

I am a Communications major at SFU, and I went to Japan to study at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo for the Spring 2015 term.

Preparation for exchange:

Upon preparing for exchange, the one thing I didn't have that would've been useful is a more detailed description of the course selection at MGU, as well as information on the SFU courses correspondent to the ones at MGU.

When packing for my trip, the only things I really needed were the basics such as clothing, laptop, and other personal necessities. I say that because much of the everyday items are easily obtainable locally for low costs. However I would suggest that you pack a bath towel with you, because it is not available at the dorm, neither was it easy to find at the local stores. You would eventually be able to find one but I assume you would want to take a shower on your arrival date.

As for my transportation to the dorm, I was at Japan prior to the move-in date so I made my own way there from Nagoya by train. The train system was confusing at first, but I made it to the local Midorigaoka station. From the station to the dorm is only a 7-8 minute walk, however Japanese streets aren't exactly simple, so it was not easy to figure out.

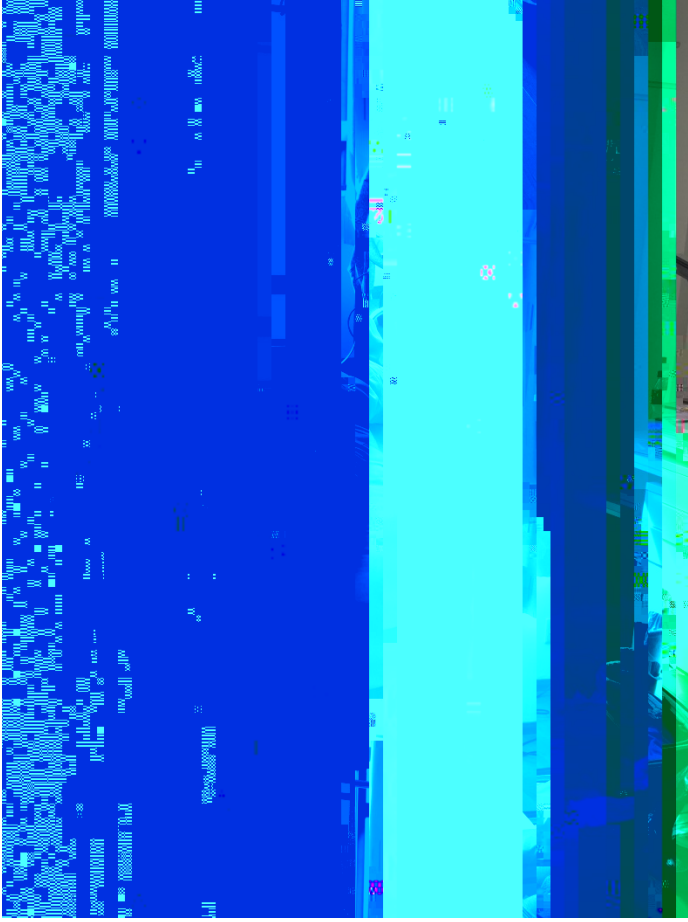
Japan is for the most part, a cash based society so it is suggested to have a decent amount of cash prepared beforehand. If not, the Seven-Eleven convenience stores have international ATMs, where withdrawals are possible with most major banks world-wide (given that there are handling fees). Regulations have made it harder for foreigners to create bank accounts, so the option of opening a Japanese bank account is only available to those staying for 2 semesters.

During Exchange:

