



JACS FAQ

For prospective students

STUDY PROGRAMS

What countries are JACS students from?

Since the start of the JACS programs (UG in 2014, MA in 2015) students have come from all over the world: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, China, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, Spain, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, USA, Vietnam. The majority of students have come from other Asian countries.

What does a typical day look like for a first-year UG (UG1) student?

A typical day for UG1 students begins with Japanese class in the mornings (starting at 8:45), followed by two or more general education and/or introductory JACS classes. First-year students will take significantly more general education and language courses than specialized JACS courses. Some students also participate in

extracurricular activities such as clubs and circles and many have part-time jobs. Finally, class assignments also take up a significant amount of time every day.

* MA students do not have any language requirements to fulfill and do not take general education courses either.

How long are classes and what time do they take place?

Classes at NU are 90 minutes each and take place Mon-Fri during the following times:

- 1st period – 8:45-10:15
- 2nd period – 10:30-12:00
- Lunch break 12:00-13:00*
- 3rd period – 13:00-14:30
- 4th period – 14:45-16:15
- 5th period – 16:30-18:00
- 6th period – 18:00-19:30

How do classes work in JACS?

While some of NU's science programs follow a quarter system, the humanities at NU run on a 15-week semester system. Classes begin around October 1 in the fall and around April 11 in the spring and normally meet once a week for 1.5 hours each.

JACS classes are generally small (5-15 students) and very communicative. In addition to JACS program students from both the UG and MA programs, we usually have some short-term exchange students from the NUPACE program and occasionally students enrolled in the Japanese programs also take our courses.

As classes are heavily discussion-based, students are expected to complete assigned readings beforehand so they may participate in class discussions. We rarely do student *presentations*; instead, students learn to be discussion leaders. Towards the end of semester, a final paper or project is typically assigned.

What kind of courses can I take?

All Japanese universities including NU distinguish between two types of courses in the **UG program**, both of which are mandatory: **general education courses** and **specialized courses**. At NU, the general education courses are offered by the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ILAS) while the specialized JACS courses are offered by the School of Humanities.

Generally speaking, ILAS courses cover a wide range of fields ranging from biology to information literacy to Japanese language education and physical education. The specialized courses make up the core of the JACS program and focus on the history, literature, and visual culture of modern and contemporary Japan (1868-present).

As a Year 1 undergraduate student, the JACS courses that you can take are limited to introductory level courses; more advanced, specialized courses will be “unlocked” once you move on to Year 2 and above. On the other hand, students need a certain number of credits from ILAS courses to advance to Year 3. Therefore, it is recommended to fulfill the requirements for third year standing in the first two or three semesters, and gradually shift to specialized courses from your second year. You will receive detailed guidance on this matter. **Students in the MA program do not need to take any general education courses.**

Can I focus on only one of the three disciplines?

In the **UG program**, students are required to take a few courses each from history, film, and literature to fulfill their “Compulsory Elective Course” requirements. Beyond the minimum requirements, students may take more or fewer courses from each discipline, provided they acquire enough credits for graduation. In general, students

take roughly the same number of classes across the three disciplines. It is only in the 4th year that students choose one of the three fields for their senior thesis (in theory, interdisciplinary projects are possible as well).

The **MA program** covers only two years, during which students write their thesis in one of the three fields. There is no requirement for general language or education courses and the amount of coursework is slightly lower. For this reason, most students put a clear focus on one of the three disciplines and complement the classes with one or two courses from the other two.

Can I take courses outside of JACS?

It is possible for UG and MA students to take courses from the wider School of Humanities, as well as other schools, for credit. Depending on your language skills, students may be permitted to take Japanese-taught courses as well (the NUEMI program offers individual tutoring support for students who take Japanese-taught courses). These courses are counted as “Electives”.

I am fascinated by premodern culture/history/literature. Is JACS the right program for me?

JACS puts a strong focus on modern and contemporary “Japan-in-Asia,” with modern meaning anything after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. While students will have the opportunity to take courses on various aspects of premodern culture, JACS is not the right program for you if premodern culture and/or religion are your main interests.

What are some things JACS students struggle with the most?

Most of our students have no prior experience of living in Japan or of living away from their families. Although all of our students have a high level of English, *studying in English* is a new experience for many. In addition, university courses are not only more intense than high school classes, but students are also responsible for organizing their own timetables, reconciling classes with extracurricular activities, etc. — time management often takes on a wholly new meaning. Finally, it can be intimidating to take classes together with your *senpai* (senior students) who might seem much more eloquent and sophisticated.

