



The Education Abroad Program office wants to hear about your experience abroad! Tell us about your experience by filling out the *Returned Student Report for Internships*. Your feedback will be used to help improve programs and services for future students and be a valuable resource for future students who are interested in working abroad.

The Returned Student Report consists of two parts:

- Part A: Participant Information
- Part B: Internship Information

Part A and B will be made public and available online to future students interested in learning more about the internship process and program. Education Abroad Program will preserve your anonymity by not revealing your name or any personal details.

Part A

Participant Information

Please provide the following information.

Name:			
Student Status:	Domestic	Home Institution: <i>(please select one)</i>	University of Alberta
Faculty:	Faculty of Engineering	Degree Status:	Undergraduate
Major/Minor:	Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering Biomedical Option Co-Operative Program		
Current Year of Study	4th		

Part B

Internship Program Information

Please provide the following details related to your Education Abroad Program Internship.

Host Organization:	Hokkaido University	Position Title:	Research Assistant	
City/Town:	Sapporo	Country:	Japan	
Was your internship paid?	Funding was obtained by scholarships and savings	Internship Period:	05/23/2016	08/30/2016
Did you participate on an exchange or summer program during your internship?	Co-Op work term			
What working language(s) did you use in the workplace? <i>Check all that apply</i>	English			

What is your proficiency in these working language(s)? <i>Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Fluent</i>	Fluent
Prior to your departure, did you take any language courses? If so, what level?	No language courses were taken for learning Japanese. But I read some language books and I learned to read hiragana/katakana (Japanese letters) and some kanji (Chinese characters) before travelling to Japan.
How important is it to be proficient in the working language(s) for your internship?	Very important
What immigration documents (e.g. work, residence permits etc.) were required to live and work in your host country?	VISA for working in Japan
What issues (if any) did you encounter while obtaining these immigration documents?	One of the documents that were required for the VISA was to be provided by the host institution, but the letter took 1 month to get to my house, so the beginning of the internship was postponed by 3 weeks.
What tips would you give to future students regarding their visa/work permit?	Check the details about the VISA requirements with much anticipation and don't purchase a ticket too close to the date that you will likely obtain a VISA. I had to change the date of my flight because of a delay in my case, but this was an unforeseen circumstance.

Position Details

What were your expectations at the beginning of the internship? Have these expectations been met?

At the beginning of my internship, I was presented with a list of tasks to be completed. I completed the large part of the tasks during the first month of the internship; and at that point my professor started to give me more work, and then I think I lost sight of the scope of the project. I think that they were happy with what I did.

Please describe the duties and responsibilities you had in your position.

- 1) Research survey of recent trend on the method and usage of artificial materials in knee joint reconstruction techniques.
- 2) Review the data of previous knee joint ligament bundle containing force experiments and make suggestions for improvement.
- 3) Conduct knee joint ligament bundle containing force experiments and conduct a statistical analysis of the collected data.
- 4) Obtain the material properties of artificial ligaments and compare it with those of natural ligaments.
- 5) Measure geometric properties of the natural knee joint ligaments by using MRI.
- 6) Convert an MRI image into an FEM; 7) Assess whether the current method/materials used in knee joint ligament reconstruction are appropriate.

Please describe the working conditions (e.g. hours worked, atmosphere, environment etc.).

My contract was to work 40 hours a week. The work was done either in an office (on the computer) or in a lab, where the necessary equipment was used to perform experiments. The work took place in the engineering buildings of the Hokkaido University. All of my colleagues were friendly and polite. My direct supervisor was tremendously hospitable and supporting of my work and he strove to ensure that I had a good experience during my internship; and I did.

What challenges/issues did you encounter during your internship? (e.g. language barrier)

The most challenging activity that I did during the internship was to use some computer programs to make a useful surface model that could be used in solid mechanics simulations. The challenge was that the process depended more on the speed of the computers. Unfortunately, I think that a lot of useful time was dedicated to tasks involving simple decisions but a lot of work was lost because of the computer crashing or the software not working properly. At least, this internship showed my boss and the other colleagues that the process that I was working on is easy to spend too much time doing; and without guarantee that things will work properly in the end.

How has the internship impacted your academic and/or professional goals?

I am more interested in travelling to other Asian countries and discovering their cultures. I think that I will look for opportunities to do so throughout my career. (This was my first time to visit an Asian country).

How did you meet people outside of work?

Initiating conversation with people in an attempt to discover their culture and to learn their language. I made a lot of friends in this manner. I met some at the gym and some while travelling or hiking in the mountains.

