

Taking the Road Less Travelled



A PRIMER

STUDY IN CHINA

JOURNEY TO THE EAST



Studying in China is a daunting but rewarding experience. You will get front-row seats to global events while living in a country that is as historical as it is transformative.

You will be joined by the best and brightest that China has to offer, given their eminently selective admissions process. Be prepared for a demanding workload from a rigorous curriculum led by some of the world's leading subject-matter experts.



It might be challenging, but you will not have to go at it alone. The strong Singaporean student community in China frequently organises events and get-togethers to offer support and respite amidst our hectic schedules.

This information booklet was also put together through the efforts of Singaporean students in China to give you a better glimpse of what life here is like. We hope you can join us!

HIGHLIGHTS



Network and Learn

Exposure to thought leaders from around the world, with ample exchange opportunities with internationally renowned colleges. Forums are commonly held in both English and Mandarin.

Be at the Cutting Edge of your Chosen Field

Expect a heavy academic workload from a rigorous curriculum led by leading subject-matter experts. Leading universities also have abundant resources for students to pursue their interests, such as Tsinghua's X-Lab startup accelerator.



Immerse in the Culture of a Civilisation

Most faculties offer classes that aid in familiarising students with the history of a given field. You will be well-equipped to draw links between China's cultural context and how it engages with the rest of the world.

CHALLENGES



Speaking in Mandarin

The language can take some getting used to. Getting weird looks from locals is a rite of passage. Practice makes perfect!



The Great Firewall

Access to popular websites such as Instagram and Wikipedia is curtailed. You will quickly acclimatise to alternatives like WeChat and Weibo.



Learning Styles

There is a stronger emphasis on memorisation in examinations here. However, seminar-style classes that allow for more discussion are on the rise after student feedback.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION



Beijing Fitness University?

This is the name Tsinghua is sometimes jokingly referred to, as passing fitness tests is an undergrad graduation requirement. Sports meets are a big part of campus life in most Chinese universities!



Count on a Singaporean

The Singaporean student community is always ready to help. Information such as course curriculums is sometimes not updated on English versions of school websites, so don't hesitate to ask us!



E-Payment Wizardry

Most merchants, even roadside stalls, prefer accepting payments through apps like WeChat Pay or AliPay. You will be assisted by your university in setting these up so you'll be good to go.

TAKE IT FROM US

BRYAN FOO

2018 PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service)
Undergraduate, International Politics
Peking University

My education experience in China has been both meaningful and eye-opening. Through our classes, I am able to get a better understanding of the Chinese perspective - how it views the world and itself. The best and most organic way to understand the Chinese culture and lifestyle is to spend time in China. There are many other things to look forward to in China - the seamless and cashless payment systems, affordable and quick food delivery, travelling scenic and diverse landscapes. Also, it's the best way to brush up one's Chinese language abilities!



MOCK YI JUN

2016 PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service)
Postgraduate, Management Science (Global Affairs)
Tsinghua University

With a population of 1.39 billion¹ and 18.69%² of the global economy - China is a world of its own, and no country will have a larger impact on our generation. Studying in China has been an eye-opening experience, and there is no better place to be if Asia is the place you hope to live and work.

YUKI CHONG

2017 PSC Scholarship
Undergraduate, Liberal Arts (World History)
Peking University

Being in Beijing for the past two years has been one of the most fulfilling and challenging experiences of my life. From examinations in Mandarin and classes on fields I was completely unfamiliar with (e.g. Theoretical Marxism and Chinese Archaeology), to the everyday interactions with my Chinese peers and my growing sensitivity to the cultural nuances of Chinese society, these are experiences and perspectives that I believe are simply unique to this country and very much irreplaceable elsewhere.



JONATHAN KOH

2018 PSC Master's Scholarship
Postgraduate, Law
Peking University, School of Transnational Law (Shenzhen)



One quickly realises that there is a strong sense of duality in China. The country's ardent desire to surge upward in economic and technological quarters is matched only by its cultural and historical sensitivity. I have had the privilege of witnessing this firsthand during my time in China. Professors and policymakers alike make a conscious effort to ensure Western traditions, though ubiquitous, are not unthinkingly emulated.

