

Akita, Japan

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Program: Akita International University Exchange,
Academic Year

Major: Japanese

Earning the Language Immersion Badge:



At Akita International University, I immersed myself in nine or more credits per semester of Japanese language courses. Some of these classes were focused solely on pronunciation, and others were focused on things like reading comprehension. Every other week in pronunciation class we were expected to recite lines in as natural an accent as

possible. In the reading comprehension course we were able to spend time reading fictional stories, news articles, etc., in Japanese and work on our understanding of them. In our main language class we had a fun project at the end of the semester where we wrote articles in Japanese and compiled them to make a magazine. Simply speaking, we practice, practice, practiced our language skills.

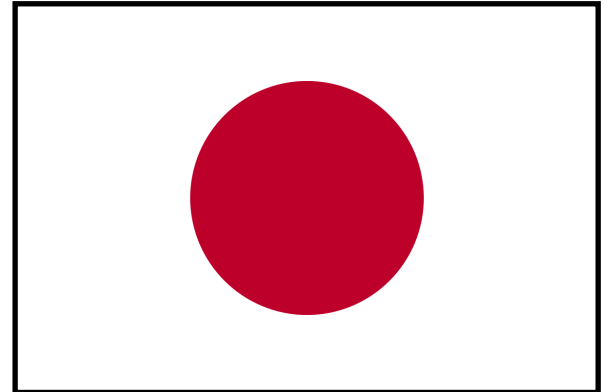
Throughout the semester, I also was given opportunities to interact with community members who lived in a village nearby campus. None of them spoke English, and it was a challenge at times to communicate using broken Japanese and to understand their heavy Akita dialect. However, we were still able to make great bonds with one another, and it was a fantastic chance to practice conversation. I also had the opportunity to do a homestay with a Japanese from January to April 2017 in Tokyo. They also weren't able to speak any English, so again it was a great opportunity to utilize Japanese. Thankfully, this family's accents weren't as strong as those found in Akita, so communication was quite a bit easier, but again it helped me gain confidence in my speaking abilities.

Transferable Skill:



Now that I'm back at the University of Utah, I'm right back into the thick of language learning with my upper-division Japanese language courses. The experience and knowledge I gained while abroad has prepared me for my final semesters before graduation, and I'm expecting to take the Japanese Language Proficiency test in December at a

business-conversational level. Post-graduation I'm planning on using my language experience to find a job either in Japan or in the United States that will let me encourage cultural exchange between these two countries and get people excited to either study abroad or even just travel!



“Study abroad encouraged me to open my mind to others' experiences and perspectives, and really allowed me to break out of my shell and make friendships that I intend to keep for a lifetime.”