

IB friendly Japanese University Survey

Background: The number of IB students applying to Japanese Universities is increasing. Okayama University has been a pioneer in not only IB admissions but also through IB student support and creating IB awareness through research and faculty education. In order to create a more IB friendly University, Okayama University has published research on IB student voices and IB student Academic advisors regarding student life and adjustments following admission. This is the last step in this mission to hear the voices of IB college counselors regarding their opinions about the present situation of IB admissions at Japanese National Universities and suggestions for creating a more IB friendly University based on IB student needs.

Method: Twenty college counselors from International Schools and First Article schools in Japan, were asked to fill out a survey anonymously, with regard to the following questions. a) What are your expectations from Japanese National Universities? b) What are some disappointing aspects of Admission policies at Japanese Universities? c) What are your suggestions for improving the existing Admission policies? d) What are the reasons behind IB students choosing Foreign Universities over Japanese Universities? e) What are reasons behind IB students choosing Private Universities over National Universities in Japan?

Results of Survey: Lack of understanding of the IB education system leading to unrealistic expectations of IB students was a major concern. Next, unfamiliarity with overseas admission policies causing concerns over age, language requirements, IB credit transfers and subsequent recognition of the IB Diploma were also reasons why IB students opted for foreign universities over national universities. Finally, Japanese Private Universities which have offers similar to overseas Universities are given priority, irrespective of the high costs involved.

Conclusion: This survey helped to get a clear conception of the demands of IB student Admissions and also the extent to which Japanese National Universities can meet their needs to become IB friendly.

Foreign Universities**Japanese National Universities**

	Foreign Universities	Japanese National Universities
Language Barrier	Can study in English	Must know native level Japanese to study at most faculties
Family Influence	If one or both parents are foreign nationals, they tend to choose universities in the UK, USA, Canada	Children of mixed race and foreigners do not prefer NU *language barrier; cultural differences; lack of understanding of mixed race students; religious backgrounds; sexual orientation
Job opportunities abroad	Better chance of working abroad	Difficult to work overseas after graduating from a Japanese University
Tuition Fee Waivers/ Attractive Scholarships	Available for students with high academic performance	Difficult
University Reputation	Worldwide	Experience is mostly valuable in Japan
Diversity of student body	In all Foreign Universities	Depends on the location of the University
IB-like education	Similar if not same	Completely different education system
Starting dates of Academic year	Compatible with the IB	Inconvenient; students must wait from 4-10 months
Overall costs	Very expensive	Reasonable tuition fees and living expenditure
Licensed jobs in Japan	Not possible	Parents and students who wish to live and work in Japan choose JNU
Overall Safety	Not so secure; depends on the location	Very safe; specially parents of female students prefer JNU
Flexibility of Academic Choices	Many courses to choose from	Limited
Vast research opportunities	Students interested in a Research Career find more research opportunities	Limited research opportunities based on the University
IB friendly	Very IB friendly	Most JNU do not have enough knowledge about the IB

	Japanese Private Universities	Japanese National Universities
Academic Competency	Easier	Tougher
Academic Programs in English	Vast choice	Limited Choice
Entrance exam	No entrance exam or easier exams	Difficult to pass National Center Test conducted in Japanese
Alumni Network	Very active	Not so active
Globalized Admission Policies	Similar to foreign University admission policies	Not yet
Campus Environment	Many foreign students and students of different educational backgrounds	Limited number of foreign students
Size of International Programs	Extensive	Limited
Fluent/Native English speaking faculty	Many	Limited
Overall cost	Pretty expensive	Very reasonable
Job opportunities	Possible to get job offers abroad	In Japanese companies and Japanese multinational companies with branches overseas