

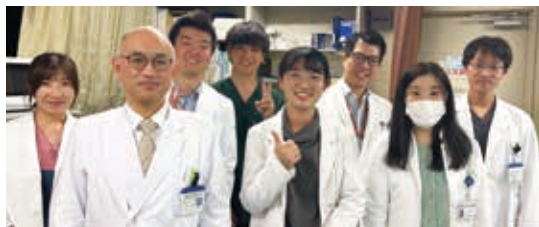
## What is VIS ?

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 National Taiwan University, Taiwan



#### Huang, Jing-En

Department of Rheumatology, Endocrinology and Nephrology  
Period: December 8 – December 19, 2025

The past two weeks of training in the Department of Endocrinology have been an immensely fulfilling experience. I sincerely appreciated that, alongside hands-on clinical practice, structured teaching sessions were arranged to facilitate systematic learning.

Despite the language barrier, the residents and attending physicians showed exceptional patience and professionalism. They took the time to explain patients' conditions in detail and guided me through the nuances of clinical procedures. This process allowed me to feel the accomplishment of translating theoretical knowledge into clinical practice.

This invaluable experience will serve as a lasting source of motivation as I continue to advance in my medical career.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to become a nephrology elective at Hokkaido University Hospital. Over the course of these two weeks, I was able to observe meaningful differences between the healthcare systems in Japan and Taiwan. In particular, I greatly admire Japan's well-structured medical referral system, which provides adequate outpatient time for patient education.

Within the Department of Nephrology, I participated in ward rounds, practiced case presentations, attended outpatient clinics, and gained learning experiences through activities such as renal biopsy procedures and visits to the dialysis unit. Overall, the internship was flexible, comprehensive, and highly enriching. The nephrology physicians were exceptionally kind, and I especially valued the warm and supportive atmosphere in the CR room.

Although winter in Hokkaido is cold, the enthusiasm and generosity of the physicians at Hokkaido University Hospital more than made up for it. I am sincerely thankful for this opportunity and would be delighted to visit here in the future.



#### Tseng, Yu-Tzu

Department of Rheumatology, Endocrinology and Nephrology  
Period: December 8 – December 19, 2025

## WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

### From The University of New South Wales, Australia



#### Keyi Lau

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Period: November 25 – December 19, 2025

**M**y four-week clinical elective in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology was an incredibly enriching experience, with many thanks to the delightful doctors and staff at Hokkaido University.

I had the valuable opportunity to attend case discussions, outpatient, and inpatient clinics, and observe both obstetric and gynaecological surgical procedures. With the reputation of being one of the largest university hospitals, I was able to observe many high-risk obstetric cases, such as placenta previa and preterm births, and also witness second phase clinical trials for cervical cancer. Not only was this experience academically rewarding but witnessing the unyielding empathy and compassion from the doctors regarding such sensitive situations taught me about patient-centred care. Furthermore, despite the language barrier, I'm thankful to the obstetric and gynaecological teams for ensuring that I understood clinical discussions and the conditions which I saw.

Outside of the hospital, I was able to enjoy exploring the scenic views of Hokkaido's winter, taking trips to Hakodate, Asahikawa, Biei and Otaru. With thanks to the heavy snowfall of Sapporo, I was also able to enjoy skiing down the slopes of Kokusai and Teine on the weekends.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the faculty and staff of Hokkaido University for their kindness, patience and enthusiasm in sharing their expertise, and making me feel welcome in their department. With thanks to Hokkaido University, I have had the most enjoyable 4 week elective placement!

I was incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to join the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery department as part of my medical elective at Hokkaido University. This was an eye-opening experience that was both familiar and foreign, yet I felt at ease the moment I walked into the department's office from the hospitality, kindness and warmth shown to me by the entire team.

These four weeks have been both academically and culturally enriching, and I constantly found myself surprised and intrigued by the nuanced differences in practice, procedures and patient interaction. During my time, I had the opportunity and privilege to witness cleft palate repairs, assist in emergency burn debridement, and to scrub into major, multidisciplinary procedures that lasted for over 10 hours. I was particularly impressed to witness how Hokkaido University Hospital utilized computer-assisted design to ensure surgical precision in major reconstructive procedures.

