

Hatty Gardner

EPOK Reflection

I've wanted to come to Japan since I began studying Japanese my first year of high school in the United States and was ecstatic to get the chance to do so during my time at University. I was also extremely nervous, coming to Okayama University was my first time traveling out of the country, and my first long trip by myself. Luckily, Okayama University's EPOK program was fairly accommodating and my experience with the program was overall good. I found the Japanese classes to be well organized and the teachers were all helpful, and the other courses offered for the EPOK students appealed to me as well due to my interest in studying Japanese culture and intercultural communication. The class load recommended by the advisors at Okayama University is ten, which comes out to twenty units total. I found this number of classes to be too much, and each semester I took nine courses instead. However, I do wish, particularly during my second semester, that I had taken less courses, because the stress from the workload turned out to be a lot. It was also frustrating that fall semester, the first semester I enrolled in, it was difficult to find and enter clubs and circles. Probably the best part of my experience was meeting new people from around the world and making friends. I'm so happy to have met all the people I have; I never would have gotten the chance if I'd stayed in California. It's been a really mind expanding experience, and I've learned a lot at Okayama University, so despite any hardships I am glad that I came.