

# A Window open to the World

SJU CIEP Newsletter Sugiyama

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## Incoming Exchange Students Activity Report

Highlights from Our Incoming Exchange Students' Experience - Academic Year 2025

### Incoming Exchange Students

In AY2025, the university hosted seven exchange students in the spring semester and nine in the fall semester. They attended Japanese and Japanese Society classes daily for either six months or one year, and some students also took faculty-level courses depending on their Japanese proficiency. When selecting faculty courses or considering participation in internships, exchange students consult in advance with exchange Student Education Coordinators. Upon their arrival in Japan, SJU students and staff accompany exchange students to provide dormitory-area orientation and assistance with opening bank accounts. In addition to academic support, the university offers attentive, small-group-based assistance in daily life, which is one of the key strengths of Sugiyama Jogakuen University. This comprehensive support has been highly appreciated by exchange students.

Spring Semester		Fall Semester	
United States	2	Taiwan	1
South Korea	2	South Korea	5
South Korea (continuing from Fall 2024)	3	Thailand	2
		South Korea (continuing from Spring 2025)	1



### Course Overview

Incoming exchange students attended daily Japanese language classes (Monday-Friday), covering grammar, vocabulary and expressions, reading, listening, and conversational Japanese. At the beginning of the academic year, students were placed into Elementary, Intermediate, or Pre-advanced levels based on a placement test.

Separately, the Japanese Society course introduced Japanese culture and society through hands-on activities such as shamisen performances, yukata wearing, calligraphy, tea ceremony, and kabuki appreciation. Faculty members from various departments also gave omnibus-style lectures, presenting Japanese society and culture from the perspective of their respective areas of expertise in an easy-to-understand manner. Students having the required Japanese proficiency level also enrolled in undergraduate courses aligned with their interests, including Applied Practice in Japanese Traditional Costume, Theories of Welfare Environment Design, Advertising and Promotion, and International Management.



## Off-Campus Study Trips

### 犬山 INUYAMA



In the spring semester, an off-campus study trip was conducted in Inuyama (Aichi Prefecture), and in the fall semester in Magome (Gifu Prefecture), with SJU students accompanying the exchange students. Through group activities, participants got to know each other better while learning about local culture and history.

In Inuyama, students enjoyed panoramic views of the Nobi Plain from the keep of Inuyama Castle (a National Treasure), explored the historic castle town, sampled local foods, and visited museums showcasing festival floats, mechanical puppets, and the history of the castle and town. In Magome, students walked through the post-town streets, learning about its origins, history, and notable figures associated with the area. They also took part in a soba-making workshop and tasted regional cuisine, gaining a deeper understanding of Japanese food culture. These off-campus programs provided the exchange students and SJU students with valuable opportunities to share experiences and exchange perspectives while appreciating the unique appeal of each region through all five senses.

### 馬籠 MAGOME



## Expanding Exchange, Connecting with the Community

Exchange students also have opportunities for interaction beyond the university. At an exchange event with junior and senior high school students of Sugiyama Jogakuen, the participants enjoyed conversations and games using Japanese as well as the exchange students' native languages. The session concluded with introductions to country-specific styles and terms used in the game "rock-paper-scissors", thus deepening cultural understanding through play. It was a memorable and enjoyable experience for the junior and senior high school students as well.

Through homestay and home visit programs organized in cooperation with the local international exchange association, students spent a day with host families, with some students experiencing Japanese culture by wearing yukata or making matcha tea, and others cooking together with their hosts or visited local cafés, resulting in the students gaining a taste of everyday life in Japan. Some students showed particular interest in aspects of Japanese living environments, such as bathroom facilities and housing design. Overall, each participant experienced Japanese daily life in their own way.

### Visit to Our Affiliated Schools



### Homestay and Home Visit Programs



# [ Center News Digest ]

## A Look Back at Academic Year 2025

### Pick up: An Exchange Student's Challenge



Photo: International Education Center (IEC)

Jung Yujin, an exchange student from Seoul Women's University (South Korea), advanced to the final round of the 64th International Speech Contest in Japanese, organized by the International Education Center, the Japan Foundation, and Akishima City, Tokyo. Out of 75 applicants nationwide, she was selected as one of the final 12 participants.

Under the theme "The Magical Steam of Hot Baths," she confidently delivered a speech comparing bathing cultures in South Korea and Japan, sharing her insights with humor. Through interaction with participants from other universities, she gained a valuable learning experience, and her willingness to take on new challenges also inspired fellow exchange students at Sugiyama.

In addition, she took part in the university's annual Winter Illumination project held at a neighboring commercial complex, collaborating with students from the Department of Human Environment Design to create a miniature house. The completed work was displayed as part of the outdoor illumination, adding a warm presence to the venue.

