

山形大学短期交換留学プログラム

STEP-YU

Short-Term Exchange Programs at Yamagata University

Spring Semester 2027- Spring Semester 2028

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1. Yamagata University

Yamagata University has six faculties with twelve study courses, one interdisciplinary school and six post-graduate courses. Its four campuses are Kojirakawa (Humanities and Social Sciences; Education and Science) and Iida (Medicine), both in Yamagata City, Yonezawa (Engineering), and Tsuruoka (Agriculture).

The total number of students is about 9,000. One of the leading universities in the Tōhoku area of Northern Japan, it fulfills an important role in both study and research. Yamagata University aims to foster well-balanced individuals equipped with knowledge, virtue, and physical well-being, who are suited to the demands of a new era. Guided by its three core missions—regional revitalization, nurturing the next generation, and promoting multicultural coexistence—as well as its fundamental educational philosophy of cultivating individuals with creativity and rich humanity, the university strives to contribute capable and compassionate graduates to society.

Currently (May 1, 2026), 319 students from 38 countries are studying at Yamagata University, which has student exchange agreements with 82 universities in 31 countries, actively promoting international exchange.

2. STEP-YU

Yamagata University offers two short-term programs for international students, providing students from our exchange universities with an opportunity to study here in Japan while remaining registered at their home schools. These programs are called STEP-YU (Short-Term Exchange Program at Yamagata University).

General (<i>Ippan</i>) Exchange Program	<u>Duration:</u> One semester or one year	<u>Available to</u> students from universities on exchange agreement with Yamagata University or its faculties
Yamagata University Japan Studies Program (JSP)		

Mutual exchange of course credits and exemption from tuition fees for a fixed number of students are part of our exchange agreements. A list of our partner universities is available on our website.

General (*Ippan*) Exchange Program

Outline

This program aims to help both undergraduate and graduate students to further their Japanese language ability and their understanding of Japan, as well as their special studies and research. It offers regular faculty classes given in Japanese. Students will be assigned to one of the faculties on Kojirakawa campus, but may be limited to undergraduate students, depending on the contents of the agreement. Graduate students of science are expected to be fluent enough in Japanese for their everyday life, even if they perform their research in English. Therefore, students with low Japanese proficiency are strongly recommended to undergo Japanese language training, *both before coming to Japan and during their study at Yamagata*. Some even may have to change their program after application. As for possibilities to perform research in English, please ask your faculty directly.

Program Terms

April 1, 2027, either to September 30th, 2027, or March 31st, 2028

October 1, 2027, either to March 31st, 2028, or to September 30th, 2028

Conditions of Application

- Enrollment at a university or faculty on exchange agreement
- At least in the second year of undergraduate study at the time of application
- At least level N2 of the Japan Foundation's Japanese Language Proficiency Test
- Students who have already graduated from their home university, or who will graduate from their home university during the period of their intended study at Yamagata, may not apply

Yamagata University Japan Studies Program (JSP)

Outline

This program has been designed for undergraduate students in order to further their understanding of Japan independent of their Japanese language ability. Therefore, lectures on aspects of Japanese culture and society are offered in English. Students will be assigned to one of the faculties on Kojirakawa campus.

Program Terms

April 1, 2027, either to September 30th, 2027, or March 31st, 2028

October 1, 2027, either to March 31st, 2028, or to September 30th, 2028

Conditions of Application

- Enrollment at a university or faculty on exchange agreement
- At least in the second year of undergraduate study at the time of application
- If level N3 of the Japan Foundation's Japanese Language Proficiency Test has not been attained, and the applicant is not a native speaker of English (or bilingual), the results of an English language test (e.g., TOEIC, IELTS, CET) will also have to be submitted. Applicants are expected to have English proficiency equivalent to CEFR level B2 or an IELTS score of 5.5 or higher
- Students who have already graduated from their home university, or who will graduate from their home university during the period of their intended study at Yamagata, may not apply

3. Class Contents

General (Ippan) Exchange Program

Japanese Language Course (Yamagata City Area)

All students are going to take Japanese languages classes at the level corresponding with the results of their placement test. The following are our courses for Academic Year 2026; each class takes 90 minutes.

