

Study in JAPAN for Africa



In Japan, one gets a first-hand experience of the fruit of a happy marriage of traditional values with advanced technology.

Introduction

What kind of image do you have of studying in Japan?

A growing numbers of international students continue to embark on their journey to pursue higher education in Japan. Renown for high quality of education, Japanese universities currently offer over 942 programmes taught fully in English (115 at undergraduate and 827 postgraduate level). The opportunity to earn a degree without being a native Japanese speaker has made Japan a popular study destination for students attracted by its exotic culture, safety and surprisingly, affordable living expenses.

The number of students from Sub-Saharan Africa has exceeded 1,500 in May 2020 (*1). Most of whom are studying at graduate level in fields of Engineering, Social Science, Agriculture and Humanities. Among the sixty-five Ugandans studying in Japan, is Mr. Bukenya Moses, who pursues Bachelor of Pharmacy at Hokkaido University-Japan, amazingly, in JAPANESE language.

He was awarded the Japanese Government MEXT(*2) Scholarship, of which application is now open for Ugandans, administered by the Embassy of Japan in Uganda. In the message below, he reflects on how he has continued to improve his global perspective with hopes of contributing to Uganda's development at heart. His story below would let you realize how a Ugandan student could broaden his/her world and make the world better by studying in Japan.

- 1* Japan Students Service Organization (JASSO)
- 2* The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan

Message from Mr. Bukenya Moses

Currently I am in my final year pursuing a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Pharmacy, Hokkaido University. I research about rational design of protein-like molecules (foldamers) as medium-molecule drug candidates. I also train to become an all-round clinical pharmacist. My current research has deepened my interest in proteins and nucleic acids and for that reason, I intend to pursue a Ph.D. in biologics drug design upon graduation.



These days I can't wait for the cold period to enjoy winter games.

The reason why I choose Japan for my studies

During my first year as a pharmacy student (2013/14 Sept. intake) at Makerere University, I attended a clinical research seminar and the guest speaker (clinical pharmacist) talked

about her involvement in early HIV/AIDS clinical trials which were funded by WHO. The test drug was an extract of a local herb but because of the limited capacity of the local pharmaceutical industry in the whole of East & Central Africa, manufacturing of the placebo and the test drug was outsourced to a Japanese pharmaceutical company.

Having realized the gap in the local drug supply chain, I envisioned myself occupying the niche of manufacturing drugs tailored to the local population (given that most drug research focuses on the needs of the demographics of OCED countries). Since my program was clinical practice oriented, I realized that I needed a comprehensive pharmacy program that could cater for my drug discovery basic research needs.

Obsessed with the dream, I looked out for undergraduate scholarships for pharmacy programs in the biggest pharmaceutical industry players. Among them, Japan was much safer, enjoyed a higher standard of living as inferred from a higher life expectancy, and a relatively cheaper cost of living. Luckily, the Embassy of Japan in Uganda was shortlisting students for the Japanese Government MEXT Scholarship 2015, for which I applied and got accepted. After a one-year Japanese language preparatory education, I joined Hokkaido University to be mentored by leading scientists in my field of interest.

My image of Japan before arrival and current impression of Japan

The fact that Japan is the home to Toyota, the world's leading car maker, gave an impression that everyone had a car. But later I realized that the dependable efficient network of public transport system renders bicycles more popular than cars. Also, the famous TV show called Ninja Warriors which used to be rebroadcasted by a local TV station depicted Japan as a country of a joyous daring young population and so I thought. Having lived in Japan for seven years now, I concluded that Japan's miraculous success can be pinned down to a delicate balance of 1) good governance, 2) an social structure based on legal equality and 3) adherence to cultural values. Actually, I think that the observed good conduct such as honesty, good time keeping or the extreme sense of accountability by people is nurtured by this fabric of cultural values.

The challenge and my ambition

Japan offered the most challenging yet exciting opportunity to explore beyond my own comfort zone of a Westernized African heritage. The biggest challenge I faced was language barrier because I came to Japan when I could not even write my own name in Japanese. But thanks to support from my instructors, within nine months I could procure most official and non-official procedures myself. Even when I had challenges, the education affairs office would help to liaise with the relevant authorities on my behalf.

I would like to encourage all prospective students not to be intimidated by the difficult facade of the Japanese language because once one gets immersed into the culture, they naturally master the language. And it would enable you to bridge the gap between my country and the world's third biggest economic power. Also, in Japan foreign cultures are celebrated and the coexistence of adopted foreign ways of life and Japanese traditions signified a very tolerant society.

By making this radical bold step to study in Japan, one gets a first-hand experience of the fruit of a happy marriage of traditional values with advanced technology. Personally, I have come to embrace all cultural values of my country, Uganda, as enablers rather than impediments to social-political and economic transformation of a country.

Information on Japanese Government MEXT Scholarship

Through the Embassy of Japan in Uganda, Ugandans can get an opportunity to apply for the fully sponsored government scholarship. Visit the website of the Embassy of Japan in Uganda and check the eligibility. https://www.ug.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/culture_study.html

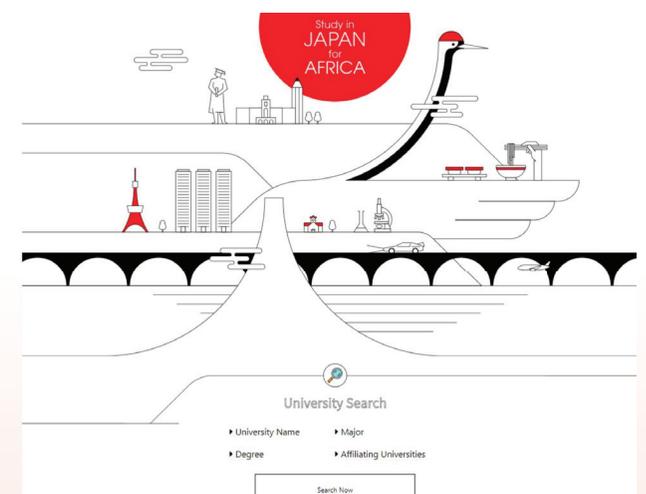
The application window opens once a year in late April. **The deadline for applications of 2022 admission is 28th May 2021.**

There are 3 categories as below.

- **Research Students:** Required academic background: University Graduates with 1st class or Upper 2nd class Honours Degree or Master's Degree
- **Undergraduate Students:** Required academic background: A' Level leavers, only for students with Natural Sciences, A' Level leavers with A in Mathematics
- **College of Technology Students:** Required academic background: A' Level leavers, with a minimum of B in Mathematics and at least two principal passes
- **Schedule**

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| Friday 28th, May | Deadline for submission of applications |
| Friday 4th, June | Preliminary shortlisted of screened students |
| Thursday 10th June | Writing Exam |
| Thursday 17th June | Oral Interviews at the Embassy |

Japanese university search



For assistance on identifying the various study options in Japan, MEXT entrusted Study in Japan Global Network Project Regional Office in Sub-Saharan Africa to provide essential information such as what universities there are to apply. This office has just launched a Data Portal which allows users to search their ideal programme according to major and degree one wish to study. Majors are categorized into 11 fields from which one identifies the specific programme. <https://studyinjapan-africa-portal.com/>

This data portal is also helpful in finding a supervisor while applying for the Japanese Government MEXT Scholarship (Category: Research Students) as introduced above.

For any further inquiries, search "Study in Japan for Africa" on the internet. We are here for you. Study in Japan Regional Office in Sub-Saharan Africa studyinjapan@oia.hokudai.ac.jp

