

CET JAPAN

School of Record Program Review



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

In March 2026, CET Japan hosted the School of Record Program Review as part of our partnership with the University of Minnesota (UMN). As School of Record, the Learning Abroad Center at UMN assesses one CET program per year.

CET asked the review team to focus their attention on the Studio Arts courses, quantifiable ways to measure language gains achieved over the term, and to conduct a holistic review of core program components.

PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

The program review team was comprised of two representatives from the University of Minnesota and three other members representing the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill (UNC), Lewis & Clark College, and Macalester College.

Members of the CET Japan program review team:

- **Mr. Zenas Seiji Ikeda**, Associate Professor of Graphic Design – University of Minnesota
- **Mr. Mario Marzán**, Associate Professor of Art – University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
- **Mr. Zach Mohs**, Director of Programs, Learning Abroad Center – University of Minnesota
- **Dr. Ritsuko Narita**, Associate Professor of Japanese – Macalester College
- **Ms. Satomi Hayashi Newsom**, Instructor of Japanese, Japanese Section Head – Lewis & Clark College

SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Program Review assesses all elements of a program: pre-departure materials, on-site orientation, academics, housing, student life, health & wellness, and program infrastructure. Assessors had full access to CET staff, faculty, and students over the course of the visit and submit a report of recommendations and commendations for CET to review, respond to, and incorporate into the program in the future.

“CET Japan has a cohesive and forward-looking leadership team, and has a strong student support infrastructure, including some highlights like the IMHPJ clinical partnership. The Kansai location of the program is an extended classroom in the fullest sense, one whose resources the program has learned to activate with genuine pedagogical purpose rather than simply geographic proximity.”

— Final program review

PROGRAM REVIEW RATINGS



ACADEMICS: Meets Expectations

Includes curriculum, syllabi, evaluation of instructors, learning in situ, and academic advising



STUDENT SERVICES: Exceeds Expectations

Includes pre-departure advising, on-site orientation, housing, health & wellness, and student life



ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT: Exceeds Expectations

Includes center & classrooms, program location, and staff roles



FACILITIES: Meets Expectations

Includes center & classrooms, program location, and staff roles



RELATIONSHIPS with HOST COMMUNITY & HOST UNIVERSITY: Exceeds expectations



SAFETY & SECURITY: Exceeds Expectations

“Newly added studio arts courses are a distinctive curricular innovation that complements a rigorous language program that adds to the community embedded learning. It is a program that treats students as residents of the area. The strength of the program lies in its three pronged approach to Language Immersion + Community Immersion + Cultural Immersion. This program provides an ideal balance of both challenge and support that one looks for in a high quality study abroad program that allows students to grow personally and academically.

— Final program review



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The program review team provided commendations and recommendations for each area assessed. The full list is included in the report to follow, but below are some of the highlights.

CATEGORY	COMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Academics	➤ CET Japan is perhaps the only program to offer manga-related studio art courses with English support and on the US-academic calendar. They have really pioneered opening this opportunity to aspiring student artists. ➤ A key learning outcome across all proficiency levels at CET Japan is the ability to communicate personal interests and research findings logically in Japanese. ➤ The Japanese language instruction at CET Japan goes far beyond traditional classroom lectures by centering the curriculum around practical, task-based learning and field studies...These activities are meticulously designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This ensures that students can immediately apply their classroom knowledge to tangible, hands-on experiences. By covering a wide array of cultural activities that transcend the boundaries of the textbook, the program offers a truly holistic approach to language acquisition. ➤ Supporting this high-quality instruction is the exceptional dedication of the faculty.	➤ While the rigor and fast-pace of CET Japan's language courses are one of the strengths, an increasing number of students have recently expressed preference for a slower pace of instruction. It might be worth considering a more moderate pace for 12 credit courses, as this could support better retention and a deeper understanding of the materials. ➤ While individual faculty members maintain one-on-one communication with students, it would be highly beneficial to establish a formal system for sharing student progress with their Japanese language instructors at the beginning and end of each semester. Faculty members often play a crucial role in advising students on their study abroad destinations, and they possess a deep understanding of each student's development and adjustment during their time abroad. By sharing these insights with Japanese language instructors, the university can also ensure a more holistic support system. ➤ For Studio Arts courses, consider a dual-track section model within the existing classroom, designating beginner and intermediate levels that share the same cultural content and core assignments while modestly differentiating expectations—such as one additional completed work or a higher technical threshold for intermediate students.

CATEGORY	COMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Student Services	➤ The Emergency and Life Safety Workshop at the Abeno Tasukaru Center treats safety preparedness as a lived, Japan-specific practice rather than a procedural obligation, and is commendably integrated into the first week of the program. ➤ The co-curricular offerings are exceptional in breadth and cultural specificity, representing substantive engagement with Japanese life rather than passing enrichment activities. ➤ CET Japan really shines in the housing that integrates CET students with OGU students in the housing, where they all have their own bedroom, but also have common spaces where they can eat, study, and hang out together.	➤ Provide an option for tablet devices on a checkout basis for the digital studio art courses. This will decrease the financial burden on incoming students. ➤ Most students are very career focused, so this seems to be an area that CET Japan could lean into more, and this was echoed by feedback from students. We recommend CET build out more robust programming around career and skill development.
Administration & Management of the Program	➤ The program's support staff demonstrate strong academic preparation and relevant experiential backgrounds. ➤ CET is clearly very committed to high quality onboarding training for faculty and staff, along with continuing education and professional development once staff have settled into their jobs.	➤ Add to website and/or program materials to give students a sense of the program from current students, particularly how warm and supportive the environment is for students. Potentially use Instagram to do this.
Relationships with Host Community & Host University	➤ Most OGU students are friendly and enjoy interacting with CET students. This openness creates a positive environment where OGU students can improve their English, while encouraging CET students to speak more Japanese. ➤ Students cultivate practical communication skills through diverse local engagement, including community presentations and discussions with high schoolers.	➤ Formalize volunteer programs with more assessment structure between CET and host organization. Potentially offer credit for the experience, and add other internship and/or volunteer placement opportunities. ➤ To further develop critical thinking skills through the Osaka-specific educational opportunities, it might be beneficial to incorporate a component focused on Nishinari ward where Burakumin, a historically marginalized social group, has lived.

“Students are challenged through the academic rigor of Japanese language courses, studio arts courses, and the electives at OGU. But they are also greatly supported by the stellar academic and support staff at CET Japan.

— Final program review

RESPONSE FROM CET & NEXT STEPS

CET received a copy of the review team's report in April and immediately began plans to incorporate the feedback into program operations. The full recommendation-by-recommendation response from CET is included after the team's full report. Many of the recommendations are currently being implemented while others will inform the long-term evolution of the program.

Examples of how recommendations have been put into action:

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN
While the rigor and fast-pace of CET Japan's language courses are one of the strengths, an increasing number of students have recently expressed preference for a slower pace of instruction. It might be worth considering a more moderate pace for 12 credit courses, as this could support better retention and a deeper understanding of the materials.	We have begun speaking with various universities about trends on their campus as well as consequences for course equivalencies and sequencing. We will continue doing this over the next year before making any final decisions.
While individual faculty members maintain one-on-one communication with students, it would be highly beneficial to establish a formal system for sharing student progress with their Japanese language instructors at the beginning and end of each semester. Faculty members often play a crucial role in advising students on their study abroad destinations, and they possess a deep understanding of each student's development and adjustment during their time abroad. By sharing these insights with Japanese language instructors, the university can also ensure a more holistic support system.	This suggestion inspired the recently sent Japanese faculty newsletter. We plan to periodically send this. To encourage students to also directly communicate with their professors, we also added an enrichment activity to certain classes for students to write and send letters to their home university Japanese instructor.
For Studio Arts courses, consider a dual-track section model within the existing classroom, designating beginner and intermediate levels that share the same cultural content and core assignments while modestly differentiating expectations—such as one additional completed work or a higher technical threshold for intermediate students.	We love this idea and will pursue it. The instructors have been informally doing this, so making this a formal part of the syllabus will be a boon to students at various levels as well as the instructor.
Most students are very career focused, so this seems to be an area that CET Japan could lean into more, and this was echoed by feedback from students. We recommend CET build out more robust programming around career and skill development.	We agree. Shortly after this Program Review, we hosted a career-focused event with a CET Japan alum currently working in Japan that was very successful. We are attempting to recreate and build on these successes.

THANK YOU

CET thanks the program review team for their time and thoughtful feedback. We believe that feedback is a gift, and we are grateful for the recommendations and candid feedback from the program review team that will make CET Japan a better, stronger program for the students and U.S. institutions it serves.

We look forward to sharing future reports from other CET programs with our greater community in future years.