LEVEL	COURSE	SUBJECT (LESSONS PER WEEK, CREDITS)
Lower Elementary	Elementary Japanese 1	Integrated Skills (4, 3), Reading (1, 1)
Upper Elementary	Elementary Japanese 2	Integrated Skills (4, 3), Reading (1, 1)
Elementary	Elementary Japanese	Speaking & Writing (1, 1)
Lower Intermediate	Intermediate Japanese 1	Integrated Skills (4, 4), Reading (1, 2), Writing (1, 2)
Upper Intermediate	Intermediate Japanese 2	Integrated Skills (4, 4), Reading (1, 2), Writing (1, 2)
Common Subjects		Kanji 1 (1, 1), Kanji 2 (1, 1), Kanji 3 (1, 1), Kanji 4 (1, 1)
Lower Advanced	Advanced Japanese 1	Writing (1, 2), Speaking (1, 2)
Upper Advanced	Advanced Japanese 2	Writing (1, 2), Speaking (1, 2)
Research Instruction	Independent Study Project	Independent Study Project (1, 2)

For regular specialized classes taught in Japanese, students may be allowed to enroll depending on their Japanese language proficiency.

Yamagata University Japan Studies Program (JSP)

For the Japanese language course included, see above for details. Students enrolled in the JSP program are required to take at least two courses each semester from both the Japanese language and Japanese culture categories, and must earn a total of at least 10 credits.

Japanese Culture

The following are our 2026 courses; each class takes 90 minutes. Though not all, the majority of these topics will be offered in 2027 (and following years) as well.

Spring Semester:

An Introduction to Japanese Culture I (1, 2)
 Introduction to Dialectology (1, 2)
 Introduction to Japanese Linguistics I (1, 2)
 Japanese Rites of Passage (1, 2)
 Japanese Literature on Screen (1, 2)
 Showa Japan I (1, 2)
 Japanese pastimes – History and their Effect on Society (1, 2)

Fall Semester:

An Introduction to Japanese Culture I (1, 2)
 Introduction to Elements of Japanese Society (1, 2)
 Japanese Popular History (1, 2)
 Showa Japan II (1, 2)
 Japanese Rites of Passage (1, 2)
 Comparing contemporary views on political and cultural issues from the Japan and European perspectives (1, 2)
 Seminar on cross-cultural understanding (1, 2)

An Introduction to Japanese Culture I Class Contents (Spring & Autumn Term, 2026)

Historical Museum:Bunshoukan
Cherry blossom viewing and picnic
Pottery making
Visit Yamadera
Education Museum
Buddhist meditation (*zazen*)
Flower Arrangement
Japanese street art *nankin tamasudare* (plate spinning)
Kimono dressing
Japanese traditional game (*kendama*)
Japanese traditional musical instrument
Making Kite
Japanese Sign Language
Maiko san Culture

Other Intercultural Experiences (2026)

Field trip for international students and tutors
Field Trip~Discover the Charms of Yamagata~
Visits to local families and schools
Hanagasa (one of the biggest local festivals)

Yamagata University International Friendship Circle and various international exchange groups organize valuable opportunities such as *Imonikai*, as well.

4. Life in Japan

Academic Schedule

semester	date	details
SPRING	mid-March	Move into the dormitory
	late-March	Orientation, Japanese Language Placement Test
	April	Start of Spring Semester Class Registration
	late July - early August	Final Exams
	early August – mid August	Move-out for program completers
	early August - mid-September	Summer Vacation
FALL	mid-September	Move into the dormitory
	late-September	Orientation, Japanese Placement Test
	October	Start of Autumn Semester Class Registration
	late December - early January	Winter Vacation
	early February	Final Exams
	early February-mid February	Move-out for program completers
	late February - March	Spring Vacation

On arrival

After arriving in Yamagata, students will be lodged at either Yamagata International House or the Seimei Dormitory. Within two or three days, students will be required to register their addresses, open bank accounts and take their Japanese Placement Test, as well as to participate in a study orientation. Students are expected to register for their classes during the first week of term. A regular Yamagata University student will act as personal tutor in order to help you to get used to life in Yamagata.

Housing

Of the short-term international students at Yamagata University in Yamagata City, about 60 can be accommodated at either Seimei Dormitory or at International House. This location will be decided in advance by the International Affairs Division. If the number of applicants should exceed the capacity of both dormitories, you may be required to live in a private apartment near the campus. International House is about 20 minutes from the campus, close to Yamagata Station, with good shopping opportunities. Seimei Dormitory will be about 30 minutes from Kojirakawa Campus.

Details of dormitory fee (per calendar month) and room maintenance fee (payable upon check-in) are shown below. Electricity, gas, and water are paid separately. Fees include internet access. The number of single rooms is limited; some students may need to share a two-bedroom apartment, generally arranged by nationality. Room maintenance fees cover bedding rental during the stay as well as cleaning and other expenses upon moving out. Any damage or excessive dirt to furniture or facilities may incur additional repair costs.