Studying in China demands a different frame of mind, as parameters are reset and assumptions questioned. My time here has trained me to wield a comparative, cross-cultural lens when analysing issues and this has made an invaluable difference to my outlook.

¹ Source: World Bank for the year 2018

² Source: Statista.com for the year 2018

STUDYING IN FRANCE

An approach to education and a way of life that challenges the familiar, leaving one with renewed lenses through which to analyse the world

Higher Education Pathways in France

01 | GRANDES ÉCOLES



02 | UNIVERSITÉS



03 | DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES



Why France?

Live in the heart of Continental Europe and gain exposure to EU politics

Be in small campuses with students from diverse backgrounds

Learn a new language

Experience a different mode of life

Programmes taught in English are available

Experience a different approach to education

Step into the unfamiliar and gain new perspectives

Some Challenges

Language Barriers

But also an opportunity for learning

Less administrative support from school

But breeds independence and resourcefulness

Being far from home

But strong support from S'poreans in France



JONAH TAN

2019 SAF Scholarship
Sciences Po-Columbia
Dual BA Program
Class of 2023

"Choosing to go to France was a stab in the dark for me, and the first few months were no doubt unfamiliar – having to cook independently while juggling academic life and dealing with the French bureaucracy. It was precisely this exposure, however, that made the past few months in France less of a strictly academic experience and more of a broader cultural integration that will stay with me for years to come."

SABAREISH ILANKATHIR

2018 PSC (Foreign Service)
Scholarship
Sciences Po Paris (Le Havre)
Class of 2022

"I think it would be an overstatement to say that studying in France is an insurmountable challenge. The torrential rains of Le Havre hit you directly in the face (they call it the crachin normand) wherever you go. In this small town, as you head home, you have no choice but to take the same route past the very same patisserie every day. Despite all this, you can't help but feel that you are in the center of a changing Europe. Studying here exposes you to a new language and a new culture. It is more challenging, but it's also undeniably meaningful."

SABRINA LEE

2015 PSC Scholarship
Sciences Po-UC Berkeley
Dual BA Program
Class of 2019

"With little knowledge of the French language, it was with trepidation that I first embarked on my studies in France. The experience pushed me out of my comfort zone, made me confront the unfamiliar and in the process allowed me to grow and develop as a person. As I immersed myself in another country's environments, I could look back on our own with renewed perspectives and ideas."

IAN KANG

2018 PSC Scholarship
Sciences Po Paris (Le Havre)
Class of 2022

"Studying in France takes you out of the Anglo-American paradigm of academia, discovering a whole alternative universe of research and thought. This breaks the conventional systems and moulds which exist within our minds when we approach any given topic or situation. Furthermore, studying in France offers you a continental Europe-outlook which in fact is more different than one would expect from the UK worldview and systems."



STUDYING IN GERMANY

Brief Overview: Essential Information



ACADEMIC CALENDAR



Differs from university to university, but generally:

Winter Semester (Oct-Mar): Lectures held mid-Oct to mid-Feb (with a two-week Christmas break from end Dec to early Jan)

Summer Semester (Apr-Sep): Lectures from early Apr to end Jul
The **non-lecture periods** are for sitting of exams, submission of term papers and completion of internships, but there will also be plenty of free time to travel or return home!



TERTIARY EDUCATION

Universities typically offer **3-year Bachelor's programmes**, with **Master's programmes being 1-2 years** long.

Universities specialise in theoretical education.

Technical Universities (TU) focus more on engineering courses.

Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) offer more practical training/experience and are more job-oriented.



UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Universities are typically strong in specific fields, with differing strengths, and therefore do not always rank highly on overall international rankings which mainly emphasise research output. German rankings (e.g. CHE University Ranking) instead compare specific faculties and criteria (e.g. student-teacher ratio).



COST OF LIVING

Semester contributions are on average **250 EUR** and include free access to public transportation. Tuition is otherwise free, except for in the state of Baden-Württemberg (1500 EUR per semester for non-EU citizens). **Health insurance** is compulsory (about **100 EUR** monthly). Students spend on average 800 EUR per month (incl. rent), although this differs based on city.



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Most undergraduate programmes are taught in German (though there are also English degrees offered, especially at private institutions), whereas most master's programmes are more international, with many courses in English.

Students generally need to be at B2-C1 level in German (more info on language requirements later).