FULL PROGRAM REVIEW



LAC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT:

Evaluation of CET Japan

INTRODUCTION

The Learning Abroad Center (LAC) appointed review team is pleased to present the following report on the CET program in Osaka, Japan. The review team observed Japanese language pedagogy, studio arts, and study abroad administration, giving this evaluation an unusually broad disciplinary range that strengthened our ability to assess both the language and arts dimensions of the program. Pre-departure materials were thorough and well-organized. Canvas access, guiding questions, instructor CVs, and staff bios were all provided in advance and allowed the team to arrive with meaningful context. Informal conversations with students over shared lunch and throughout the week provided candid perspective not always available in structured sessions. These were very positive, genuine and illuminating.

Introduction of Terms Used in Document

- **CET** – The parent CET organization based in Washington DC, USA.
- **CET Japan** – Site-specific CET program in Osaka, Japan.
- **OGU** – Osaka Gakuin University; partnering host institution
- **HA** – Human Academy; partnering host institution of studio arts
- **IMHPJ** – International Mental Health Professionals Japan; interdisciplinary network providing mental health care, therapy, and related services
- **Kansai** – Region of Japan that encompasses Osaka.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CET Japan has a cohesive and forward-looking leadership team, and has a strong student support infrastructure, including some highlights like the IMHPJ clinical partnership. The Kansai location of the program is an extended classroom in the fullest sense, one whose resources the program has learned to activate with genuine pedagogical purpose rather than simply geographic proximity. Newly added studio arts courses are a distinctive curricular

innovation that complements a rigorous language program that adds to the community embedded learning. It is a program that treats students as residents of the area.

The strength of the program lies in its three pronged approach to Language Immersion + Community Immersion + Cultural Immersion. This program provides an ideal balance of both challenge and support that one looks for in a high quality study abroad program that allows students to grow personally and academically. Students are challenged through the academic rigor of Japanese language courses, studio arts courses, and the electives at OGU. But they are also greatly supported by the stellar academic and support staff at CET Japan.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation site visit team was composed of:

- Mr. Zach Mohs, Director of Programs, Learning Abroad Center, University of Minnesota
- Ms. Satomi Hayashi Newsom, Instructor of Japanese, Japanese Section Head, Lewis & Clark College
- Dr. Ritsuko Narita Larson, Associate Professor of Japanese, Macalester College
- Mr. Mario Marzán, Associate Professor of Art, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill)
- Mr. Zenas Seiji Ikeda, Associate Professor of Graphic Design, University of Minnesota

The members of the site visit team reviewed (list as applicable):

- the history of the program
- annual reports
- student evaluations
- course syllabi
- participant statistics and demographic information
- staff and instructor curriculum vitae
- pre-departure materials
- on-site orientation materials

The agenda of this review is attached as an appendix.

MISSION OF THE PROGRAM

- **Overall structure**

CET Japan is motivated to enrich students by methods of academics with culture immersion. It is mostly based in Osaka with Osaka Gakuin University (OGU). They encourage 14–16 credits for regular Fall/Spring semesters. They also have summer programs and a large number of custom programs. The studio arts curriculum and the language program together cultivate a dual fluency, one linguistic, one visual, that is rare in study abroad contexts and that positions CET Japan as a genuinely distinctive model for cross-cultural immersion. Small class size provides students with plenty of individual attention.

- **Rationale**

A meaningful portion of students arrive through interest in Japanese popular culture. The current studio arts courses are a genuine and growing part of what makes this program distinctive, and there is significant room to develop them into something that serves art students with even greater intentionality and depth.

- **Population**

25–30 spring/fall

55 summer

100 custom

NOTE: Refer to presentation slides for percentages

EVALUATION

1. ACADEMICS

1.1 Curriculum

- Courses include host-country scholarship, perspectives, and examples
- Courses reflect unique opportunities in that environment and context
- Meet students' needs and appropriate level
- Guest lecturers
- Academic excursions and experiential and intercultural learning

The course curriculum is composed of both CET-only students and CET+OGU students. There are 3 basic types: Japanese Language for CET students, Studio Arts for CET students, and OG-Direct (CET & OGU students).

The two major goals are to grow autonomous learners, and to develop critical thinking skills.

Japanese Language Courses (Fall/Spring):

All students must take language classes. CET Japan offers two Japanese language tracks. The first is the long-standing, 12-credit Intensive Japanese course (180 contact hours). To meet more flexible learning needs, a new 6-credit track (90 contact hours) was introduced in Fall 2025. This variety allows students to select the credit load that best aligns with their individual academic plans.

- **6 CREDITS OF JAPANESE**
 - OS/LANG 105 Beginning Japanese 1
 - OS/LANG 155 Beginning Japanese 2
 - OS/LANG 205 Intermediate Japanese 1
 - OS/LANG 255 Intermediate Japanese 2
 - OS/LANG 375 Advanced Japanese Projects
- **12 CREDITS OF JAPANESE**
 - OS/LANG 220: Intermediate Japanese
 - OS/LANG 260: Intermediate High Japanese
 - OS/LANG 320: Pre-Advanced Japanese
 - OS/LANG 420: Advanced Japanese
 - OS/LANG 520: Advanced High Japanese

The language pledges are required for all students with the option of a full or limited pledge. Every course incorporates a field study component. Class sizes are kept small and 1- 10 students are enrolled in each course.

Studio Arts Courses (Fall/Spring):

Meets once a week. 3–4 hours. Evening Classes. Exclusive for CET students. 60-hour studio arts. Taught by local accomplished artists-educators. CET provides instructor translators. All student backgrounds welcome. Includes field studies to environmental situations—such as nature, Japanese house interiors, zoos, etc..

- Character Design (4 credits)
 - Character design and illustration foundation fundamentals.
 - Done in a Japanese Context.
- Manga Creation (4 credits)
 - Digital methods. Using *Clip Studio Paint*.
 - Story development, layout, coloring, direction, and production.
- Recommendation: The various student experience levels pose a challenge for course instruction. Some students come with the pursuit of an art/visual-based major and/or degree (eg. BFA) from their home institutions. Having a different set of evaluation criteria for these students may provide a more enriching learning environment (eg. students may voluntarily participate by signing a course contract at the start of the semester).
- Recommendation: Additional studio electives would be favorable as demand grows.

OGU Direct-Enroll (Fall/Spring):

Two courses taught in English are offered in collaboration with OGU. Students take these courses with OGU students.

- Japanese for Specific Purposes (1.5 credits)
- Japan Area Studies (3 credits)

The Area Studies co-curricular with OGU students creates genuine cross-cultural exchange beyond the CET program environment. In addition, the region provides extraordinary access to Japanese cultural history that is directly relevant to both the language and arts curricula. The excursions are thoughtfully selected and rich. It is unclear, however, whether any currently carry formal academic framing or are tied to measurable learning outcomes. Connecting them

more explicitly to course content would represent a meaningful and accessible opportunity to deepen the program's experiential learning dimension.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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1.2 Internship & Community Engagement Courses

- Preparation prior to placement
- Supervision at placement site
- Quality and appropriateness of placements
- Assessment at placement site
- Career competency development

At the time of assessment there is no support for internship nor community engagement courses. However, it is noted that the existing volunteer programs and local-artist instructors do pave the way to build these courses in the future and would be favorable to potential future students. Many students from the program use the volunteer placements as a launching pad to doing the JET program after graduation. Both students and site visit participants expressed a desire to have the community engagement opportunities expanded and formalized in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

Formalize volunteer programs with more assessment structure between CET and host organization. Potentially offer credit for the experience, and add other internship and/or volunteer placement opportunities.

• <u>Not Applicable</u>		
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1.3 Research

- Complies with IRB requirements
- Prepares students for research practices in host country

While the program does not have formal research opportunities, students do a Japanese culture investigative project as part of their language class, sometimes choosing topics and subjects that could potentially necessitate interaction with IRB.

RECOMMENDATION

Reach out to IRB authority to determine if any sort of IRB review is needed for language course projects that students are doing based on topic or subjects.

• <u>Not Applicable</u>		
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1.4 Faculty

Japanese Language Courses

The institution's faculty recruitment and development processes demonstrate a sophisticated balance between leveraging external expertise and maintaining strict internal pedagogical standards. When evaluating candidates for part-time positions, the institution performs an exhaustive review of their professional backgrounds, including years of professional experience, previous teaching environments, and the specific textbooks they have utilized. All instructors possess rich experience in teaching a wide variety of class levels, ensuring a high degree of pedagogical versatility. While diverse teaching backgrounds are highly valued for the adaptability they bring to the classroom, the institution ensures a baseline of excellence by requiring all candidates to undergo a practical mock lesson as a mandatory component of its rigorous screening process.

