



BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Sophia University
Academic Year 2013-2014
Program Guide

Sophia University
http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/e_top

Preparing for Study Abroad

- To maximize the study abroad experience, students should prepare themselves by learning about their host country, its history, and culture. Students might want to begin with: <http://www.economist.com/topics> or <http://www.britannica.com/> for a summary.
- Know what is happening in the news in the host city by reading the local newspaper at: <http://www.allyoucanread.com/japanese-newspapers/>
- Engaging with and adapting to a different culture is an inherent component of study abroad. Students may find the following websites useful to learn about intercultural communication before they leave home: <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>
Customs and traditions in the host country are different from those at home. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions, students may want to visit the following website: www.hthstudents.com
- Students and their parents should refer to the Office of International Programs website (www.bc.edu/international) and specifically to the *Study Abroad Handbook* for more information regarding the abroad experience.
- Prior to departure, students will meet with their International Study Advisor at an orientation to help them further prepare for their study abroad experience.

On-Site Contact Information

- **Ms. Yu Chin**
Overseas Liaison Center
Tel: +81-3-3238-3521
Fax: +81-3-3238-3554
Email: overseas@cl.sophia.ac.jp

Travel Information

- Pick-up service is available only to those students who have made accommodation arrangements through Sophia University, and who have requested for the service by the deadline indicated on the Arrival Information sheet provided with the acceptance materials. Students must arrive at Narita Airport on the designated arrival dates, September 19th-20th 2013, between 9am-5pm.
- Narita airport is far from Tokyo, and it is recommended that students use the airport pick-up service. However, if students do not wish to use the pick-up service, they may reach their destination by limousine bus, Keisei Skyliner (train), or taxi. Information counter staff can assist with using these transportation modes.

- **Visa Information:** Sophia University will send you a Certificate of Eligibility (COE), a document which you will need in order to obtain your visa. You will need to submit the COE and your acceptance letter to the Japanese Consulate nearest your home. The student visa will be stamped in the back of your passport, and the COE will be stapled into your passport. As an exchange student, your visa status should be “College Student.” To locate the appropriate consular office, you can contact the Boston Consulate General of Japan at (617) 973-9772 or <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/index.html>. Along with the completed application for a College Student Visa, you should submit the COE, your passport, and a passport-sized photograph to the nearest Japanese Consulate. Please consult the Japanese Embassy website at <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/index.html> for updated information on required visa application documents, regulations and procedures, as they may vary from state to state.

Academics

Program dates and Academic calendar	
Fall 2013	Spring 2014
September 19-20: Designated arrival dates	April TBD: Designated arrival date
September 21: Orientation program	April TBD: Orientation program
September 22: Japanese placement test	April TBD: Japanese placement test
September 28: Classes begin	April TBD: Pre-registration
September 22 -October 4: Course Registration	April TBD: Classes begin
December 22-January 5: Vacation	July TBD: Final examinations
January 24- 31: Final examinations	

- Check in at http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/academic_calendar for an updated academic calendar and semester dates.
- For course selection information, please refer to the course offering section found at http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/course_info
- **Important:** Students are required to have completed at least 2 semesters of Japanese prior to arriving in Tokyo. Your Japanese proficiency level will be assessed upon arrival. You are strongly advised to prepare in advance for the Japanese placement test, in order to place higher. There are three levels of Japanese offered (1-3).
- Course approval information will be found at: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/courseapproval.html>
- Information about transcripts and grades is available at: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/transcripts.html>
- If you have a learning disability you should discuss with your ISA whether your host university is able to make appropriate accommodations; if so, bring documentation from your doctor or the BC Disabilities Office to support any request for accommodations at your host university