Incoming JACS students are assigned a tutor who will help them navigate the intricacies of the system. Nonetheless, the first few months can be a bit overwhelming. However, in the almost ten years since the program started, we have observed students grow from this experience and come out very strong. We encourage everyone to confide in their friends and, ideally, also speak to the faculty if they feel they are not on top of things. In most cases, problems can be solved or at least significantly eased through communication. Should it be necessary, NU also offers professional counseling free of charge (in English and Japanese).

How many Japanese classes will I be able to take?

In the first year, UG students take Japanese lessons every day in the first period, beginning at 8:45 a.m. Placement tests ensure that everyone is put in the appropriate level. Students who have passed JLPT Level N3 and above can submit their certificate to have a part of the credits recognized; they may choose to take Japanese or other foreign languages courses to fulfill the rest of their credits. From Year 2, students may take Japanese and Japanese linguistics courses to count as electives.

MA students do not have any language requirements to clear but are permitted (read: strongly encouraged) to take language courses on a voluntary basis.

Is there a study-abroad system I can participate in?

Yes. NU has many partner universities around the globe and JACS students are eligible to apply. So far, only a small number of our students have taken advantage of this opportunity. For one thing, most of our students are already in a “study-abroad” situation here in Japan. In addition, it can be tricky (but is not impossible) to get overseas credits recognized upon return, which means that careful planning is crucial to fit in a term or two abroad.

Can you tell me more about NU’s Research Student program?

Students who have graduated from an undergraduate program abroad can enter Nagoya University as non-degree seeking students under the Research Student Program. Research students will be able to take language and content courses, pending the permission of the instructor. While many of our current MA students first joined us as research students and spent a term or two polishing their research projects, this is not mandatory. Likewise, entering the research student program will not guarantee admission to the JACS MA program.

We strongly encourage prospective research students to get in touch with a potential supervisor before applying to the program!

General guidance:

https://en.nagoya-u.ac.jp/admissions/research_students/index.html

Graduate School of Humanities Guidance:

<https://www.hum.nagoya-u.ac.jp/en/admissions/for-prospective-intl-students/researchstudentapplication.html>

EXTRACURRICULARS

What extracurricular activities are offered at NU?

Clubs (*bukatsu*) and circles (*sākuru*) are a great way of getting to know students from the Japanese programs and of improving your Japanese skills. We encourage everyone to check out the amazingly wide variety of activities. Recruiting usually happens in April at the beginning of the Japanese academic year. We recommend that JACS students focus on getting used to life in Japan during their first term and wait until their second term before trying out or joining any clubs or circles. Before joining, you should understand the nature of the group you are considering and be aware of the expectations that come with group membership.

The biggest difference between clubs and circles lies in how they are organized. While circles can be rather informal (read: it's OK to miss meetings occasionally, or to leave the circle altogether), clubs tend to be organized in a much stricter, often very hierarchical way than what students might be used to from their home countries. The expectation generally is that students will *attend all meetings* (regardless of the time and even when you are not feeling well) and *stay in the same club until they graduate*. Many clubs also have a busy schedule that can be difficult to reconcile with a demanding curriculum such as JACS. For instance, we once had a student who joined the ice hockey club unaware that they would hold their training sessions between 1:00-3:00am and travel as far as Hokkaido to participate in tournaments. Sport clubs in

particular will often require members to buy expensive gear or pay significant fees for renting facilities (e.g. the ice rink), tournament participation, etc.

In short, while circles are often pretty relaxed, clubs tend to expect that you will prioritize their activities over your studies, which is *not* what we recommend. The reason this works for (some, not all) Japanese students is that while getting *into* NU is extremely difficult, graduating is not. Companies generally pay more attention to the university ranking than to an applicant's major or their GPA, and dedicated participation in a sports club, for instance, can count as a big plus. **NONE OF THIS IS TRUE FOR JACS!** While it is significantly easier to get in, the workload of JACS courses is medium to high, and students are expected to do original research for their senior thesis. In addition, for international students the GPA will be significantly more important even if they opt for job-hunting in Japan. Therefore, it'll be best to choose your club/ circle wisely!

SCHOLARSHIPS & COST OF LIVING

Can I apply for a scholarship and/or a tuition waiver?

Yes and yes. We have no way of knowing how NU's financial situation will develop in the coming years, but in the past, we have been able to give away a limited number of scholarships to both UG and MA students. Most students have benefited from tuition waivers for some time.

UG applicants will be automatically considered for the scholarship unless you opt out. Please note that while applying for a scholarship will *not* negatively affect

your application, it will require the submission of a range of documents about your family's financial status.

In the case of UG applicants, the scholarship decision is based on merit and need alone, whereas the MA scholarship is based on merit and nationality, meaning that while you do not need to prove your financial need, you may not be eligible depending on where you are from. Even if you do not receive a scholarship offer upon entering NU, JACS students from both programs have been rather successful in applying for various smaller scholarships after enrollment.