The structural foundation of the faculty is further strengthened by the high academic credentials and clear leadership of its Lead Teachers. At this institution, lead positions are held by highly qualified educators who possess at least a Master's Degree. The organization operates under a unit-based management system, where one Lead Teacher oversees and coordinates a small team of two to three part-time instructors. This structure ensures that core

educational policies are thoroughly executed with meticulous oversight at every level of instruction.

Furthermore, the institution enforces a strategic biennial rotation of teaching assignments. By changing responsibilities every two years, the institution prevents faculty from becoming siloed within a single grade level. This policy is designed to ensure that all instructors develop a comprehensive understanding of the entire four-year curriculum.

Studio Art Courses

- Degree appropriate for course content

The studio arts courses are taught by the Human Academy faculty and adhere to the qualification expectations of that institution; which places heavy emphasis on extensive professional experience. In addition to this, the current faculty have a bachelor's level education from reputable institutions such as Kyoto Seika University.

Current instructors bring professional practice credentials that are in many respects more relevant to these courses than specific academic degrees. The instructor for Manga Creation has taught manga and illustration at multiple institutions including Saga University of Arts. The instructor for Character Design is an active and practicing artist who has served as an assistant to recognized artists like Shuji Mukai in large scale projects. Both are embedded in the Kansai professional creative community.

In a studio arts context, professional practice is a legitimate and valued form of expertise. This is consistent with how visiting and adjunct faculty are hired at US art departments, and it should be framed as a strength rather than a credentialing caveat.

Discussion did take place during the assessment period as to the possibility of assisting existing or new faculty attaining higher degrees. Historically such degrees did not exist for those in the manga field and there are only a small handful in relatively recent years. Therefore it is considered unnecessary at the time of this assessment. It is noted that CET Japan was very conscientious in providing enriching course designs by partnering with the art institutions of Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and the Art Center in the course development.

Recommendations regarding faculty professional development can be found in section 3.2.

COMMENDATION

CET Japan is perhaps the only program to offer manga-related studio art courses with English support and on the US-academic calendar. They have really pioneered opening this opportunity to aspiring student artists.

RECOMMENDATION

At the time of this review, the full-time and part time faculty ratio is 40:60. The part time members are an indispensable part of the program. Offering them a multi-semester contract may positively impact their morale and improve their qualities of teaching even more, which then will lead to the enhancement of students' experience.

Additional recommendations regarding faculty professional development can be found in section 3.2.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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1.5 Syllabi

Japanese Language Courses

- ***Contact Hours***

The core of the program offers two language tracks to accommodate different academic goals. The 12-credit Track includes approximately 160 to 180 hours of face-to-face instruction per term—twice the pace of a typical Japanese course in the United States—with students attending several hours of class four mornings a week. It is an Intensive Immersion program designed to help students complete a full year of U.S. university-level Japanese in just one semester.

For those seeking a more balanced curriculum, the 6-credit Track provides approximately 80 to 90 contact hours per term, allowing students to earn 6 credits of Japanese while dedicating more time to English-taught electives.

CET offers the Language Pledge to maintain the immersion environment, students commit to one of two levels:

- Full Pledge: A 24/7 commitment to speaking only Japanese. This is the "deep end" of immersion, applied in both academic and social settings, including with Japanese housemates.
- Limited Pledge: A targeted commitment that may apply to specific hours, locations (such as classrooms or common areas), or proficiency levels, allowing for a more gradual transition into full immersion.

In addition, as a real-world connection through field trips and class projects, students interact with the local community and Japanese culture. This allows them to immediately apply the new vocabulary and grammar they learned in a real-world context.

● ***Texts and Readings***

The CET Japan curriculum is built upon the foundation of standard U.S. university-level language education while maximizing the unique regional characteristics of its host location, Osaka. At the core of the classroom experience are academic textbooks widely adopted by major North American universities, such as the Genki series or Tobira: Gateway to Advanced Japanese. While these materials are used to rigorously solidify the foundations of grammar and vocabulary, the most defining feature of the program is the remarkable pace of instruction. Students are expected to learn the contents of an entire textbook for beginner levels — contents that typically span a full academic year— within a single semester or summer session, requiring an exceptional level of focus and intensive preparation.

Furthermore, leveraging its base at OGU, the program provides original materials focused on the local "Osaka-ben" (Osaka dialect). These resources serve as a vital bridge for social integration, empowering students to build deeper connections and engage in meaningful daily interactions with their Japanese roommates and local residents.

The CET curriculum centers on 'task-based materials' designed for experiential learning. Beyond classroom instruction, students utilize specialized tools—including theme-based interview sheets and field notebooks—to conduct surveys and observations through direct interaction with the local community. By integrating standard linguistic textbooks with original project-based materials, the program enables students to simultaneously develop practical communication skills and cross-cultural understanding within a condensed timeframe.

● ***Assessment***

The grading system for the 12-credit courses is designed to balance the daily learning process with a rigorous evaluation of language proficiency throughout the term.

Daily Consistency and Preparation (30% of Total Grade)

Thirty percent of the final grade is determined by a student's day-to-day engagement. This includes Participation (10%), which evaluates active class contributions and adherence to the Language Pledge, and Homework (10%), which measures the completion and quality of daily assignments. Additionally, a series of Quizzes (10% total) are administered to track the steady acquisition of vocabulary and kanji. While each individual quiz carries a small weight, they serve as a vital indicator of consistent effort.

Applied Project-Based Learning (20% of Total Grade)

A hallmark of the program is experiential learning, which is assessed through a required Project (20%). This evaluation is split into two parts: the Process (8%), which monitors the research and interview stages, and the Final Product (12%), such as a presentation or report. This ensures that students are graded not only on their final results but also on their ability to apply Japanese in real-world contexts during the planning phases.

Comprehensive Proficiency Evaluation (50% of Total Grade)

The largest portion of the grade is allocated to formal examinations to ensure academic rigor. This consists of Chapter Tests (25%), which assess the mastery of specific grammatical units, and a Final Exam (25%), which serves as a cumulative assessment of the semester's material. While the program values the daily learning process, half of the final evaluation is based on these standardized results to ensure that students have reached the required proficiency levels for their respective tracks.

The CET Japan assessment framework prioritizes daily participation and project-based milestones over traditional examination results. Grading is primarily weighted toward active classroom engagement and the practical application of language skills through field research and presentations. This distribution ensures that final evaluations reflect consistent performance and functional communication rather than isolated test scores.

At key milestones throughout the term, students take a midterm and a final exam, both consisting of written, listening, and oral components, which each carry a weight of around 20-25%. While the 6-credit Track follows a similar evaluative structure to the 12-credit Track, strict standards regarding attendance and punctuality are maintained across both, as these factors directly impact the final letter grade (A through F). Ultimately, to ensure high proficiency gains in a short period, the system is designed so that "consistent daily effort" is valued as much as, if not more than, one-off examination scores.

- **Learning outcomes**

A key learning outcome across all proficiency levels at CET Japan is the ability to communicate personal interests and research findings logically in Japanese. Regardless of their starting point, students engage in project-based learning that takes them beyond the classroom to develop fieldwork skills, such as conducting interviews and surveys with local community members. By synthesizing these real-world interactions into formal poster sessions, written reports, or oral presentations, students at every level—from beginner to advanced—acquire practical Japanese language proficiency and the confidence to navigate academic or professional environments.

RECOMMENDATION

While the rigor and fast-pace of CET Japan’s language courses are one of the strengths, an increasing number of students have recently expressed preference for a slower pace of instruction. It might be worth considering a more moderate pace for 12 credit courses, as this could support better retention and a deeper understanding of the materials.

Studio Art Courses

- Contact hours
- Texts and readings
- Assessment
- Learning outcomes

Both studio art courses, *Character Design in a Japanese Context (OS/ARTS 250)* and *Manga Creation (OS/ARTS 320)*, carry 4 recommended credits each across 60 contact hours, meeting in 3-hour sessions in a term. Grading is identically structured across both: final portfolio (50%), mid-term assessment (30%), homework (10%), and participation (10%). Assessment rubrics are detailed and criterion-referenced: the *Character Design* mid-term and final portfolio each evaluate students across eight categories including ideas and creativity, degree of completion, composition and layout, realism in size and shape, research and understanding of art materials, three-dimensionality, detail depiction, and shadow and light. The *Manga Creation* rubrics similarly assess eight criteria: character differentiation, panel layout, clarity of storyline, quality of inking and shading, use of manga-style effects, originality, neatness, and overall completeness, with point values weighted toward originality, neatness, and overall completeness at the mid-term. Field-based components are built into both schedules; site

visits to shrines, cityscapes, and zoos in *Character Design*, and a museum excursion to either the *Kyoto International Manga Museum* or the *Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum* for the Manga Creation class.

