



1. What exactly is the Summer Session program?

Every year during the summer vacation period of the university, students who want to learn about Japanese culture come from overseas to the Summer Session of Sophia University. The program lasts for three weeks, from the last part of July until the middle of August. The purpose of sponsoring the Summer Session is to cultivate adults who have a more adequate view of today's world by offering them chances to study about Japan and about Asia. The courses offered center on Japanese society, politics, economics, and culture, and extend to include courses about the economy and culture of the East Asia region.

The curriculum offered in 2012 provides a good example. Thirteen courses were opened to be taught every weekday morning in English. The educational organization is within Sophia's Faculty of Liberal Arts. These courses were offered:

Japanese Art, Japanese Business and Management, Contemporary Japanese Economy, Japanese History: Edo and Tokyo, two courses in Japanese Language, Japanese Literature and the City, Contemporary Japanese Politics, and Foundation of East Asian Culture. In the afternoons, students could take part in a variety of special events. These included experiencing the Japanese tea ceremony and flower arranging, attending stage performances of Noh and Kabuki, sightseeing at the Meiji Shrine, and learning Japanese drumming at a special hall.

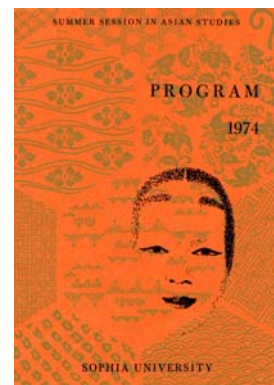
The most popular course in 2011, by the way, was the special Sociology course about contemporary Japanese society. The afternoon event that drew the most interest was the Kabuki performance.



These pictures are from the 2011 Summer Session. One shows the Japanese drumming practice by Summer Session students and the other shows participants visiting Meiji Shrine.

The timetable for each course is set to meet the accreditation requirements of the Basic Law of Universities in Japan. Each accepted student could register for two courses and gain three credits for each course, six credits in total. The students who come to Sophia from overseas educational institutions can transfer the Summer Session credits back to their home institution after their return from Japan. The academic fee of ¥160,000 covers registration costs (¥20,000) and tuition for two courses.

Summer Session students come from a variety of countries and programs. Americans are the highest number of participants from one country; many Asian overseas students attend, from China and India and elsewhere. Students also come from Europe and Africa. Students who apply individually make up the largest number by application category. Many contract-related exchange program students participate. A non-profit educational institution with its headquarters in New York City facilitates the attendance of many overseas students; this is the Council for International Educational Exchanges, usually referred to as Council or CIEE. Regular full-time degree-seeking students of Sophia University also attend; most of these are students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts or in one of its associated graduate programs.



This is a picture of the 1974 Summer Session explanation and recruiting pamphlet.

2. The Sophia Summer Session program marked its 50th Anniversary in 2011

The Summer Session functions as one of the educational activities that build bridges between East and West. Such activities have been characteristic of Sophia University since the institution was founded. The 50th program was held in 2011. The total number of Summer Session participants has exceeded 11,000.

This Summer Session program began in 1961. At that time, there was a growing interest in things Japanese all over the world. To respond to this interest, Father John Blewett, at that time an associate professor in the International Division, began to campaign for such a program. Later, a committee of faculty members in the International Division began to study the details of a proposed summer program. Among these professors was Father Maurice Bairy, who devoted himself for a very long time to the administration and development of the Summer Session. The curriculum of the program was first taught in the summer of 1961, for five weeks from mid-July until mid-August. A large number of American and European universities already offered a summer program. If Sophia University were to offer a program of similar quality, the university's good reputation for international education and research would assure the world of education that the program should be highly evaluated.

The current program has not changed in any essential point since the beginnings. However, the types of students who attend now are quite different from the early participants. These were primarily teachers from American high schools and colleges who were involved in teaching and research about countries in Asia. (Please check out the pictures of all the mature women participants in the early programs.) The participants nowadays are mostly university students and graduate students.

The classes offered in the 1960s would typically offer some related tours, for example a visit to a factory that produced electronic appliances or to a stock company. Trips to Nikko or Kamakura might be part of another course. After the final examinations that concluded the academic program, sightseeing companies would offer the participants optional tours to locations inside Japan or beyond Japan. These tours might add one or two additional weeks to the overseas experiences of the Summer Session participants.

Destinations included Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. In the 1970s, thanks partly to the growth of Japanese business activities and technical advances, instead of the large numbers of American and Canadian participants, gradually the number of participants from Southeast Asian countries became more noticeable. At the same time, the number of participants who were already regularly registered students in the International Division also grew, since the summer session credits could count towards their graduation.

After some time, the International Division was reorganized into the Faculty of Comparative Culture, which more recently has become the Faculty of Liberal Arts. The number of contract-related exchange students and other



The pictures of the Summer Session participants on this page were taken during the first three Summer Sessions: 1961, 1962, and 1963. One shows a Kabuki performance on the stage in 3-521. Another shows a tea ceremony demonstration. A third shows Ikebana instruction, also in 3-521. We see a picture of a trip by participants to Kamakura.

students from this faculty has started to increase. Professor Richard Gardiner, who has been involved in various ways with the Summer Session over many years, explains: “The joint participation in the Summer Session of students from overseas and full-time Sophia students has clearly become more numerous recently. From now on, we intend to increase the number of students from overseas at Sophia University, so these Summer Session courses will take on even more importance.” Thus, the meaning of the Summer Session to the university as a whole will be even more highly evaluated.

Sophia University was one of the thirteen universities chosen in 2009 by the Ministry of Education and Science as part of the Global Thirty, the institutions that are expected to take the lead in educational globalization activities. Everyone expects that the role of the Summer Session program in educating students from overseas about Japan will be one key to such educational globalization.



This is a picture of a post-session sightseeing trip to Manila.