Dormitory	Room Type	Monthly Fee	Room Maintenance Fees
International House	Single	¥15,000	¥45,000
	Couple	¥22,000	¥65,000
	Family	¥25,000	¥80,000
Seimei Dormitory	Single	¥15,000	¥45,000

Note: As of September 1, 2026. Fees may be revised during the academic year due to policy changes.

Cost of living

Students who do not lodge at International House or Seimei Dormitory will be helped to find a room.

Upon moving in, a deposit equivalent to one to two months' rent will have to be paid as guarantee money. Living in Yamagata, students will not only have to pay for their room rent, but also for utilities, food, transportation, internet, mobile phone and entertainment. In total, this will come to approximately ¥80,000 per month.

Part-time Work

The primary purpose of this program is to study Japanese language and culture, so part-time work is not actively encouraged. Students who wish to work part-time should ensure that it does not interfere with their studies and must obtain a *Permission to Engage in Activity Other Than That Permitted under the Status of Residence Previously Granted* from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan. This permission may also be obtained at the port of entry upon arrival in Japan. Part-time work is permitted only during the period of enrollment at Yamagata University. Students arriving in March or September may not work before their enrollment begins.

Insurance

Exchange students are required to join the two types of insurance outlined below.

- (I) National Health Insurance (approx. ¥21,000 per year). International students residing in Japan and holding a student visa are required to join the National Health Insurance program. To receive medical treatment, simply show your insurance card at the hospital. Students only need to pay 30% of any medical costs.
- (II) Supplementary Insurance (approx. ¥12,500 per year). Personal liability insurance covers damage done to other persons such as might occur in everyday life, as well as any out-of-court settlement and mediation service costs.

Withdrawal from the Program

Withdrawal from the STEP-YU program will have to be notified to the International Affairs Division (during business hours) at least one month before planned departure. Residents of International House or of Seimei Dormitory may check out only during business hours. Students who live in a private apartment should refer to the relevant clauses in their contract. As for private apartments, Yamagata University will not be responsible for your checking-out arrangements.

5. How to Apply

For the selection of candidates for STEP-YU, grade point average, plan of study and research, and the two letters of recommendation issued by teachers will be considered. Students applying for the program are asked to send their complete application materials by electronic mail to the address on the cover of this pamphlet, through their home university's International Studies Office. The nomination of students is not required.

Deadline for applications (Japan time) is

- November 1, 2026, for students starting April 2027
- May 1, 2027, for students starting October 2027

Details of required application forms, and their designated format, are shown below. Forms are available at <https://www.yamagata-u.ac.jp/en/international/programs/step-yu/>.

Form	Document	Format
1-1	Application Form	Word
	Copy of Certificate of Japanese Language Proficiency Test or other Japanese tests if taken	PDF
	Certificate of English Language Test Read Section 2 carefully before completing	PDF
1-2	Plan of study or research	Word
2-1	Recommendation letter from applicant's Japanese language instructor at home institution	PDF
2-2	Recommendation letter from academic instructor at home institution who has known applicant for at least one year. Form 2-1 and 2-2 must be issued by different persons.	PDF
3	Health Examination Report If you cannot send documentation via e-mail for security reasons, regular mail is possible. Let us know in advance of application.	PDF
4	Photo document	Word
	Application for Certificate of Eligibility *Please attach a certificate that shows you have sufficient financial support while in Japan. (eg. Certificate of receipt of the scholarship, Certificate of bank balance of the financial supporter)	Excel
	Copy of passport Passport should be valid for the entire length of stay at Yamagata University.	PDF
	Academic Transcript (Home University)	PDF
	Application Form for Residence Approval	PDF

- Students who wish to study at the Faculty of Engineering, the Graduate School of Science and Engineering, or at the Graduate School of Organic Materials Science, please refer to the guidelines of the STEP-YUFE program, the specialized exchange program for engineering. Details such as application guidelines, application forms, and submission procedures available at <https://iec.yz.yamagata-u.ac.jp/en>

6. Post-Application Process

Results of applications to Yamagata University will be sent to the office in charge of studying abroad at the applicant's home university.

Students enrolling in April:

- Mid to Late January: Sending Acceptance Letter
- End of February: Sending Certificate of Eligibility (CoE)

Students enrolling in October:

- Mid to Late July: Sending Acceptance Letter
- End of August: Sending Certificate of Eligibility (CoE)

We ask all students to undergo the necessary procedures with their Japanese Embassy or Consulate, and to get their plane tickets by themselves early enough.

Note that even after a Letter of Acceptance has been issued, the acceptance process can and will still be suspended if the submitted documents are found to be insufficient.