The two courses form a complementary pair without redundancy. *Character Design* grounds students in observational drawing and traditional analog media, primarily watercolor, while *Manga Creation* develops narrative structure and digital production skills through *Clipstudio* digital application. Both courses scaffold effectively from foundational skills toward original creative work, and mid-term assessments function as genuine developmental checkpoints rather than conclusive assessment. The instructor created and provided handouts that serve as the primary course material in both.

Contact hours for both courses follow a once-weekly, 3-hour meeting format that, while consistent with how an increasing number of American research universities structure studio art courses. An incremental increase in weekly contact time would be a welcome enhancement, offering students more in-class production time and greater opportunity for instructor feedback within what is already an immersive and well-structured program. Taken together, these offerings reflect a genuine commitment to both artistic skill development and cultural immersion, and appear well suited to the undergraduate students they serve.

Given the range of student experience likely to continue to enroll in a program of this kind, from beginners encountering studio art for the first time to more experienced students with prior drawing or design backgrounds, it is worth recommending that CET Japan consider a dual-section strategy within the same classroom. Rather than asking the instructor to differentiate across the full spectrum of ability simultaneously, two parallel tracks could be designated: a beginner level and an intermediate level, sharing the same class sessions, cultural content, and core assignments. The distinction between tracks need not be dramatic. An intermediate student might be expected to produce one additional completed work, or meet a higher threshold of technical refinement in the final portfolio, for example. This approach would allow the instructor to focus feedback and critique more purposefully, give students a clearer sense of their own developmental trajectory, and make the program more attractive and academically appropriate for students across a wider range of artistic preparation. In terms of student feedback on the Manga class one example includes this comment “The Manga Creation class has been excellent! Every class feels like a friendly workshop where we can work at our own pace, see each other's work anytime, and receive encouraging educated feedback from the teacher. Each class also has a very specific focus teaching an essential manga drawing skill/element, making every class feel intentional, varied, and exciting.”

RECOMMENDATION

Increase weekly contact hours incrementally for both courses to allow for more sustained in-class production time and stronger feedback cycles.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider a dual-track section model within the existing classroom, designating beginner and intermediate levels that share the same cultural content and core assignments while modestly differentiating expectations—such as one additional completed work or a higher technical threshold for intermediate students.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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1.6 Evaluation of Instruction/Classes (Japanese Language and Studio Arts)

Japanese Language Courses

- ***Student Engagement***

At CET Japan, student engagement is driven by a rigorous language pledge that creates a complete immersion environment. To navigate the challenge of communicating solely in Japanese, students utilize whiteboards to visually express complex thoughts they cannot yet articulate verbally, allowing instructors to provide immediate, real-time linguistic guidance. This commitment to immersion extends beyond the classroom through interviews with local residents in Osaka. These interactions foster a win-win situation: while students deepen their cultural understanding and linguistic fluency, the locals also gain fresh perspectives and a rare opportunity to reflect on their own culture. Furthermore, the program enhances interest in written Japanese by incorporating water calligraphy for kanji practice. Compared to traditional pencil-and-paper drills, this tactile, artistic approach is significantly more engaging, helping students internalize correct stroke order and develop a more profound connection to the Japanese writing system.

- **Quality of Instruction**

The Japanese language instruction at CET Japan goes far beyond traditional classroom lectures by centering the curriculum around practical, task-based learning and field studies. Students acquire "living Japanese" through real-world missions, such as grocery shopping or navigating complex train stations. These activities are meticulously designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice; for instance, before a hands-on cooking session, instructors provide a comprehensive introduction to Japanese culinary culture and terminology. This ensures that students can immediately apply their classroom knowledge to tangible, hands-on experiences. By covering a wide array of cultural activities that transcend the boundaries of the textbook, the program offers a truly holistic approach to language acquisition.

Furthermore, the curriculum is designed to foster critical thinking by engaging with complex social issues. Leveraging its location, the program encourages students to study the history and contemporary lives of minority groups, such as the Zainichi Korean community, a topic deeply rooted in the specific social fabric of Osaka. At the advanced level, such as Level 5, this immersion is further enriched by incorporating creative and atmospheric settings for academic output. For example, students may deliver their final presentations in a classroom decorated like a traditional Japanese *kominka*, transforming a standard speech into a culturally resonant experience.

Supporting this high-quality instruction is the exceptional dedication of the faculty. The Japanese instructors are remarkably patient and kind, guiding each student through the challenges of immersion with a supportive hand. One student commented that "the teachers are all very welcoming, soft-spoken, and easy to talk to. Engaging in conversation with them during walks and breaks has been a true highlight of my experience." The integration of rigorous academic standards, heightened social awareness, and compassionate faculty leadership ensures that students achieve more than linguistic proficiency; they receive comprehensive mentorship throughout their cross-cultural development.

- **Accessibility of the Instructor**

To ensure personalized support, students are required to participate in one-on-one sessions held at the beginning and midpoint of the semester. Additionally, the instructor will be available in the classroom 30 minutes prior to every scheduled lesson for informal consultations. Furthermore, during field trips and off-campus activities, the instructor will be present to provide continuous guidance and support in a real-world setting.

COMMENDATION

The Japanese instructors incorporate community involvement tasks into their courses to help students learn 'natural' Japanese. As part of their projects, students conduct interviews with local residents. The Program Director believes their mission is to empower students as 'social agents' in alignment with CEFR principles. They are shifting their focus beyond the classroom to prioritize community-based activities—such as local interviews and collaborative projects—to ensure students develop the practical competencies necessary to navigate real-world Japanese society.

RECOMMENDATION

While individual faculty members maintain one-on-one communication with students, it would be highly beneficial to establish a formal system for sharing student progress with their Japanese language instructors at the beginning and end of each semester. Faculty members often play a crucial role in advising students on their study abroad destinations, and they possess a deep understanding of each student's development and adjustment during their time abroad. By sharing these insights with Japanese language instructors, the university can also ensure a more holistic support system.

RECOMMENDATION

To further develop critical thinking skills through the Osaka-specific educational opportunities, it might be beneficial to incorporate a component focused on Nishiinari ward where Burakumin, a historically marginalized social group, have lived.

Studio Art Courses

- Student engagement
- Quality of instruction
- Accessibility of the instructor

OS/ARTS 250 Character Design in Japanese Context and OS/ARTS 320 Manga Creation

The review team had the opportunity to observe both studio arts courses offered through CET Japan, and taken together they present a picture of a program that has built something genuinely distinctive and worth developing further. Each course has its own character, its own instructor, and its own pedagogical focus, but they share a common ambition: to give students a structured point of entry into Japanese visual culture through the act of making. That ambition is evident in both classrooms, and it is what makes these courses worth the attention the review team gave them. Both courses were observed to be well-prepared and thoughtfully organized. In each case the instructor had clearly considered not only what students would do during the session but why, and the progression from conceptual framing to hands-on

application gave the classes a coherent arc. Students in both rooms were attentive and engaged, treating the work seriously and responding to instructor guidance with evident investment.

The *Character Design in Japanese Context* course session centered on critique and presentation, with instructor feedback pitched across the range of student levels in the room. The feedback was warm and responsive, addressing both technical and compositional decisions in student work. What the review team observed was an instructor who is genuinely attentive to where each student is and who adjusts accordingly, which is a meaningful skill in a mixed-level studio environment. The critique format leaned toward a direct instructor-to-student exchange, which is consistent with how mentorship and artistic guidance often function in artistic educational contexts.

The *Manga Creation* course observed took a different shape, built around a lecture and studio activity format that moved with clear intentionality from narrative framing toward technical instruction in linear perspective. The session opened with a presentation on background and environment as active storytelling elements in sequential manga narrative, asking students to think about the spaces between and behind characters as meaning-making rather than as compositional filler. This pedagogy set a strong conceptual foundation for the perspective work that followed. The instructor walked students through one-point, two-point, and three-point perspective systems with clarity and precision, grounding each in practical decisions about when and why a practitioner would choose one over another.

One of the most compelling features of each session was the instructional language structure. The instructor taught in Japanese while an interpreter facilitated comprehension for the students who needed it, creating a learning environment in which visual concepts and Japanese language were being acquired simultaneously. This is not an incidental arrangement. It is also a thoughtful integration of the program's mission. Students at different levels of Japanese proficiency were navigating the same content through different linguistic lenses, and the visual nature of the material, perspective drawing as a language of its own, made that navigation feel natural rather than strained.

