

# All the big challenges that came from adapting makes it worth it at the end of the journey

Exchange Semester Experience

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My name is Nadia Pinedo, I am 29 years old, come originally from Peru and I am currently doing my master's degree in Germany. I joined the Individual Program at YNU. My experience at YNU was unforgettable, through this program I have been able to not only take part in Japanese and English classes about Japanese culture, but also was able to join the Modeling laboratory of Prof. Yamada and Prof. Matsui from the Graduate School of Environment and Information Sciences.

During the past two years I have trying to attend YNU for an exchange program, but due to the pandemic I was unable to come to Japan. Nevertheless, YNU offered me the opportunity to take online Japanese classes during this complicated time. Some of the classes were very early in the morning or very late at night, however I always got a lot of support from my classmates and Japanese teachers. Through these classes I was able to take classes from 200 level until 400 level, which helped me immensely when I arrived at the university and which I will always be very grateful for. Coming to such a different country like Japan has its challenges from the moment you step out from plane, the signs and the travel system is different, and the big luggage does not make it easier. Nevertheless, I was always able to ask information and people always helped me find the way to the correct train or bus.

In YNU, the International Office was very helpful, and they always answered all my questions and gave me support during my stay at YNU. As for my Japanese classes, we were lucky, that everyone was in Japan so we could have face to face classes. This allowed me to meet my teacher and enjoy more the university life. I could enjoy the cafeteria, the conbini and the campus with my classmates. Additionally, right after the semester began, there were a lot of students promoting their clubs, and me and some other international students joined ESS (English Speaking Society). Until now I am very glad, I joined, because I got to meet a lot of Japanese students and do some activities with them. We went to Kamakura and Hakone and enjoyed from going together to Tokyo, doing picnic and some games. I think this relationship was very helpful for me, I could practice my Japanese and use English in case I didn't know all words.

As for the cultural classes I took Japan in the World, were we discussed topics like the atomic bomb from a Japanese perspective and some other topics like centralization in Japan, the Okinawa situation, and the

Fukushima event consequences. Every week I enjoyed discussing with my teacher and my classmates, as it is not usual to learn about this part of history in my country. This class allowed to understand better Japanese culture and its history, as well as the Japanese way of thinking. As for my laboratory, I really enjoyed my time with the Prof. Yamada, Prof. Matsui and my laboratory classmates. I got the unique opportunity to work with them and I also was able to experience another part of the Japanese university's culture. Everyone treated me well as help me with any difficulty I encountered along the way. During this semester, I could learn about their investigation topics and could engage in some other activities as seminars, conferences and even a workshop were me and my classmates made a chair by ourselves!

Finally, I also had a great time at the International Residence where I met the other international students and my roommates. By hanging out in our free time, they made this experience rich and joyful. Japan has a lot to offer, such as very beautiful places, amazing food, and an interesting culture, so all the big challenges that came from adapting makes it worth it at the end of the journey. I hope I can meet everyone again!