Housing and Living

- Sophia University offers three housing options: home stay, dormitory, or apartment style university housing. There is no on-campus dormitory, and all students commute to Sophia from their housing. Housing fees are paid directly to Sophia University. After students specify their housing preferences, the Overseas Liaison Office will make the decision of the placement based on availability. Once the arrangement is fixed, a detailed housing notice will be sent to the individual students. Students should read the notice carefully and submit the necessary payment by the indicated deadline. The majority of housing, except for Wakejuku and Kashiya residences, requires students to prepay the housing fee for the whole semester in lump sum before their arrival.
- For more information on housing, please refer to http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/housingInfo_costs .
- Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at: <http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/2012-2013%20estimated%20student%20budget%20w%20housing%20Aug%202012.pdf>
- **Local Transportation:**
Convenient transportation can be achieved using the multitude of train, subway, and bus lines. Student commuter passes can be purchased at the railway station by filling out a request form and submitting it with the Student ID card. To use a bus line, students must apply for a Student Commuter Certificate at the Student Center. A railway access map can be found at http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/info/access/directions/access_all
- **Sophia Sponsored Activities:**
Students are encouraged to join any of the wide-range of clubs and sports offered at Sophia. Past participants have noted that the university social life is centered around club interaction and provides the easiest way to meet Japanese students.
- **Meals:**
Meals are provided on a pay-as-you-go basis and students' options will vary according to their housing. More information will be available in the acceptance packet and during orientation.

Wellness, Health and Safety

- Make sure that you have had any required or recommended vaccinations for your travel destinations by consulting the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.
- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services is an emergency health and emergency services provider. All registered BC students are covered by our blanket policy while living and traveling outside of the United States. For more information, visit the following website: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- You are encouraged to consult HTH online services for health and safety information about all world destinations, travel illnesses, and as a resource for international medical providers
- Students are advised to visit the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov/> for important travel information including travel advisories.
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. Students will have a smoother transition by making sure that they prepare to remain healthy. Following are some websites that provide important information and advice about how to have a healthy and safe experience abroad:
http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/culture_shock.html

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html>
<http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2007/11/20/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-and-how-to-beat-them/>

- Be aware that the manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the conditions of medical facilities, and how health care is afforded may be quite different from U.S. practices. U.S. health care values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced; even notions regarding the onset of an illness or the timing of expert attention may be considered culturally based.
- Refer to your Study Abroad Handbook for further information about health and safety issues including women, LGBT, disabled people and others
- In the event of a large-scale emergency, such as a natural disaster, you should first text your onsite coordinator; follow the emergency procedures discussed in the onsite orientation; and call or text your parents to let them know where you are and that you are safe
- The emergency phone number in Japan is 110 for Police and 119 for Fire, Ambulance and Emergency Rescue
- Be sure to visit the OIP website for additional information about Health and Safety: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
BC emergency contact information:
OIP (617) 552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
BCPD (617) 552-4444 (outside of normal business hours)
- Alcohol and Drugs
In many cultures, alcohol consumption is an acceptable part of the culture and people are taught to drink in moderation at home. Many countries have a lower drinking age than the U.S. while other countries have drinking and drug abuse laws that may be more severe. Students are subject to the laws of their host country, so if students choose to drink alcohol abroad, always drink responsibly and be knowledgeable about their host country's laws by visiting:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses

Finances

- The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad: <http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/2012-2013%20estimated%20student%20budget%20w%20housing%20Aug%202012.pdf>
- In addition, Sophia University has prepared an estimated budget for exchange students: http://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions/exchangeprograms/housingInfo_costs/living_expenses
- Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/Scholarship_Opportunities.html

Returning to BC

- Complete a Program Evaluation. Upon completion of their program, OIP will e-mail the link to the evaluation.
- Mentor an exchange student from the host university by contacting oiexchange@bc.edu
- Volunteer for Discovery Night, Pre-departure Orientation, Re-entry seminar by contacting the International Study Advisor, Christina Dimitrova at dimitroc@bc.edu

- It is not uncommon when students return from studying abroad to experience “reverse” culture shock. The following may help students transition back to home:
<http://www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/shock.shtml>

References

- **Useful websites:**
<http://www.roughguides.com/> travel guidebook
- Student and parent guides at <http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/index.html>