Across both courses, the review team observed that the physical learning environment presented some constraints worth addressing. Both courses are taught in general education classrooms that have been adapted for studio use rather than designed for it. Students in the *Manga Creation* course were working on standard paper on small desks arranged in a conventional classroom configuration, which limited the instructor's ability to circulate freely and access individual work directly. In the *Character Design* course, a similar spatial dynamic was observed. A studio arts course benefits from a physical environment that signals to

students that they are in a space set apart for making, where the arrangement of furniture supports the instructor's movement, where student work accumulates visibly on the walls, and where materials communicate the seriousness of the practice. The review team recognizes that dedicated studio space involves institutional negotiation and resources that go beyond the program's immediate control. The suggestion is offered as a direction worth pursuing with Human Institute partners over time, framed as an investment in the quality of the experience for students and instructors alike.

Both instructors demonstrated the kind of individualized attention that distinguishes strong studio teaching, moving through the room, working alongside students, and making themselves available for one-on-one feedback and guidance. As both courses continue to develop, the review team would gently suggest building in more structured opportunities for student-to-student dialogue and peer critique alongside the instructor-centered feedback that currently anchors both classrooms. Peer critique, often used in American schools, teaches students to articulate what they are seeing and why it works, which is a form of visual literacy that serves them long after the semester ends.

Finally, both courses present a significant and genuinely exciting opportunity to build more explicit connections between the studio work students are making and the art historical traditions of Japan that underlie it. The region is one of the richest art historical landscapes in the world, and students are living inside it. The visual grammar of ukiyo-e woodblock printing, the compositional intelligence of the great landscape artists, and the elegance of traditional Japanese design are not distant from what students are doing in these classrooms. They are foundational to it. Helping students see and articulate that lineage throughout all of the assignments would give both courses a depth of cultural grounding that is unique and would make the learning students take away considerably richer. These observations are offered with genuine respect for what is being developed at CET Japan. Both courses are meaningfully conceived, considered, and responsive to who the students are. The recommendations are invitations to push further into territory the program is already moving toward.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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1.7 Academic Advising

- Pre-departure

- On-site
- Troubleshooting issues, supporting students through academic challenges

CET is committed to placing students at the proper language level to maximize the quality of their learning experience. In addition to the result of the placement test, they carefully review faculty reference letters, and when appropriate, conduct a zoom interview prior to students' arrival. Finally OGU offers a "shopping week" for courses at the beginning of the term so students can try out different courses before finalizing their enrollment.

On-site, the academic team and the residential team provide comprehensive support. The Residential Director meets with every student at the beginning of the semester to discuss each individual's goal in terms of their Japanese language skills, followed up by two more check-ins— one mid semester on culture shock and adjustment, and then one right before they leave regarding re-entry. The academic team meets with students on a similar schedule, and both teams maintain close communication with one another. This coordinated system effectively identifies students' concerns and enables timely support. As a result, students feel supported and express appreciation for the care the support team provides.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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2. STUDENT SERVICES

2.1 Pre-departure Services & Materials

- Pre-admission (program materials, website, etc.)
- Post-acceptance (orientation, visa services)

Pre-departure materials are very extensive and give the students all they need to know prior to arriving in Japan. Students commented on it being a lot of information and sometimes hard to navigate, but that everything they needed was there. They also talked about how if they couldn't find information they needed or answers to their questions, the CET staff in the US was readily available and super helpful in answering questions or directing them to the right document for the information they needed. One comment that came up from students and site visit participants was a desire to better communicate ahead of time how supportive the

program was for students and what their experience would be like once they arrived, in addition to the more practical and administrative guidance that is included in the materials.

One possible idea to increase brand visibility and provide a transparent view of the program would be for CET Japan to launch an official Instagram account. The strategy should focus on showcasing daily classes, cultural activities, and excursions through the eyes of the students. By integrating direct student comments and testimonials into each post, the account will offer an authentic "day-in-the-life" perspective. This peer-to-peer storytelling will not only build trust with prospective applicants but also effectively highlight the program's unique balance of academic rigor and cultural immersion.

RECOMMENDATION

Add to website and/or program materials to give students a sense of the program from current students, particularly how warm and supportive the environment is for students. Potentially use Instagram to do this.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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2.2 On-site Orientation

- Materials
- Safety
- Tour of city (location familiarization)
- Culture learning

The multi-day on-site orientation at CET Japan is thoughtfully sequenced and reflects genuine investment in the student experience from the moment of arrival. Rather than front-loading students with information, it unfolds across multiple days and formats, addressing housing, health, mental health care, and practical logistics before academic content is introduced. The Virtual CET Center on Canvas provides a well-organized ongoing reference point that students arrive already familiar with through pre-departure preparation, meaningfully reducing the disorientation typical of the first days abroad.

Particularly noteworthy is the Emergency and Life Safety Workshop at the Abeno Tasukaru Center, held during the first week and conducted as a hands-on, Japan-specific experience rather than a procedural briefing. Students travel there by public transit as a group, navigating the city's train system in real time, which is itself a form of orientation. Resident registration is

handled collectively with staff support, reflecting an understanding that logistical ease is a form of student care.

Osaka's working-class character, its relationship to food, commerce, and regional dialect, offers students a textured encounter with Japanese urban life that the program draws on deliberately. The Shinsaibashi Walking Tour, offered to the review team as part of the structured orientation experience, is led with genuine local knowledge, warmth, and humor, and gives students a relationship to the neighborhood rather than simply an impression of it. The welcome dinner, a shabu-shabu meal in Umeda attended by students and staff together, extended that orientation into the social dimensions of program life, functioning as both an introduction to Japanese dining culture and a genuine community builder.

The program's approach to immersion accumulates rather than announces itself, building across co-curricular workshops, excursions, and encounters that together construct a layered picture of life in Osaka. Offerings ranging from indigo dyeing, Haniwa ceramics, and Awa Odori to trips to the Adachi Art Museum and Izumo Grand Shrine represent substantive threads of Japanese life rather than passing cultural encounters. The Area Studies co-curricular with OGU students deserves particular recognition as genuine intellectual exchange between CET students and Japanese peers that the program has invested in making substantive rather than performative.

COMMENDATION

The Emergency and Life Safety Workshop at the Abeno Tasukaru Center treats safety preparedness as a lived, Japan-specific practice rather than a procedural obligation, and is commendably integrated into the first week of the program.

COMMENDATION

The co-curricular offerings are exceptional in breadth and cultural specificity, representing substantive engagement with Japanese life rather than passing enrichment activities.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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2.3 Housing

- Safety
- Cleanliness (prior to students' arrival)
- Provides basic amenities

- Access to public transportation
- Proximity to program center
- Meals
- Family selection process (homestays only)
- Interaction with students (homestays only)

Housing is an area where CET Japan particularly shines, especially with the integration of local roommates. The typical ratio is about 3 CET students to 2 OGU students throughout the apartments. CET staff commented on how it took them a while to find a local partner in Japan who would be willing to house local students with CET study abroad students, and the willingness to do that by OGU is one of the reasons they ended up with OGU as their local partner. All students get their own room, and both CET and OGU students expressed satisfaction with their overall living arrangements. For students in the standard apartment housing, they also offer a 3 day weekend homestay program to provide students greater insight into living like a local.

Each housing complex features a common space designed for various activities. Even in locations without an open common area, creative solutions are implemented, such as converting a regular room into a shared space.

OGU student housemates are eager to engage with international students, building meaningful connections through shared activities such as cooking together, dining out, playing video games, and going to karaoke. These interactions are often sustained through messaging apps like Line, where students stay in touch and deepen their friendships over common interests.

COMMENDATION

CET Japan really shines in the housing that integrates CET students with OGU students in the housing, where they all have their own bedroom, but also have common spaces where they can eat, study, and hang out together.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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2.4 Health & Wellness

- Availability of doctors, English speaking
- Availability of counselors, English speaking

- Accommodations for documented disability categories

English-speaking doctors and therapists are available in a close proximity. Onsite staff did a lot of work to identify English speaking therapists in the whole region – two in particular identified, one in Osaka and one in Kyoto. Students have the option to meet with them in person or virtually. Roughly a third of students on the program report ongoing mental health management while they are abroad. Beyond the day to day health and wellness for students, the program has also dealt with a mental health crisis before that involved evacuation.

For pre-departure planning, students need to work with a US doctor ahead of time to change medications or get approval from Japanese authorities to bring them in, and they are coached through this by CET staff.

Students coming for a semester are enrolled in the national health care system to offset the cost of medical care, but even short term students have full coverage through CET international health insurance provider.

