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.

Survey Q & A (1-3)

Expectations from Japanese National Universities

No Center test or additional tests for IB students
Recognize the IB Diploma
Reconnize the IB Certificate
All faculties accepting IB
Reasonable IB score requirements
Reasonable subject requirements by faculties
IB student support system
University has a good understanding of IB
Clear and concise guidelines
Transparency regarding Admission Policies
Conditional offers based on predicted scores
Campus Safety
Transfer of IB credits
Availability of dorms for all IB students
One stop IB application system like UCAS in UK
Understanding "critical thinking" & "discusison"
Proper assessment of IB scores and CAS

Dissapointing Japanese University Admission Policies

Too High total Diploma score as high as 42 required	
Insufficient or no understanding of IB	
Lack of understanding about the IB DP scoring system	
Some Universities divide students based on passports	
Unrealisitic expectations from IB students	
Unclear language requirements	\checkmark
Many Japanese Universities require Maths in HL only	
Too complicated admisison policies	
Application timing inconvenient for IB students	
Medical schools demand too high DP scores	×
Age requirement at Admisison 18 (some IB students are younger)	×
Non-flexibility of conditional offers	×
Unfamiliar with overseas admisison policies	×

Suggestions for improving exsiting Admission Policies

Clearer admission guidelines	
Specify which subjects are required in HL or SL	
Train Faculty about IB Admissions	
IB students applying with generalized IB score such as 24 should be	
asked to give a presentation	
Allow transfer of credits from IB	×
Incentives for IB students with high IBDP scores of 40 or above	×
Fix IBDP score ranges for each faculty like	×
Establish one stop application system for all IB students	×
Differentiate between Dual Language IB and full English IB	\times

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(Discovery Program only)
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(Except Medical school)

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(Dept. of Educaiton and the Medical school require interviews)

	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 undertanding 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/ AttractuveScholarships	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	Incovenient; 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
Flexibilty of Academic Choices	Many courses to choose from	Limited
Vast research opportunites	Students interested in a Research Career	Limited research opprtunties based on the University
IB friendly	find more research opportunites 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 entance 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	s Not yet
Campus Environment	Many foreign students and students of different educaitonal backgrounds	Limited number of foreign students
Size of Inernaitonal Programs	Extensive	Limited
Fluent/Native English speaking faculty	Many	Limited
Overall cost	Pretty expensive	Very reasonable
Job opportunties	Possible to get job offers abroad	In Japanese companies and Japanese multinaitonal companies with branches overseas