HIGHLIGHTS AND OBJECTIVES

WHY GERMANY?

REASONS TO STUDY IN GERMANY



Cosmopolitan, with a pluralism of ethno-cultural diversity and lifestyles



Generally safe, with economic and political stability



Known as the land of thinkers and poets: rich culture and history



World-class education with long and famous university tradition



Progressive, inclusive and environmentally conscious



Perfectly situated for exploring Europe (bordered by 9 countries!)



Known for beautiful natural landscapes and charming cities



Huge international student community (one of the most popular destinations for EU students)

Learn one of the most popular languages in the world!

"Around **130 million people** speak German as their mother language or as a second language. German is the most widely spoken mother language in the European Union and an official language in seven countries."

(Source: <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/culture/the-german-language-surprising-facts-and-figures>)



Neuschwanstein Castle, Bavaria
Photo by Eric Marty on Unsplash



What do I need to study in Germany?

APPLICATION PROCESS



ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

e.g. Singapore's GCE "A" Levels min. 3 H2s, 1 H1
at least one mathematical / science subject

GERMAN PROFICIENCY

(not needed for international degree)

TestDAF (TDN 4) available in Singapore
DSH (DSH-2) in Germany
= generally B2-C1 proficiency (based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), admission possible with lower scores based on university

HOW TO APPLY

Many universities use the platform **uni-assist**, but every university has a different application process, so check your preferred university's website for more information.

LEARNING GERMAN

Singapore: Goethe-Institut
Germany: Students may enrol in language courses offered at universities (usually between Jun-Sep), Volkshochschule, private language schools, and summer schools

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES



LANGUAGE BARRIER

While many Germans are able to speak English, the language of administration is still German and this may daunt those who are new to the language. Students may contact the DAAD if assistance is required.

BUREAUCRACY

Germany is famous for its bureaucracy and the many administrative hurdles one has to clear in order to finally settle in the country. The settling-in process may seem endless and stressful.

DIFFERENT CULTURAL PRACTICES

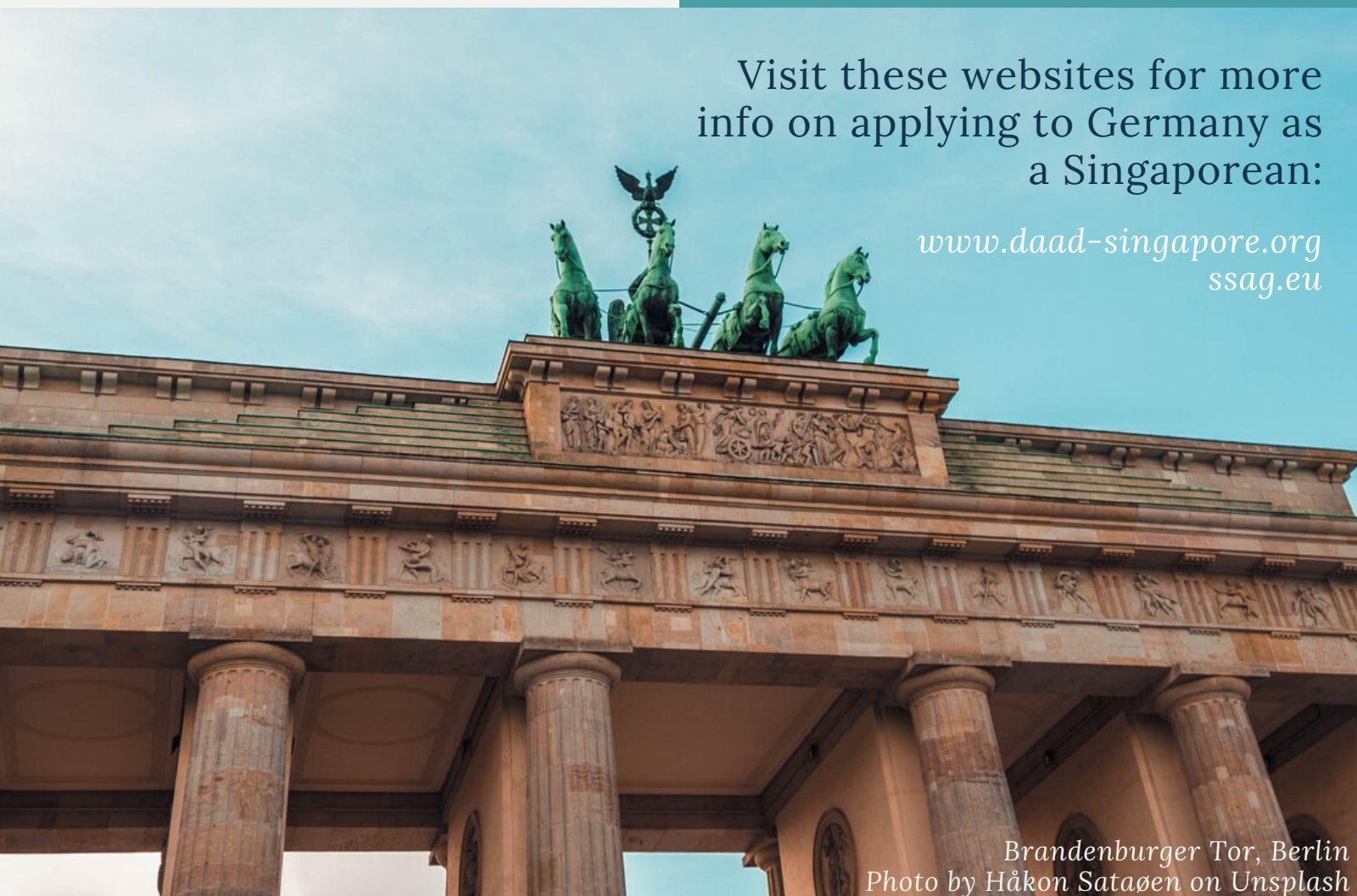
Living in Germany comes with many quirks, such as having to take recycling very seriously. You will have to get used to sorting your trash all the time!

