



Learn more about the
**JAPAN CENTER FOR
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITIES (JCMU)**

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 **JAPAN CENTER**
FOR MICHIGAN UNIVERSITIES
ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター

A Legacy of CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In 1968, the Governors of Michigan and Shiga Prefecture signed an agreement to establish a sister-state relationship. On the 20th anniversary of that relationship, they partnered to create the **Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU)**. Today, the Michigan-Shiga relationship remains one of the most comprehensive of its kind, engaging residents of both states at various levels—through sister-city relationships, state-level exchanges, and JCMU. For the past 36 years, JCMU has worked to provide meaningful intercultural experiences and rigorous academic studies to students of all backgrounds, from institutions in Michigan and beyond.

On the shore of LAKE BIWA

JCMU is located in Hikone, a city of approximately 100,000 people in Shiga Prefecture situated on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Japan.

As a castle town located off the beaten tourist track, Hikone preserves much of its charm and heritage. At the same time, Hikone is only a 45-90 minute local train ride from the large cosmopolitan cities of Kyoto, Nagoya, and Osaka.

JCMU's location outside of Japan's bustling cities encourages students to use their Japanese language and cultural studies to navigate everyday life. As a result, students return with impressive skills, increased confidence, greater self-reliance, and lifelong memories.



JCMU Campus viewed from Lake Biwa



Program HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY

JCMU is strongly rooted in the surrounding community, working closely with Shiga officials and local partners, including the University of Shiga Prefecture and Shiga University, to design and implement cultural exchange opportunities. JCMU students are regularly included in local events, volunteer opportunities, field trips, and unique partnerships that foster lasting friendships. Many JCMU programs also include homestays with local Japanese families or the chance to have a Japanese student as a roommate. Regularly scheduled activities on campus provide persistent exposure to Japanese language and culture.

ACCESSIBLE & SUPPORTIVE

JCMU strives to remove barriers that often prevent U.S. students from studying abroad in Japan. As a result:

- Most JCMU programs do not require any previous Japanese language study to participate, and students of all majors/specialties are welcome to apply.
- Rather than running on the Japanese academic calendar, JCMU follows a typical U.S. semester schedule—Fall (*Sep. - Dec.*), Spring/Winter (*Jan. - Apr.*), and Summer (*May and June - Aug.*)—with programs as short as 2-3 weeks long and as long as a full academic year.
- JCMU's Japanese language curriculum aligns well with that of most 4-year U.S. schools offering a Japanese major and is an excellent fit for FLAS recipients.

In addition to a wealth of Japan-specific knowledge, JCMU staff and faculty are well-versed in U.S. standards and expectations for international education. From offering robust pre-departure advising and orientations to responding to health or safety concerns abroad, JCMU readily offers reliable support to students, parents, and institutional partner staff.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

JCMU regularly invites faculty from partner institutions and beyond to propose and lead JCMU Short Summer Programs, to run a hosted program at JCMU, to conduct research, provide lectures or workshops, or to simply visit our campus!

ADMINISTRATION

JCMU is administered by Michigan State University on behalf of the JCMU Consortium. Housed within the Center for Global Learning and Innovation within MSU International Studies & Programs, JCMU benefits from guidance and support from experts in the field of international education.

JCMU PARTNERS

Consortium

Central Michigan University
Eastern Michigan University
Ferris State University
Grand Valley State University
Lake Superior State University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Northern Michigan University
Oakland University
Saginaw Valley State University
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
University of Michigan - Dearborn
University of Michigan - Flint
Wayne State University
Western Michigan University

Affiliates & Cooperatives

Albion College
Aquinas College
Bowdoin College
Calvin University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Kalamazoo College
Muhlenberg College
Northern Illinois University
Texas Technological University
University of West Florida
University of Missouri - Columbia
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee



36 years of operations

240+

institutions have sent students to JCMU

3,700+

JCMU alumni