COMMENDATION

Staff have done a great job setting up administrative and health professional networks that ensure students are fully supported in terms of their mental and physical health.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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2.5 Cultural & Career Considerations

- Staff-facilitated activities
- Excursions
- Language exchanges/partners
- Student groups and sports teams
- Volunteer opportunities
- Activities tied to or embedded within academics (may be in the academics section)
- Activities to prepare students for re-entry
- Career and skill development activities

This is an area where there is a lot going on, and the program generally does a good job, but there is also some room for potential enhancements and improvements to the offerings. For excursions, there is an emphasis on locations that students wouldn't go on their own. A poster session in the Japanese class at the end of the semester is a great way to connect with the locals and the region as a whole, which encourages students to return to Osaka. It also trains presentational skills that are practical skills in their career. The program is doing great jobs connecting with alumni and friends to expand the activities to offer (Ex. Field trip to Yamaha studio, Cooking workshop, etc). There is a potential to build a career path for students with their help.

One other unique opportunity for students on the program in this space is the I-Chat Lounge, where students can volunteer to help OGU students with their English. Students highlighted the welcoming atmosphere of the lounge, noting that OGU students are consistently friendly and eager to engage with program participants. The staff also received praise for creating an inviting environment through thoughtful decor and personal introductions, which effectively encourage open communication. Overall, students expressed high levels of excitement about building relationships within this supportive space.

In addition, a wide variety of extracurricular activities are offered to all the CET students in order to reinforce the program goal of community and cultural immersion, including workshops led by guest experts in fields such as Rakugo and Ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement).

Finally, students have an opportunity to join OGU Kendo and Kado clubs. Other clubs might be open for international students depending on the students' proficiency level and skillsets. Community building activities are also offered including Mario Kart Cup, Takoyaki Party, and movie parties with OGU students.

RECOMMENDATION

Most students are very career focused, so this seems to be an area that CET Japan could lean into more, and this was echoed by feedback from students. We recommend CET build out more robust programming around career and skill development.

RECOMMENDATION

While an alumni network exists, we suggest that the CET program further strengthen these connections. Students would benefit from more focus on job prospects and discussions regarding Japanese work culture. For example, alumni visiting Osaka could give guest lectures about their career paths. Additionally, providing students with access to alumni blogs or

professional social media pages would offer valuable insights into life after the CET program. In addition to CET alumni, we could also involve OGU graduates. For instance, we could connect OGU alumni working in the gaming industry with CET students who are interested in that field. They could also host job talks regarding professional certifications and career development.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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3. DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

3.1 Student Services

- Training and resources for on-site staff
- Resources for homestays
- Accessibility and accommodations processes
- Support for student identity needs (gender, sexuality, race, religion, etc.)
- Knowledge of local and/or national/cultural context

The student body is very diverse and generally feels supported by CET staff, and plenty of attention is paid to each student. Over half of the CET student population identifies as people of color and over one quarter identify as LGBTQ+. Accommodation requests are reviewed on a case by case basis and honored as much as possible, with about 10% of students having declared disabilities. It is also easy for students to reach out to resident staff via Whatsapp or Line if they need anything.

In terms of training and resources for staff, CET internal communications are done through a program called Igloo that the staff compared to Reddit. It includes training modules for new staff including an ATA/CET overview, about CET students, technology, finance, health and safety, student support, and academics to name a few. JEDI and Sustainability themes are included throughout the modules and are not included as separate modules. The manager of the role (either onsite or in the US) pulls out what modules are relevant to each role. The onboarding process is typically one-on-one meetings, either in person or virtually. Staff mentioned that they view the majority of the first year in a role as training.

Beyond the first year, there is also ongoing training for all staff including mental health first aid, using AI (Copilot) for work, and custom programming to name a few. This continuing education is usually large groups based on job responsibilities. Multiple sections of those are typically offered given the broad range of time zones where CET operates, and they are also recorded for viewing later if staff cannot make the live session. Much of this training is also provided for adjunct instructors and house mates. The majority of training is created and updated by CET staff, while occasionally bringing in external experts.

COMMENDATION

CET is clearly very committed to high quality onboarding training for faculty and staff, along with continuing education and professional development once staff have settled into their jobs.

COMMENDATION

Commitment to diversity and inclusion is present from the earliest stages of the student experience, addressed directly in the on-site orientation materials in a way that signals genuine program values rather than procedural compliance. That students encounter this framing before they start the program is worth recognizing.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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3.2 Academic

- **Training and resources for faculty**

CET Japan uses various methods that support the ongoing growth of both incoming and existing faculty. This is in addition to the general CET training (see 3.1).

For Japanese language courses, part of the onboarding experience for new faculty is to observe existing classes and have meetings over pedagogy and teaching styles. This is crucial in the first few weeks. In the tutelage of new instructors they may ask for them to create an example lesson plan that is then reviewed and commented on by current faculty.

Post-hiring, the faculty development program is remarkably structured, particularly for early-career instructors who have recently obtained their qualifications. Through a formal mentorship system, veteran faculty members provide ongoing direct guidance, encompassing collaborative lesson planning, the sharing of instructional content, and systematic classroom observations. This institutionalized approach to knowledge transfer ensures that high-quality instruction is not dependent on individual talent but is maintained as a consistent standard across the organization.

Beyond technical expertise, the faculty is characterized by a supportive interpersonal culture. This is exemplified by an open-door policy in the Japanese classes that helps create an open environment which encourages communication about teaching and co-learning from each other.

RECOMMENDATION

While faculty members support each other through frequent sharing of teaching ideas and materials, it would be beneficial to provide them with external opportunities in their professional development; such as conferences, financial support for pursuing certificates and/or higher degrees (masters and terminal degrees), and sabbaticals. This would be a potential win-win scenario for both the faculty and CET Japan in the long term. It is however recognized that there are limitations in the implementation of these recommendations as faculty are hired of HA and OGU which have their own institutional constraints.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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4. ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

4.1 Director-level Staff

- Background
- Cross-cultural skills
- Relationship with faculty
- Community ties

The current Program Director has educational background in foreign-related studies which includes ethnographic music research in Tanzania. They also have a Japanese language teaching background as well.

They started out as a CET Student Services Coordinator in 2017 and moved up through various key positions until they assumed the current Program Director role in 2024. This has resulted in a thorough understanding of all aspects of the current CET Japan program.

The Program Director responsibilities include, but are not limited to, oversight of part-time instructors (shared responsibility with Academic Team; see 4.3), finding local partners to do programmatic activities (shared responsibility with Resident Team; see 4.3), working with the Board of Education of Suita City and Setsu City to collaborate with local municipality schools, collaborating with 10 housing providers, decision of academic resources, conducting weekly meetings with faculty and staff, navigating program and personnel issues, setting goals that meet student concerns, and application of the JEDI framework when possible.

CET provides training for the Program Director. (see 3.1)

CET normally sets overarching goals for the organization, but specific goals for the program are created in partnership between the Program Director and US-based CET leadership.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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4.2 Support Staff

- Background
- Cross-cultural skills
- Community ties

The program's support staff demonstrate strong academic preparation and relevant experiential backgrounds. Collectively, they hold advanced degrees in language pedagogy and curriculum design, with teaching experience spanning novice to advanced learners across diverse age groups. Their cross-cultural competencies are evident through immersive international study, lived experience (including host families), and sustained engagement with language learners in both in-person in the US and Japan, and remote contexts. Staff also show meaningful community ties, including professional experience in local industries, long-term

participation in cultural practices, and familiarity with regional attractions and daily life. They also continue to seek and build new connections with community partners. These attributes suggest a strong ability to support students academically and culturally.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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4.3 Administrative Structure

- Assignment of duties
- Training and development of staff and faculty
- Assessment of faculty and staff

The administrative structure has a Program Director, a Residential Team, and an Academic Team. Although assigned duties are attached to specific roles, there is a cooperation of pinch-hitting and helping each other out as needed. The work culture is very collaborative and supportive. Examples of this include a 4-day work week and approval of extended personal days (e.g. one month leave)—both are highly uncommon in Japanese work culture.

Assignment of Duties

The **Program Director** is head of the overall program and manages personnel, oversees connections with vendors, landlords, etc. They maintain communication and collaboration with the host institution of OGU.

The **Residential Team** oversees all student life concerns and related programming. The roles are composed of the following:

- **Resident Director**—Serves as the primary contact for students. Oversees student life concerns, programming, housing, and community ties.
- **Custom Program Directors (2)**—Oversee the custom programs that are not part of the regular academic session (e.g. custom study abroad experience with a specific institution or faculty). CET Japan has extensive custom programs and therefore uses a sizable team. They have 1–3 staff at any given time.
- **Custom Program Seasonal Staff**—A minimum of one program lead is hired on an as-needed basis.

The **Academic Team** manages the curricular aspects of the program and maintains steady relationships with OGU and HA. Some personnel also have additional language instructor roles and/or lead in student life residential activities—kendo and chado (Japanese tea ceremony).