SMALLER SG COMMUNITY

The SG community is much smaller relative to places like the UK (although still sizeable in bigger cities e.g. Munich). One definitely has to step out of their comfort zone (and perhaps into the huge international student community)!

Visit these websites for more info on applying to Germany as a Singaporean:

www.daad-singapore.org
ssag.eu





AMANDA LEE JIAQI

2015 PSC Scholarship
Freie Universität Berlin

Social and Cultural Anthropology (Undergraduate)

Three years of language immersion, enriching debates and hilarious cultural misunderstandings later, I look back and have no regrets choosing Germany for my undergraduate studies. Berlin, in particular, is an international, student-friendly city with no shortage of spontaneity and unexpected encounters. My time in Berlin has taught me to respect different, sometimes opposing, perspectives and engaged me with ideas of justice and equity.

YUAN TING LEE

2015 PSC Scholarship
Hertie School of Governance
Public Policy (Master's)

Studying in the capital of a major European power is undeniably exciting, and conversations about politics in Europe and beyond can be heard floating in hallways at all times. It is challenging to move to a new place where I did not grasp the language fully, but constant effort and practice has made the transition much smoother for me. I am getting used to something new about life in Germany everyday and this is undeniably exciting.

NICOLE WONG YIFEI

2018 PSC Scholarship (Teaching Service)
Universität Leipzig
German as a Foreign and Second Language
(Undergraduate)

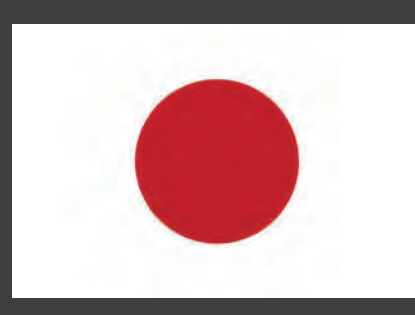
Leipzig has a young, lively energy that can be felt even with constant reminders of its rich history. Walking on the streets, in the footsteps of famous historical figures such as Bach and Goethe and surrounded by beautiful old architecture, one also sees people from all over the world, clear evidence of Leipzig's international appeal. As a city, Leipzig is neither too big nor too small, managing to be both exciting and cosy, due also in part to the fun and warm-hearted people one is bound to meet.

