

What is VIS ?

The International Relations Division of the Faculty of Medicine issues VIS to send out the live messages from International Students of Graduate School of Medicine, Graduate School of Biomedical Science and School of Medicine, and to promote the exchange of intercultural information. We hope VIS helps to cultivate intercultural communications and boost international exchanges.

VISの発行の目的は、医学院・医理工学院・医学部医学科の留学生の生の声を発信することと、異文化間の情報交換を促進することです。VISが異文化間のコミュニケーションを養い、国際交流を実行していくうえで役立つことを望みます。

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From The University of Adelaide, Australia

During my time at Hokkaido University, I had the opportunity to join two departments: Paediatrics (Cardiology and Endocrinology) and Therapeutic Radiology. It was an incredibly enriching experience both clinically and culturally. In Paediatrics, I encountered a range of rare and complex conditions that broadened my understanding of subspecialty care, particularly in congenital heart disease and endocrine disorders. The Therapeutic Radiology department was equally inspiring—it was my first time seeing proton beam therapy in action. As someone from Adelaide, where our first proton therapy centre is just being completed, this experience was especially impactful and has sparked a genuine interest in this field as a possible career path.

The teaching at Hokkaido University was outstanding. The doctors and wider healthcare teams were not only highly knowledgeable but also very welcoming and generous with their time. Their willingness to teach and involve me in clinical discussions was above and beyond what I expected.

Outside of the hospital, Hokkaido itself was a beautiful place to explore. I would love to return, especially in winter, to experience the full charm of the region. I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity and highly recommend this program to future students.



Clement Wong

Department of Pediatrics
Department of Therapeutic Radiology
Period: May 26 – June 20, 2025

I am so grateful for this invaluable opportunity to have spent 4 weeks at the Paediatric Department of Hokkaido University Hospital, rotating through Endocrinology, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Cardiology and Neurology.



Si Rong Lee

Department of Pediatrics
Period: May 26 – June 20, 2025

The doctors and staff were exceptionally kind and welcoming. Even though most discussions were conducted in Japanese, they consistently took the time to translate and explain key points to me in English. Their dedication to teaching, patience, and willingness to bridge the language gap created a truly enriching learning environment.

I was especially fortunate to learn how to perform echocardiograms on neonates, which is a highly valuable skill to acquire. The hands-on guidance from all the doctors was instrumental in helping me understand both the technical aspects and clinical relevance of echocardiographic findings in newborns.

One highlight of my placement was presenting a case during the weekly case conference on Wednesdays. Despite the initial nerves and the language barrier, the team was incredibly supportive and provided me with constructive feedback.

This experience has significantly solidified my interest in paediatrics and taught me the value of cross-cultural collaboration in medicine. I am deeply grateful to the team at Hokkaido University Hospital for their generosity, mentorship, and warmth. Thank you so much for having me!

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From Medical University of Vienna, Austria

My electives at the Departments of Cardiovascular Surgery and Gastroenterological Surgery 1 were wonderful and valuable experiences that significantly enhanced my knowledge in these specialties.

During my first four weeks in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery, I was welcomed with open arms. I observed a variety of surgeries and was often able to scrub in. The doctors made great efforts to explain the intricacies of the procedures and gladly answered any questions I had. I am very thankful for all the personal teaching I received during my time with the Cardiovascular Surgery team. A highlight of this rotation was being able to join a heart transplant surgery on short notice over a weekend.

The Department of Gastroenterological Surgery 1 consists of several subgroups, and I had the opportunity to rotate freely between them during my four weeks there. During conferences, a doctor always translated into English for me, for which I am very grateful. I especially want to thank the doctors in the pediatric subgroup, who made me feel like a valued part of the team and consistently engaged me in interesting and educational conversations.

In both departments, the medical students at Hokkaido University welcomed me warmly. I had many fascinating conversations with them about Japan and Austria, and I formed friendships with several of them. They went out of their way to show me around Sapporo and Hokkaido.

Overall, my time at Hokkaido University will always be a memory I look back on with joy. I met so many kind-hearted doctors, nurses, and students who shared my passion for providing the best possible care to patients.

Lastly, I would like to thank the staff at Hokkaido University for their continuous support before and during my stay in Japan.



Manuel Alexander Winninger

Department of Cardiovascular Surgery
Department of Gastroenterological Surgery I
Period: May 26 – July 18, 2025

From Griffith University, Australia



Tianci Liu

Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Period: July 28 – August 22, 2025

My time at Hokkaido University was filled with eye-opening experiences and warm, welcoming people. The Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery team was very supportive, and Professor Maeda proved to be an excellent teacher, he is always willing to involve students and explain procedures. I had the opportunity to observe complex and fascinating surgeries while also learning about a healthcare system very different from my own. Dr. Maeda also took the time to hold suturing and microscopic suturing workshops for us, which were both eye-opening and eye-straining experiences. I truly appreciated having the nuances of suturing explained in detail and hope to use this knowledge to create well-healed closures in the future.