Housing Information

To the best of your knowledge, what housing options are available to students?	Hokkaido University has student dorms throughout the city. Students that are very proficient in Japanese may be successful in finding other housing that is not associated with the university, but the language barrier is certainly an obstacle.
What type of housing did you stay in?	International Student Dorm for Hokkaido University
How satisfied were you with your housing choice?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 = Not at all satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 = Very satisfied
What should future students be aware of when looking for similar housing? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Lease agreements, deposits, tenant rights</i>• <i>Utilities and furniture</i>• <i>Location and neighbourhoods</i>• <i>Safety and security</i>• <i>Type of resources available to look for housing (eg: Craigslist)</i>	The location of the dorm that I stayed in (Hokkaido University International Student Dormitory Kita 8 East) was very convenient; it was close to the university, and there were many store close by where one can purchase food. Another student from the university was in another dorm and he had to ride a bicycle for ~30 minutes to get to the university. From my dorm, it took ~15 minutes to walk to the university.

Health and Safety

Are there any specific health/safety issues that future students should be made aware of? What precautions can you recommend to mitigate or eliminate these issues?

Anything specific would pertain to the internship work; the supervisor should be able to inform the students further.

Cultural Adaptation

What cultural differences (if any) did you find particularly challenging?

The Japanese people are very friendly and they want to socialize with foreigners and know about them, but they are very shy; in order to break this barrier you have to be able to speak a minimum level of Japanese; unfortunately, I didn't speak very much Japanese when I arrived to Japan, so it took me almost two months to be able to have very simple and basic conversations in Japanese, but this enabled me to make many friends, and very quickly the situation changed and I many enjoyable social experiences with Japanese people.

What parts of your host country's culture did you most appreciate?

The food was amazing! I made Japanese friends that taught me how to cook some Japanese dishes.
The people were very nice and friendly, although a bit shy at first.
The nature in Japan is very beautiful and impressive.
There are a lot of historical places to visit; there is a lot to see.
Transportation by rail was very convenient; the bus system was also very useful.

Costs and Budgeting

Please describe your basic costs in Canadian dollars. This will help future internship students plan their own budgets.

Airfare to host country	\$ 1,800.00	Brief Description	Cost was increased because the flight date was changed.
Visa fees	\$?	Brief Description	I cannot remember how much I paid.
Books/term (if applicable)	\$ n/a	Brief Description	No books; stationary was bought by the lab.
Accommodation/month	\$ 340.00	Brief Description	Average of the 3 months that I was there.
Meals/month	\$	Brief Description	Depends on how much you cook or eat out.
Health insurance/month	\$ 25/month	Brief Description	I was covered by my parents, but I got a local health insurance; the price corresponds to the Japanese one.
Local transportation/month	\$ 0	Brief Description	I was allowed to borrow a bicycle from the lab.
Personal spending/month	\$	Brief Description	
Communications/month (e.g. phone)	\$ 6.33/month	Brief Description	I had a data only plan (4 GB/month; company: OCN).
Other travel	\$ 1500	Brief Description	I did a couple of long trips through Japan. The airplane tickets were the most expensive item.
What unexpected costs did you encounter?	A hostel membership fee (\$25).		

Funding your International Experience

Please indicate how you financed your program. This will help future students plan their own budgets. Check all that apply.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from UAlberta <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from Host Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Student loans <input type="checkbox"/> Family contributions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal savings <input type="checkbox"/> Employment while in host country <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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Final Thoughts

What were some highlights of your experience abroad?

I did a visit to Tokyo and I stayed in the house of a Japanese friend that I made when she visited Canada 3 years ago. Her family didn't speak English, so I learned a lot of Japanese. I had a lot of vacation time, so I went to a lot of different places and enjoyed a great variety of nature in Japan, including Yakushima and Amami Oshima; these places are great for people interested in nature, diving/snorkeling and entomology.

Would you recommend your internship program to other students? Why or why not?

Yes! I think that this was a very valuable experience. Living in Japan is not as expensive as people say (as long as you don't only eat at expensive restaurants). I recommend this internship to students that are interested in seeing something very different and probably also in learning another language. It's also a very safe place.

Please provide any final information/tips for students interested in working abroad that you would like to share.

Be open minded; accept other ideas; forget about embarrassment (it's the biggest obstacle when trying to learn a language because people are to worried about making mistakes to try to speak with locals); listen to people speak the language even when you don't understand what they are saying (eventually you start to understand it); be patient with the process; try to enjoy every experience that you have. You can get a local health insurance offered by the government in Japan that is relatively inexpensive, and it will greatly reduce the costs if something happens and you require medical attention in Japan.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience. Your opinion is important to us and will help enhance the programs and services for students working abroad.

To submit this report, please upload the report on Moodle (via the Education Abroad Online Pre-departure Course).

Protection of Privacy - The personal information requested on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33 (c) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be protected under Part 2 of that Act. It will be used for the purpose of managing the consent for disclosure of personal information process; Parts A and B will be made available on the Education Abroad Program website to help future students learn more about the internship process and the internship program you chose. The Education Abroad Program will preserve your anonymity by keeping your name separate. Please direct any questions about this collection to:

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(780) 492-6040; goabroad@ualberta.ca

By checking this box, I grant the Education Abroad Program permission to publish Parts A and B of this report and place it in the Education Abroad website (www.goabroad.ualberta.ca) to assist students conducting research on Education Abroad Programs.

Full Name:

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/08/2016