Photo by Roman Kraft on Unsplash
Heidelberg





Welcome to Japan



Highlights



Where East Meets West

People may think of Japan as a culturally homogeneous nation, but this would be glossing over the incredible diversity of cultural influences in Japanese society. Embracing food, sports and music from all over the world (but especially America), and yet taking care to put a subtle East Asian twist on them - Japan is an amazing place where polar opposites of East and West meet, and seem to get along just fine.



Blend of the Traditional and the Modern

Japan has robot-run hotels and restaurants, but Japan also has thousands of Shinto shrines and sumo wrestling. In Tokyo, the electronics and anime haven of Akihabara is within walking distance from the cultural heritage centre of Asakusa. As the old are celebrated for their history, new frontiers are constantly being pushed. Watch as Japan redesigns tradition and rethinks modernity.



Mega-Cities and Mountain Ranges

Japanese cities have grown to astonishing proportions, and Tokyo is one of the most populous cities in the world: there is never a dull moment in the buzz of the big cities with bright lights. But while urbanisation is taken to the next level in Japan, the countryside remains a breathtaking preserve of scenic mountain trails and tranquil village life, not to mention an abundance of onsen spots for a relaxing weekend getaway.

Brief Overview

Why Study in Japan?

With many scholars heading to the US and Europe, it is a break from the usual to study in Asia. Within Asia, Japan has achieved incredible development while still preserving many of its traditions and cultures.

Japan is a country much like Singapore and yet so different in many ways. To be able to study and examine things from an Asian perspective provides a differentiating factor from Western-centric universities.

Unique Points

Japan is a melting pot of the old and the new, the East and the West, the urban and nature - there really isn't anywhere quite like Japan.

The culture and lifestyles here are arguably vastly different from anywhere else in the world.

The opportunity to study alongside interesting people from different parts of Asia such as Laos, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan whom you would not usually have the opportunity to interact with.

Challenges

Creating an alphabet for your language	Rome Bulgaria Greece
Creating an alphabet for your language then deciding to use a cooler one some other people made	Norway Germany Britain
Instead of creating an alphabet just makes a letter for every word in your language	China
Not having an alphabet for your language, stealing one from your neighbours and using it in the wrong way then also creating 2 new alphabets for your language and using all 3 at once	Japan

Limited Programmes in English

As an **undergraduate**, you have the option of attending a **one-year preparatory course** before enrolling in bachelor programmes conducted in Japanese.

Some of the prominent Undergraduate Degrees conducted in English include:

- **University of Tokyo's** PEAK Program that offers two courses: the International Program on Japan in East Asia, and the International Program on Environmental Sciences
- **Tokyo Institute of Technology's** Global Scientists and Engineers Program that offers an interdisciplinary curriculum of Science and Engineering
- **Keio University and Waseda University's** undergraduate programmes that are typically humanities-related courses

For **graduate programmes**, the range of English courses is much wider with **most major universities offering various English courses**.

Language Barrier

Japanese is the **only language** that pervades **day-to-day life**, with public transport information, bank statements and administration typically being conveyed in Japanese and only Japanese. This can pose **intimidating challenges** for students entering a foreign environment, and is made worse by the **bureaucracy behind Japan's processes**. Not knowing Japanese can be debilitating and alienating.

However, most **Japanese universities** are intensifying their efforts to **integrate international students** into the university, and offer support for international students who may not know Japanese. This includes **assigning a local 'buddy'** who will be able to **assist in translating documents** for students who have yet to master Japanese. They are also willing to converse with you in Japanese if you are looking to gain fluency in their language!

Moving In

Apart from university dormitories, it may be **difficult to find affordable apartments**. However, do take note that **university dormitories are limited** in availability and one has to go through **competitive balloting processes** to get them. **Private apartments** tend to be **unfurnished** and come with various one-time fees and contractual terms.

However, **sharehouses provide affordable solutions** - as long as you are not too particular about privacy! And with a **tightly-knit Singaporean community in Japan**, all you have to do is to reach out, and someone would share their own personal experiences and offer **helpful advice**. The **Singapore Students' Association Japan (SSAJ)** offers a useful guide to surviving in Japan at ssaj.net

Practical Tips

Undergraduate

Admission for undergraduate programmes are mostly in April, with some in September

Basic Admission Requirements:

- High school results, standardised test results, personal statement / letters of recommendation, etc.
- At least N1 to N2 proficiency in Japanese might be required for some programmes
- Universities may have varying requirements for programmes taught in English, especially at the graduate level

For More Information:

- The Japan Student Services Organisation (JASSO) offers one-year pre-university Japanese language courses
- Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) offers information to help international students understand Japan

Graduate

Admission for graduate programmes are mostly around December/January, with some admissions in September.