The roles are composed of the following:

- **Academic Director**—Serves as the main contact for all academic related activities. Oversees the course teachings, syllabi, and faculty relations. Coordinates new and ongoing relationships with host institutions of HA and OGU and their faculty.
- **Assistant Academic Director (2)**—Assists with academic programming and relations with HA and OGU.
- **Program Coordinator**—Recruiting and training of OGU students for housemates positions. Additional duties as required by academic programming needs. It is noted that, the current position holder is an alumna of OGU and has been involved in various CET activities since their student days. Having someone with this background in the position leverages their personal ties in establishing a strong connection with the OGU student body and is a byproduct example of the ongoing benefit of CET and OGU collaborative relationship.
- **Language Instructors**—Full-time and part-time instructors. Additional hires are on an as-needed basis.

HA/OGU faculty that teach CET courses are not considered to be part of the Academic Team, but do fall under their purview.

Training and Development of Staff and Faculty

Faculty undergo the same general CET training (see narrative in 3.1).

Assessment of Faculty and Staff

Faculty have three main assessments:

1. Student feedback is formally gathered by the Academic Director who then shares them to the relevant faculty
2. Sit-in class observations are conducted by someone from the Academic Team and an evaluation is given.
3. Lead instructors evaluate their associates and provide feedback.

For faculty-lead custom programs, there is a separate review process where an evaluation is done by the study abroad office of the relevant home institution.

Staff have three main reviews:

1. An annual performance review conducted by their supervisor

2. An anonymous peer review selected at random
3. A self-review as mandated by CET policies

CET Japan also has a student feedback review on its program.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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5. *QUALITY OF FACILITIES*

5.1 Office and Class Space

Similar to the open-door policy in classrooms, instructors have collaboratively established a policy of keeping their office doors open except when they need to be closed for meetings and exams, etc. This creates a welcoming and approachable environment. Since offices and classrooms are located on the same floor and in close proximity, interactions among faculty, and between faculty and students are naturally encouraged.

The rightly sized classroom to the number of students makes rapport-building easier. Each classroom is also dedicated to only one course and the students in the course, and every classroom is decorated with the students' projects, and photos from workshops and everyday life. The personalized classroom enables students to feel that it is their space and they have a place in the community. It is an inclusive space where students feel safe and comfortable learning a language.

COMMENDATION

The display of photos showcasing diverse student activities—including their poster presentations—serves to visualize inclusiveness within the classroom, ensuring that every student feels represented and valued

RECOMMENDATION

Class space for studio courses would benefit from larger work areas (e.g. desk sizes) in order to work optimally for the analog-based projects or similar.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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5.2 Study Space

The International Building offers a few lounge spaces where students can relax, interact with OGU students, and/or study for classes. One of the spaces has a good set up for eating, and the space seems to be a popular hang-out spot for both OGU and CET students.

On the third floor, there are several quiet spaces, which have been very useful for students requiring testing accommodations. One student expressed their appreciation for the staff's extensive support in reserving these rooms and taking the time to proctor lengthy exams.

There is a dedicated tea ceremony room in the building that provides students with an opportunity to experience the Tea Ceremony in an authentic environment. Further enhancing the experimental learning CET focuses on, Kendo lessons and Kimono-wearing experiences are also offered in the space.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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5.3 Library

CET Japan created and maintains its own private library, stocked with a variety of materials designed to pique student interest, including travel guides and manga. These resources are available for students to borrow at their convenience. Additionally, the library offers a collection of "extensive reading" (*tadoku*) books. OGU has a library as well, but it is less useful to or utilized by CET students.

Students are also encouraged to utilize local community libraries. This practice helps them build their reading proficiency by engaging with accessible Japanese texts while providing valuable opportunities to interact with local residents, including families and children, within the community.

COMMENDATION

Encouraging the use of local libraries provides opportunities to interact with Japanese people across various generations, such as parents and children, allowing for a deeper understanding of society.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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5.4 Technology

Spaces observed had adequate technology support for appropriate instruction. This included wifi access, projection or large screen tv, digital document projector, and device adapters for connecting student laptops and devices for class projection.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide an option for tablet devices on a checkout basis for the digital studio art courses. This will decrease the financial burden on incoming students.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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6. SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS & PRACTICES

Staff mentioned how they prioritize sustainable and zero waste practices as much as possible with organized events and excursions.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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7. RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COMMUNITY & HOST UNIVERSITY

CET Japan utilizes OGU in Suita, Osaka, as its primary host institution. Students are treated as full members of the OGU campus community, having complete access to facilities such as the library, cafeteria, and fitness center. This "shared campus" model provides the essential physical foundation for international students to naturally integrate into typical Japanese university life without feeling isolated. OGU is willing to allow CET to use their facilities according to the US calendar as well as provide plenty of liberty for how they want to utilize the space. This demonstrates the good relationship they've established through collaboration for more than 15 years.

The hallmark of this partnership is the multifaceted interaction with OGU students. Beyond the "Japanese Housemate" program—where students share apartments to apply their language skills in daily life—the I-Chat Lounge serves as a vital hub for engagement. By participating in lounge activities, CET students connect with Japanese peers through both structured language exchange and informal social interactions. Furthermore, joining traditional clubs such as Kendo or Tea Ceremony allows students to move beyond the role of a visitor; by training alongside Japanese teammates, they develop a profound sense of camaraderie and a physical understanding of Japanese etiquette and spirit.

The student-led poster presentations also attract active participation from both OGU students and local residents. These sessions, by providing direct contact with the community, serve as more than just a reporting of results; they offer precious opportunities to deepen mutual understanding between the students and the public, significantly contributing to the promotion of community engagement.

Finally, the university acts as a gateway to the broader local community. Through OGU's regional networks, students engage in fieldwork such as participating in local festivals and cultural exchanges at neighborhood schools. By weaving together residential life, academic study, and extracurricular immersion, the partnership between CET and OGU empowers students to gain a multidimensional understanding of Japanese social structures and build lasting personal networks.

COMMENDATION

Most OGU students are friendly and enjoy interacting with CET students. This openness creates a positive environment where OGU students can improve their English, while encouraging CET students to speak more Japanese.

COMMENDATION

Students cultivate practical communication skills through diverse local engagement, including community presentations and discussions with high schoolers.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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8. PERCEIVED SATISFACTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Students highlighted the welcoming atmosphere of the program, noting that OGU students are consistently friendly and eager to engage with program participants. The staff also received praise for creating an inviting environment through thoughtful decor and personal introductions, which effectively encourage open communication. Overall, students expressed high levels of excitement about building relationships within this supportive space.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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9. SAFETY & SECURITY ISSUES

- Crisis and evacuation plans
- Relationships with local authorities
- Managing daily health and safety issues
- Transportation safety
- Identity-specific issues: gender, race, sexuality

Staff take safety and security issues very seriously, including taking all students to the Abeno Tasukaru Life Safety and Emergency Training Center during orientation for training and awareness on earthquake and tsunami safety and best practices. They also discuss crisis and evacuation plans with students in the event of an earthquake or other crisis. Public transportation is generally very safe and easily accessible for students. Staff are also readily available to assist students for any health and safety issues that come up, including accompanying them to the doctor to help navigate the Japanese healthcare system and translate as needed.

COMMENDATION

Safety and security orientation training for students is very extensive, specific to the location, and well done.

• <u>Exceed expectations</u>	• Meet expectations	• Do not meet expectations
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10. COMPLIANCE WITH LAC POLICIES (review Rules of Conduct: Policy on Student Conduct in EA Opportunities)

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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11. FUTURE PROSPECTS & PLANS

The future of the program is primarily steered by CET's institutional partners and student needs. In terms of increased enrollment, CET wants to increase enrollment numbers in fall and spring, but feels like the numbers for summer and custom programming are good now. In terms of future course development, any of the HA offers is certainly possible, or they could hire HA faculty to teach CET classes. Throughout the week there was discussion and a bit of

debate about potentially reducing the minimum language credit enrollment requirement more below six to four or even three credits, but that would only make sense if other courses were added and if it was done in a way that didn't detract from the core language acquisition strength of the program for the majority of students.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that this study abroad program currently specializes in Studio Art, CET should more actively promote it to art colleges in the United States. To this end, it would be beneficial to provide specialized courses unavailable at students' home institutions, with 'the business of anime' serving as a prime example.

• Exceed expectations	• <u>Meet expectations</u>	• Do not meet expectations
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12. RELATION BETWEEN PREVIOUS REVIEWS AND CURRENT FINDINGS

• <u>Not Applicable</u>		
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RESPONSE FROM CET



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the evaluation team benefited greatly from the care and concern for this process by the CET staff in Osaka and the US. Special thanks to Director Yonezu and Dr. Sakurai and their great teams in Osaka, along with Assistant Director Maruyama and Dr. Pisano and their team on the US side. Finally, a huge thank you to the students both from CET and OGU who welcomed us into their world with openness and warmth.