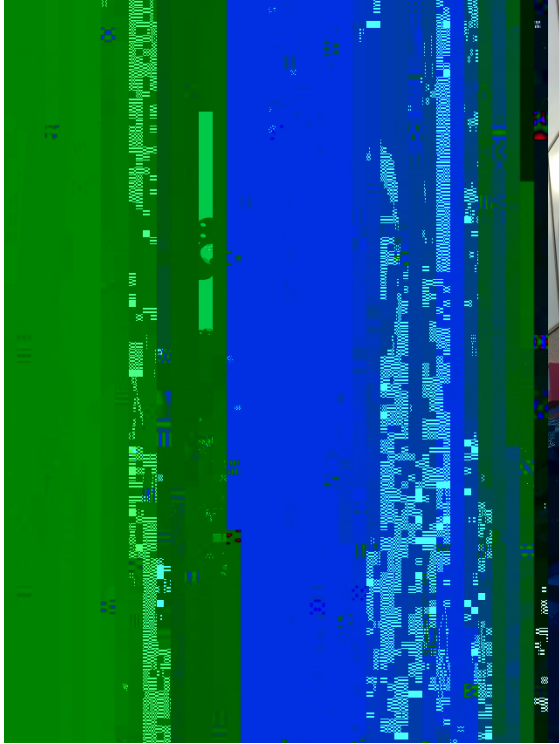
After I arrived at the dorm, the caretakers briefly walked me through the facility. The individual rooms were rather spacious and comfortable, and were all furnished with a desk and a comfortable bed. Wifi was only available in the common room downstairs, but each room had an Ethernet cable. There were washrooms available on each floor, and shower rooms separate for men and women were located on the bottom floor along with several washing machines and dryers in each. Also located in the bottom floor is the common room and the communal kitchen. The kitchen is equipped with the most basic cooking ware, such as rice cookers, pots, pans, utensils, etc. Each student also gets their own space in the fridge, enough for 1 person. As described above, I was quite content with the accommodation we were provided with at the dorm. The dorm itself is located in a quiet residential area of Tokyo called Okusawa, close to higher end districts such as Jiyugaoka, and Den-en-chofu.

We had several convenience stores close by, and the neighbourhood shopping areas were about 10 minutes away on foot.

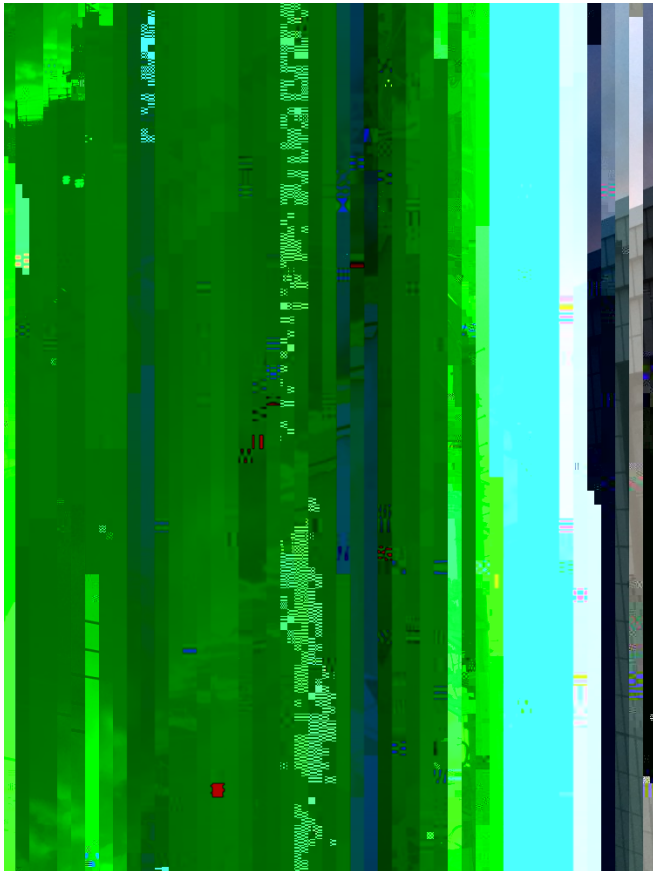
A couple of days after arrival, we attended the orientations that MGU has prepared for us. First was the “Survival Japanese Orientation”, where the school’s Japanese language teachers walked us through the steps we should take in the case of emergencies such as earthquakes, as well as teaching us the basic Japanese needed for other emergency cases. The second orientation we had was held at school, where we were given packages and instructions on course selection, and other document work that were to be completed. The package included a \$200 bursary for our transit passes from the dorm to the campus. This



Individual rooms at the dormitory



A busy weekend at Harajuku main street



View of the Okusawa neighbourhood



Above: A local tonkatsu restaurant 2 minutes from the dorm.