Masters in Public Policy at the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo

- Application Deadline: December 2019
- Interview: February 2020
- Announcement of Admission Results: March 2020

Graduate Program on Global Society, University of Tokyo

- Application Deadline: Mid-January 2020
- Announcement of Admission Results: March 2020
- Requires GRE results for admission

Testimonials



Brendan

2014 Overseas Merit Scholarship (Open): University of Tokyo: Master of Public Policy/ International Program

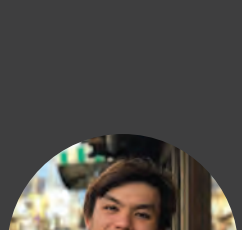
Studying in Japan was a highly enriching experience. Having studied in both the UK and the US, I was eager to find out what it was like to pursue higher education in an Asian country. The Graduate School of Public Policy allowed me to take courses which explored Japan's take on public policy, from foreign policy to monetary policy, which I found very informative. I was also provided with various opportunities to take my learning outside of the classroom, through conferences and events. Of course, the world-class faculty and my talented classmates helped to complete my experience. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed studying in a country that had so much to offer in terms of policy innovation despite its emphasis on culture and tradition.



Xinyi

2015 Public Service Commission Scholarship: University of Tokyo: Master of Public Policy/ International Program

It has been a wonderful experience studying and living here in Tokyo. The Graduate School of Public Policy offers an interesting variety of courses to suit students' differing interests. There are also several opportunities to go abroad during the programme through intensive courses or student conferences. Most importantly, I have found it deeply rewarding to truly get to know my friends from all around the world at GraSPP. Outside of school, there are many things to do in Tokyo - be it attending talks given by world renowned speakers or savouring the many delicious food options on offer.



Jeremy

2013 Singapore Government Scholarship (Open): University of Tokyo: Master of Public Policy/ International Program

I had completed my undergraduate degree in Computer Science at the National University of Singapore (NUS). During my time at NUS, I attended a Summer School in UC Berkeley, USA, an exchange at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan and a Winter School at Yonsei University, South Korea. I saw Japan as a place of opportunities to really get to interact and engage academically. It is a city that shares many similarities to Singapore and yet different. Both Japan and Singapore have the same influences from both the East and the West, and have a strong focus on infrastructural development. However, they differ greatly when it comes to things like tradition preservation, customs and citizen interaction. While I struggled to choose between LKYSPP and UTokyo, I'm glad I chose UTokyo as it provides me more opportunities to achieve personal growth.

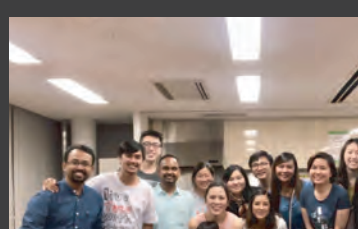
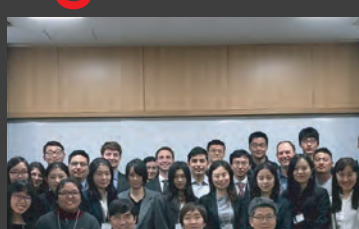
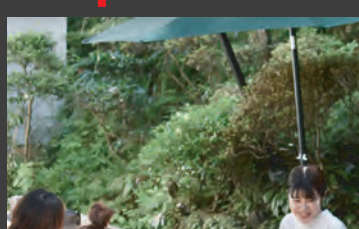


Danyon

2016 Public Service Commission Scholarship: University of Tokyo: Graduate Program on Global Society

For me, pursuing studies in Japan has been a plunge into a cultural environment that starkly contrasts my undergraduate experience in the UK. Living here has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to sneak a glimpse into the underbelly of Japanese society - to see past the hospitable image that Japan projects to tourists visiting for a short period of time, and gain a fuller understanding of how Japan has fascinatingly evolved into where it is today.

Japan Through the Lens



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