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

- CET Japan is perhaps the only program to offer manga-related studio art courses with English support and on the US-academic calendar. They have really pioneered opening this opportunity to aspiring student artists.
- The Japanese instructors incorporate community involvement tasks into their courses to help students learn 'natural' Japanese. As part of their projects, students conduct interviews with local residents. The Program Director believes their mission is to empower students as 'social agents' in alignment with CEFR principles. They are shifting their focus beyond the classroom to prioritize community-based activities—such as local interviews and collaborative projects—to ensure students develop the practical competencies necessary to navigate real-world Japanese society.
- The Emergency and Life Safety Workshop at the Abeno Tasukaru Center treats safety preparedness as a lived, Japan-specific practice rather than a procedural obligation, and is commendably integrated into the first week of the program.
- The co-curricular offerings are exceptional in breadth and cultural specificity, representing substantive engagement with Japanese life rather than passing enrichment activities.
- CET Japan really shines in the housing that integrates CET students with OGU students in the housing, where they all have their own bedroom, but also have common spaces where they can eat, study, and hang out together.
- Staff have done a great job setting up administrative and health professional networks that ensure students are fully supported in terms of their mental and physical health.

- CET is clearly very committed to high quality onboarding training for faculty and staff, along with continuing education and professional development once staff have settled into their jobs.
- Commitment to diversity and inclusion is present from the earliest stages of the student experience, addressed directly in the on-site orientation materials in a way that signals genuine program values rather than procedural compliance. That students encounter this framing before they start the program is worth recognizing.
- The display of photos showcasing diverse student activities—including their poster presentations—serves to visualize inclusiveness within the classroom, ensuring that every student feels represented and valued
- Encouraging the use of local libraries provides opportunities to interact with Japanese people across various generations, such as parents and children, allowing for a deeper understanding of society.
- Most OGU students are friendly and enjoy interacting with CET students. This openness creates a positive environment where OGU students can improve their English, while encouraging CET students to speak more Japanese.
- Students cultivate practical communication skills through diverse local engagement, including community presentations and discussions with high schoolers.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formalize volunteer programs with more assessment structure between CET and host organization. Potentially offer credit for the experience, and add other internship and/or volunteer placement opportunities.
- Reach out to IRB authority to determine if any sort of IRB review is needed for language course projects that students are doing based on topic or subjects.
- At the time of this review, the full-time and part time faculty ratio is 40:60. The part time members are an indispensable part of the program. Offering them a multi-semester contract may positively impact their morale and improve their qualities of teaching even more, which then will lead to the enhancement of students' experience.
- While the rigor and fast-pace of CET Japan's language courses are one of the strengths, an increasing number of students have recently expressed preference for a

slower pace of instruction. It might be worth considering a more moderate pace for 12 credit courses, as this could support better retention and a deeper understanding of the materials.

- Increase weekly contact hours incrementally for both studio art courses to allow for more sustained in-class production time and stronger feedback cycles.
- Consider a dual-track section model within the existing classroom, designating beginner and intermediate levels that share the same cultural content and core assignments while modestly differentiating expectations—such as one additional completed work or a higher technical threshold for intermediate students.
- While individual faculty members maintain one-on-one communication with students, it would be highly beneficial to establish a formal system for sharing student progress with their Japanese language instructors at the beginning and end of each semester. Faculty members often play a crucial role in advising students on their study abroad destinations, and they possess a deep understanding of each student's development and adjustment during their time abroad. By sharing these insights with Japanese language instructors, the university can also ensure a more holistic support system.
- To further develop critical thinking skills through the Osaka-specific educational opportunities, it might be beneficial to incorporate a component focused on Nishiinari ward where Burakumin, a historically marginalized social group, have lived.
- Add to website and/or program materials to give students a sense of the program from current students, particularly how warm and supportive the environment is for students. Potentially use Instagram to do this.
- Most students are very career focused, so this seems to be an area that CET Japan could lean into more, and this was echoed by feedback from students. We recommend CET build out more robust programming around career and skill development.
- While an alumni network exists, we suggest that the CET program further strengthen these connections. Students would benefit from more focus on job prospects and discussions regarding Japanese work culture. For example, alumni visiting Osaka could give guest lectures about their career paths. Additionally, providing students with access to alumni blogs or professional social media pages would offer valuable insights into life after the CET program. In addition to CET alumni, we could also involve OGU graduates. For instance, we could connect OGU alumni working in the gaming industry with CET students who are interested in that field. They could also host job talks regarding professional certifications and career development.

- While faculty members support each other through frequent sharing of teaching ideas and materials, it would be beneficial to provide them with external opportunities in their professional development; such as conferences, financial support for pursuing certificates and/or higher degrees (masters and terminal degrees), and sabbaticals. This would be a potential win-win scenario for both the faculty and CET Japan in the long term. It is however recognized that there are limitations in the implementation of these recommendations as faculty are hired of HA and OGU which have their own institutional constraints.
- Class space for studio courses would benefit from larger work areas (e.g. desk sizes) in order to work optimally for the analog-based projects or similar.
- Provide an option for tablet devices on a checkout basis for the digital studio art courses. This will decrease the financial burden on incoming students.
- Since this study abroad program uniquely specializes in Studio Art currently, CET should explore more actively promoting it to art colleges in the United States.

Program Review Itinerary

March 23 – 28, 2026



CET ACADEMIC
PROGRAMS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 <i>Arrivals in Osaka</i> <i>Independent transfer to hotel</i>	24 <i>Breakfast at hotel</i> <i>10am: Meet in lobby, walk to campus</i> <i>10:30-11am: Opening Session @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>11am-12:30pm: Deep dive on residential life @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>12:30-1:30pm: Bento Lunch</i> <i>1:30-2:30pm: Academics at CET 1 @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>2:30pm: optional Assessors reflection time @ OGU (01-B1-03) or free time</i> <i>4pm: Meet at Candeo Lobby</i> <i>5-6pm Shinsaibashi Walking Tour</i> <i>6:30-7:30pm: Observe Character Design @ HA 1101</i> <i>7:30pm: Small group dinner</i>	25 <i>Breakfast at hotel</i> <i>9am: optional Assessors reflection time @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>10:00am: Meet in lobby, walk to campus</i> <i>10:15-10:45am: Academics at CET 2 @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>10:45am-11:45am: Observe Japanese classes</i> OS/LANG 255: 3rd floor OS/LANG 260: 4th floor OS/LANG 320: 4th floor Tea ceremony: first floor <i>12:00-1:30pm: Lunch with students: the 3rd and 4th floor</i> <i>1:30-3:20pm: Campus, housing, and neighborhood tour with students</i> <i>3:30-5:00pm: Area Studies observation co-curricular experience with OGU students</i> <i>5:45pm: Leave for Umeda</i> <i>6:30-8pm: Shabushabu Dinner</i>	26 <i>Breakfast at hotel</i> <i>9am: optional Assessors reflection time @ OGU (01-B1-03)</i> Zach, Mario, Seiji: <i>10am: day trip to Arashiyama, Kyoto</i> <i>11:15am: Tenryu-ji Temple</i> <i>11:45: Bamboo Forest</i> <i>Free time to shop; lunch using stipend</i> <i>2:30pm: Leave Arashiyama for OGU</i> Narita-sensei, Newsom-sensei: <i>10:45-12:50: Observe Japanese classes</i> 3rd floor: OS/LANG 255, OS/LANG 520 4th floor: OS/LANG 155, OS/LANG 260, OS/LANG 320 **OS/LANG 520 is 10:45-11:45 only <i>12:50pm-1:30: Bento Lunch @01-03-04</i> <i>1:30-2:00: Osaka-ben direct-enroll elective class observation @01-02-03</i> <i>2-3:30: Deep-dive on Japanese language classes with CET academic staff @01-04-Meeting Room</i> <i>3:30-4:30: Free</i> <i>(continued on next page)</i>	27 <i>Breakfast at hotel</i> <i>9am-9:30: Wrap up meeting @ OGU (01-B1-01)</i> <i>9:30am: write report @ OGU (01-B1-01 or 01-B1-03)</i> <i>1pm: working lunch: Q&A with on-site staff</i> <i>Afternoon: continue working on report</i> <i>Free dinner using stipend</i>	28 <i>Breakfast at hotel</i> <i>All day departures</i>

Program Review Itinerary

March 23 – 28, 2026



			All Assessors: <i>4:30: Depart for Shinsaibashi (meet at Kishibe Station)</i> <i>5:30-6:30: Discussion with studio arts administrators and faculty @ HA 1102</i> <i>6:30- 7:30: Observe Manga Creation class @ HA 1101</i> <i>7:30pm: Group dinner</i>		
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