

Orientation Program

The JISPA offers the Orientation Program (OP) to newly accepted scholars under the partnership track. The OP aims to ensure that scholars entering the JISPA are well prepared to commence their master's programs in economics at the partnership universities and to adjust to life in Japan through intensive courses in English, mathematics/introductory econometrics, introductory economics, and Japanese. This program is held from mid-July to late-September (2.5 months), prior to commencing studies at the partnership universities. The OP is conducted at the International University of Japan, located in Niigata, Japan.

The OP comprises:

- a four-week course in academic English (reading, writing, listening, and oral communication skills) and writing tutorial sessions during the subsequent four weeks;
- a four-week course in mathematics for economics and introductory econometrics (including statistical software);

- a one-week course in introductory economics; and
- a one-week course in the Japanese language (including lectures on cross-cultural understanding and field visits), in addition to practical sessions.

All JISPA incoming scholars are required to participate in the OP. Scholars from countries where the official language is English or those with high English proficiency are exempted from taking the English component, but must participate in the remaining components of the OP.

In addition to the courses mentioned above, the IMF staff will offer lectures on the IMF to introduce its role and functions, as well as contributions made by the Japanese Government to the IMF. Some extracurricular activities are organized by the IUJ to facilitate interaction among the OP participants. The OP aims to develop leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills through social and cross-cultural communication activities.

Thanks to the Government of Japan and the IMF who organize this excellent Orientation Program (OP) to prepare JISPA scholars for their master's program. Attending the OP was a wonderful experience and I was able to improve both my English language and academic knowledge.

This program prepared me for my master's program in Japan very well. First of all, the OP provided a good opportunity to study and practice English intensively. I was encouraged to use English with professors and other OP students from many countries. I also developed soft skills such as communication skills through individual presentations, group discussions, and extracurricular activities. As a result, my English improved rapidly, and therefore I had more confidence to communicate in English. The basic Japanese language course was also very useful to live in Japan. Moreover, the fundamental academic course, which covered mathematics for economics, introductory econometrics and economics,

was really important for further studies in my master's program as it provided important basic knowledge and concepts of economics and econometrics.

Last but not least, the OP gave me a chance to make many good friends with JISPA scholars and Japanese students through both academic and non-academic activities. I hope that the next year's JISPA intake will also enjoy the OP and get the full benefit of the program as I did.



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