Even in the unfamiliar environment of studying abroad, Yujin's proactive attitude and continued challenges offered inspiration and encouragement to those around her.



### Outgoing Exchange Student Outcomes

Students who studied at partner institutions not only strengthened their foreign language skills and academic expertise but also actively participated in extracurricular activities. Through exposure to diverse cultures and values, they returned home having developed greater flexibility and a broader perspective.

Spring Semester	
Thailand (continuing from Fall 2024)	1
Malaysia (continuing from Fall 2024)	1
Fall Semester	
Australia	1
South Korea	1

### Exchange with Partner Institutions

- Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada)  
Four faculty and staff members paid a courtesy visit to the university president and gave a study-abroad presentation at the School of Foreign Studies.  
October 27, 2025
  - Ling Tung University (Taiwan)  
A group of 23 students and two faculty members visited the School of Information and Social Design and toured Hoshigaoka Campus.  
October 29, 2025
- In addition, one coordinator from Southern Cross University (Australia) visited the university.



### Incoming Exchange Student Voices

Roh MinYoung, Sookmyung Women's University



From September 2024 to July 2025, I studied at Sugiyama Jogakuen University as an exchange student from Sookmyung Women's University for ten months.

At first, my Japanese was not very strong, but through classes at Sugiyama and preparation for the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, I enjoyed discovering subtle nuances and appropriate word choices that I had not fully understood through self-study or classes in South Korea. I also found it very meaningful to make friends with people from other universities and from different countries, including Japan, whom I would not have met if I had not studied abroad, and to exchange diverse opinions on shared topics.

Although I was worried about living alone for the first time, the experience helped me gain a deeper understanding of myself.

While traveling abroad offers opportunities to experience other cultures, I felt that exchange study allowed me to engage with a culture more deeply and even feel like a part of it—an experience that goes beyond tourism. In particular, I enjoyed building a one-on-one friendship with a Japanese student through the StudyMate program and experiencing Japanese culture together.

Although the exchange program has now concluded, I hope to retain what I learned, felt, and reflected on at Sugiyama as a strong foundation, and to move forward in life as a more mature and confident version of myself.



# Outgoing Exchange Student Report

Ayaka Sakakibara, School of Cross-Cultural Studies

## Report

From February to November 2025, I studied abroad for nine months as an exchange student at the University of Tasmania, Australia.

At first, I felt overwhelmed by the unfamiliar environment and struggled to act the way I had hoped. However, by building on what I was able to accomplish each day, maintaining a positive mindset to keep trying, and having the courage to reach out to others, I gradually began to enjoy life in Tasmania. I realized that my mindset and attitude could make a positive change in my situation. I also became more comfortable speaking up in class discussions and group work and came to enjoy interacting with other students. Learning from being exposed to perspectives different from my own was both stimulating and deeply rewarding. In Hobart, home to both the university and my dormitory, nature and people coexisted in harmony, creating a comfortable environment for study. At the dormitory, I made friends with people from many different countries, and we studied together, talked, went out, and supported one another during challenging times such as when dealing with assignments and exams. Each moment of daily life spent with these friends became an unforgettable memory.

This nearly year-long experience was truly invaluable—something I could not have gained through student life in Japan alone. By overcoming many first-time challenges, I was able to expand the range of possibilities available to me. I intend to continue striving to discover new worlds.



## StudyMate and Exchange Student Supporters Programs

The StudyMate program is a volunteer-based support system designed to support exchange students' academic learning by pairing them with SJU students for mutual language and cultural exchange. The one-on-one format allows participants to build close relationships, and in some cases, connections are maintained even after the exchange students return home. For SJU students, the program also serves as an opportunity to deepen interest in foreign languages and international perspectives, to reexamine Japanese language and culture, and to develop teaching and communication skills by learning how to explain ideas clearly. The Exchange Student Supporters program is led primarily by student volunteers who plan and organize seasonal events and cultural activities. Throughout the year, the program provides various opportunities for interaction, including Tanabata celebrations, Halloween lunches, sports events, and Christmas parties. Through these initiatives, exchange students are supported in naturally expanding their connections with SJU students and in enjoying a safe, fulfilling student life in Japan.



## Message from the Director of CIEP Professor Mitsuo Tadokoro

Today, AI can provide translations in multiple languages within seconds, and platforms like YouTube allow us to glimpse even the inner workings of other societies. One might wonder whether it is still meaningful to spend time and money going abroad. Yet, what you grasp through your own lively intelligence and emotions will become an precious treasure for you. Sugiyama Jogakuen University offers you valuable opportunities, and we invite you to make full use of them and spend an enriching time here with us. We look forward to welcoming you!

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