



Faculty of Law, Graduate School of Law, Doshisha University (Japan)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

Overall good impression. Unfortunately we chose to leave at the end of March because of the pandemic so the rest of the semester was spent doing online classes from Switzerland.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

The staff of Doshisha University is very helpful for all matters. In fact, one needs to send everything to them in order to get the certificate of eligibility and then go to the embassy in Switzerland with the certificate. They also provide us with some choices for accommodations. Pay attention because the deadlines are strict and it takes some time to gather all the necessary documents. Some need to be translated in English by a professional translator (family certificate, salary certificate of the parents, transcripts of grades).

The Doshisha website is not that useful but has more general information about Doshisha. For the rest, I suggest to just look at the documents sent to you, all the information is in there.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

You will be contacted by the person in charge of the double degree students. You can ask that person all kinds of questions. Ms. Ashida was very helpful, especially when we decided to leave Japan because of the pandemic. She helped us with all sorts of things, from closing the bank account to paying our phone bills. However in general, administrative stuff takes a lot of time so be prepared and patient.

4 Housing

The University offers you different choices. All the previous Swiss students chose the private dormitory so I followed their recommendation. Bear in mind that the dormitory has quite strict rules, for instance a curfew at 12 or that you cannot have guests. Moreover, it is quite expensive, around 800 CHF per month and you need to pay the electricity and heating bills which can add up to around 100 CHF per month on top of the rent. The dormitory staff does not speak English, but they are nice and try to be helpful still. There is food in the morning and at night, meat-based, typical Japanese family food. I think that I would try to go in the Doshisha dormitory because it is easier to make friends with other international students. In my dormitory, I was the only non-Japanese girl and it was hard to break the language barrier.

5 Arrival

You will most probably take a flight to Osaka. From there, you have an express train to Kyoto station, which is convenient. We arrived at night so we took a taxi to the dorm, I suggest that you already have some cash on you because the taxi does not accept credit cards. Then, you will have a week organised by the University with meetings and also someone from the Uni will help you open a bank account.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

It is quite easy and cheap to get a phone number. Usually, it is unlimited data, which is good. You will pay around 35 CHF per month.

7 Bank account

I had to open an account with Japan post because I was offered a scholarship. Still, I think it is the easiest solution because a student from Doshisha will go with you to open the account. In Japan, you always use cash, I recommend that you get a japanese bank account to withdraw cash easily. You will also need to pay your phone bill and mandatory health insurance with it. International transfers are complicated as there are no IBAN in Japan (it is only european).

8 Transport

I recommend that you use a bike, either a used one bought from facebook, or go to a bike shop, like "Eirin". Kyoto is a small and flat city, so everything can be done by bike. Plus, subway is quite expensive in comparison.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

Generally, Doshisha is a small and very beautiful University. The graduate school of law is also quite small. Even though there are multiple student clubs, we heard that it was very hard to get in for non-japanese speakers. There are few international students in the masters of law, the other master students take mostly japanesetaught courses. That is why we were often only two to three students per class.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

It's mostly small groups with a lot of discussion. The attendance is mandatory for all courses and counts for the final grade. There are no written exams but reports and papers to write or oral presentations. I would say it is less demanding than UZH. You need to write another master thesis, the subject of which might be imposed to you. Don't leave it to the last minute.

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

Kyoto is a small and very charming city. You will never be able to visit all the temples there are. The city itself is surrounded by mountains, which offer a lot of hikes. The Kamo river flows all the way through the city and it is a very nice place to chill or jog along. You get ten times 20% off any train ride (also bullet train) as a student. Osaka is less than an hour away. You can go to Tokyo with the bullet train in three hours. And in general Japan has a lot to offer.

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