In the past, most students in the UG program and many in the MA program have benefited from (rare) full or (more often) partial tuition waivers. Unfortunately, application for the waiver has only been possible after enrolment and from inside Japan in the past, but it seems this rule is being revised.

Note that Japanese citizens are not given any preferential treatment in the admission process. At the time of writing, they are, however, exempt from tuition waivers. If you are a dual citizenship holder, please consider carefully what the best choice will be.

Does NU provide housing?

All UG and MA students are offered a room in a relatively new international dormitory not far from campus for the first year (see the AO website for more information). From the second year onwards, students move to small private apartments in the vicinity, many of them opting for room sharing. While the rent is relatively reasonable compared to many other countries, moving itself can easily become expensive. It is therefore essential to familiarize yourself with Japanese moving culture before canceling/signing a contract.

ADMISSION INTERVIEW

How will the candidates be chosen for the interview?

While the AO will check the applications for completeness, the actual document screening is conducted by the JACS core faculty. We will invite applicants on the basis of their academic performance and place special emphasis on the essays, so be sure to reserve enough time for writing.

What should I expect during the interview?

The interviews are conducted online by the JACS core faculty (3 people). A member of the AO will be present to monitor the interview and to help with technical issues. So, in a typical interview you will see three to four faces (the AO staff might turn off their camera), which can be a bit intimidating at first. However, we want to give applicants the chance to e-meet everyone they would be studying with at JACS. Of course, the interview is also a great way for us to get to know applicants a bit. The interview will last about 30-40 minutes during which we will ask questions about your application, other topics related to cultural studies in general, and also give you the opportunity to ask whatever you would like to know.

Could you give me an idea of the application timeline?

The exact dates are published by the Admission Office, so please check their website as well. UG interviews are usually held in February or early March; MA interviews have nearly always been scheduled for early to mid-March. In recent years, the results for both programs have been published in the second half of March.

In previous years, we have usually held a second round of applications for the MA program (“rolling application”) in the spring. The application deadline is usually around the end of April or in early May, and interviews have been held in late June or early July. If you are interested in applying after the first round is already over, please get in touch to inquire whether a rolling application is scheduled for that year, and to find out whether your project would fit into our program.

CAREER PATHS

Where do JACS graduates go after graduation?

Roughly a third of our graduates have moved on to MA or PhD programs in Japan and abroad. Universities our students have been admitted to include: Adelaide University, Brown University, Columbia University, Nagoya University LCS, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Seoul University, University of Cambridge, University of California-Los Angeles, University of California-Riverside, University of California-Santa Barbara, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Minnesota, University of Oregon, University of Oxford, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, Waseda University, University of Washington, Yale University.

Two thirds of our BA/MA graduates have started careers in non-academic fields in Japan or their home countries. Companies in Japan include Komatsu, Shinmei Kogyo, UFJ Mitsubishi Bank, Japan Travel Bureau, and an advertising agency as well as a major hotel chain in Tokyo; graduates also work as university admin staff or at English language schools. Outside Japan, graduates can be found at the NYC Art Gallery, a localization company in the UK, a financial technology corporation in

Singapore, an advertisement company in Shanghai or in housing development in the US. Some students have joined family businesses upon return to their countries.

Career Support Center at NU

<https://en.nagoya-u.ac.jp/academics/career/index.html>

CONTACT US

Is it appropriate to contact the faculty before applying?

YES, please do contact us with any question you might have. **Especially in the case of MA applicants, we strongly encourage prospective students to get in touch before applying.** The MA program only runs for two years which means that MA applicants should already have a well-developed idea of what topic they would like to research for their MA project. In addition, the further up the academic ladder you step, the more important the relationship with your supervisor – as well as their fields of expertise – becomes. Every year, we receive a number of applications that would make for interesting projects but are clearly outside our fields and therefore get rejected. To find out whether your project would fit in and whether you feel like you could establish a good working relationship with the faculty in your field, please do not hesitate to email us!

Prof. Tristan GRUNOW (History) tristan.grunow@nagoya-u.jp

Prof. Kristina IWATA (Literature) kristina.iwata@nagoya-u.jp

Prof. MA Ran (Screen Studies) ma.ran.d8@f.mail.nagoya-u.ac.jp

USEFUL LINKS

G30 Admission Office

<https://admissions.g30.nagoya-u.ac.jp/apply/>

Nagoya University Global Engagement Center's Handbook for International Students:

http://ieec.iee.nagoya-u.ac.jp/en/info/handbook_for_new_intl_students_2021-23.pdf

Diversity & Accessibility at NU

https://en.nagoya-u.ac.jp/about_nu/declaration/Diversity/index.html

LGBT+ and Inclusive Practices at NU

https://en.nagoya-u.ac.jp/about_nu/declaration/guidelines_for_lgbt/index.html