During the one-week break, I explored Sapporo and other parts of Hokkaido, which allowed me to further immerse myself in Japanese culture. I attended one night of the Obon Festival in Odori Park, enjoyed the beautiful natural scenery, and even bathed in one of the many onsens in Noboribetsu. I also thoroughly enjoyed the accessibility of convenience stores and vending machines, and I was able to build confidence in practicing and speaking Japanese.

I will look back on my time at Hokkaido University with gratitude, fond memories, and new knowledge. This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I am deeply thankful to the team at Hokkaido University for facilitating such a wonderful opportunity.

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From University of Malaya, Malaysia



Alexander Loh Zi Xuan

Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Department of Dermatology
Period: July 22 – August 29, 2025

My clinical attachment at Hokkaido University from July 22 to August 29, 2025, in the Departments of Otorhinolaryngology and Dermatology was an eye-opening and memorable experience. I felt welcomed by the doctors and staff, who were always kind and willing to share their knowledge since the first day in the hospital.

In Otorhinolaryngology, I had the chance to observe surgical procedures and learn in outpatient clinics. The doctors explained the cases clearly, which really helped me strengthen my understanding of ENT conditions and treatments. In Dermatology, I was introduced to many types of skin diseases and learned about how they are diagnosed and managed, which gave me a broader view of medicine.

What impressed me most was the patient-centered and well-organized style of the Japanese healthcare system, as well as the strong sense of teamwork. This experience not only improved my medical knowledge but also inspired me to carry these values into my own future practice.

I am very thankful to Hokkaido University for giving me this chance. I would definitely recommend this program to other students, and I hope it continues to connect people through international medical learning.

Visiting Hokkaido University was truly beyond my expectations, as only two students from my university were selected. From the very first day, I was touched by the hospitality and kindness shown when I registered and joined both departments.

My first posting was with the Department of Gastroenterological Surgery II, which became one of the most memorable and fulfilling experiences. As I am deeply interested in general surgery, I was able to observe operations I had never seen before and learn from a wide range of cases. I am especially grateful to all the doctors who patiently explained each case in English. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Wada Masataka and Dr. Wada Hideyuki for guiding me closely and ensuring I was never left behind.

My next posting at the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery was equally rewarding. Under the guidance of Dr. Taku Maeda, I was encouraged not only to scrub in and assist but also to understand the rationale behind each procedure in detail. His lectures and practical sessions on flap reconstruction, suturing, and microscopic suturing were eye-opening. I also had a wonderful time with Ms. Emi Sawaguchi, the chief secretary, who warmly welcomed us with a Nagashi Somen and matcha tea party, gatherings, and many enjoyable conversations.

I also enjoyed sharing this experience with elective mates from Australia and Germany, though I regret not meeting local students due to their summer vacation. Overall, Hokkaido is a wonderful place for both study and travel, and I look forward to returning one day to relive these memories.



Tiong Chiong Kian

Department of Gastroenterological Surgery II
Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Period: July 22 – August 29, 2025

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

University of Hamburg, Germany

I did my clinical internship in the plastic surgery department, and the experience was incredibly enriching. The entire team was exceptionally kind, supportive, and eager to help me learn. I had the opportunity to scrub in frequently and observe a wide variety of fascinating surgeries, which greatly enhanced my understanding of the field.

I felt especially welcomed by everyone, and Dr. Maeda went above and beyond to ensure that I could follow along with the procedures. He took time out of his schedule to translate and explain everything to me in detail. In addition, he gave me private lectures on key plastic surgery techniques and suturing, which I found extremely valuable for my professional development.

The knowledge and skills I gained during my time in the department will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on my future practice. I am deeply grateful for this wonderful experience and the opportunity to learn from such skilled professionals. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the team and to Dr. Maeda. Greetings from Germany!



Lea Friedel

Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Period: August 18 – September 17, 2025



Antonia Reers

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
Period: August 18 – September 17, 2025

My four-week clinical elective in Orthopaedic Surgery at Hokkaido University was an enriching and memorable experience. I felt warmly welcomed by the department as the doctors and residents were eager to share their knowledge and took time to explain surgical techniques and diagnostic approaches. Comparing German and Japanese medical practice was another very interesting aspect of the elective. I was able to observe a wide variety of cases in the operating theatre, ranging from trauma surgery to joint replacements, which broadened my clinical perspective significantly.

Beyond the technical skills, I was impressed by the precision, discipline, and teamwork that characterized the daily workflow. The respectful interaction between staff and patients left a lasting impression on me. I would encourage future students to learn some basic Japanese beforehand, as it greatly improves communication with both patients and colleagues. Overall, the elective provided not only professional growth but also deep cultural insights, making it truly invaluable.



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