth a visit. First of all, there is the capital Tokyo, the nation's economic center and the most densely populated city in the world. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are also very striking places to visit if you want to find out more about Japan's role in the Second World War. In the winter, you can go skiing in Nagano (which hosted the 1998 Winter Olympics) or on Mount Fuji, or take the opportunity to see the local snow monkeys or relax in the hot springs. If you prefer something warmer, you can head to Okinawa for a chance to recharge your batteries on the beach or go diving and discover a breathtaking world under the water.

There are endless opportunities to go and explore the country.

### ***d. Sports***

Doshisha runs around 410 clubs and "circles," which you can take part in free of charge. There are opportunities to participate in both indoor (e.g. basketball) and outdoor sports (e.g. soccer). Here are some of the options available: [https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/student\\_life/s\\_support/club.html](https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/student_life/s_support/club.html).