Living in Hokkaido was a dream come true, and every weekend was filled with new places to explore and breathtaking sceneries. I could not imagine another location where you can hit up the ski slopes 30 minutes away from town, or drive to a city where the snow is up to your shins. Ultimately, it was the kindness of the secretary Ms. Emi Sawaguchi, the unwavering enthusiasm of my supervisor Dr. Taku Maeda and all the hilarious interactions both inside and outside the hospital with the local Japanese students that truly made this experience special, and I cannot wait to visit again.



#### Jason Lin

Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
Period: November 25 – December 19, 2025

# WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

## From The University of Sydney, Australia

I had the great privilege of attending placement with the cardiovascular surgery team at Hokkaido University Hospital. It was a great experience – I had the opportunity to observe and participate in many operations and conferences. The whole team was keen to get me engaged in learning about all aspects of cardiothoracic surgery. Dr. Shingu and Dr. Sato in particular were incredibly generous in their efforts to include me in activities such as participating in operations and suture practice with the Japanese medical students. I was able to observe cases and operations that I might not have been able to in my home hospital, such as total aortic arch replacement and the treatment of Tetralogy of Fallot.

This exchange at Hokkaido University was a great opportunity to learn about Japanese culture and medical system. The doctors and students taught me many different phrases and slang, such as the uses of “やばい”. It was good to practice my Japanese language skills, but I am very grateful for the doctors and students that explained complex medical

terminology in English to help me understand.

The 4 weeks I spent at Hokkaido University were wonderful and I would like to give my sincere gratitude to all the staff and students that made this exchange such a great experience.



**Nicholas Hegyi**

Department of Cardiovascular Surgery  
Period: January 13 – February 6, 2026

I was fortunate enough to be able to spend 4 weeks with Hokkaido University Hospital's Department of Dermatology. During my time there, I had the opportunity to observe and participate in a wide range of activities including clinics, case conferences, ward rounds and surgeries. Through these experiences I was able to gain greater insight into many interesting, important and unique dermatological conditions, such as psoriasis, bullous pemphigoid and alopecia areata, and the range of available treatment options. Further, I also was able to appreciate how symptoms manifesting on the skin, mucous membranes, nails and hair can reflect other diseases and pathological processes outside the scope of dermatology as well. When I struggled to understand complicated Japanese medical jargon at times, the doctors were kind enough to translate for my understanding. The doctors and medical students at Hokkaido University Hospital also taught me a lot about the Japanese healthcare system, Japanese culture and allowed me to practice my Japanese with them. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all the support and teaching that all staff graciously extended to me, but in particular, to Professor Ujiie, A/Professor Natsuga, Dr Miyauchi, Dr Kimura and Dr Tanaka.



**Cindy Purvis**

Department of Dermatology  
Period: January 13 – February 6, 2026

## From Leipzig University, Germany

I would like to thank all members of the Neurosurgery Department and the International Relations Division for their support in facilitating my five-week clinical training at Hokkaido University Hospital. Due to the team's vast expertise and motivation to share knowledge, I had the opportunity to substantially expand my understanding in stereotactic neuroanatomy, as well as hands-on microsurgery techniques and intra surgery mapping and diagnostics to name a few. I had the chance to observe fascinating interventions, including awake tumor resections, deep brain stimulation, combined revascularization surgery for moyamoya disease and stem cell transplantation.

The high level of skill and calmness evident during surgeries has had a truly inspirational impact on me.



**Harriet Berckenhagen**

Department of Neurosurgery  
Period: January 13 – February 13, 2026

## WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

### From Kyungpook National University, South Korea

**F**or the four weeks of practice at Hokkaido University Hospital, every day I could experience something new—not only about medicine, but also about Japan more. As it was my first time to do clinical training in Japan, everything was unfamiliar. However it made the training much more meaningful.

In the neurosurgery, I was able to observe many kinds of cases. Some surgeries were very long and technically demanding, especially vascular bypass procedures and tumor resections. Seeing neurosurgeons working under a microscope and making decisions depend on the situations reminded me how much responsibility and concentration this field requires. Also, in rehabilitation clinics, I learned that treatment is not only about removing disease, but about helping patients return to daily life. Swallowing evaluations, spasticity treatment, orthotics, and patient counseling showed me a slower, more patient-centered side of medicine. I was grateful that the doctors created an open atmosphere where I could ask questions freely.

During the stay, I tried to experience as much of Hokkaido as possible. The snowy scenery, hot springs, winter festivals, and time spent with new friends are so invaluable. I could feel the real-life of Japan, which is totally different from travelling. Living and learning in a different country helped me grow both as a medical student and as a person. I truly appreciate everyone who supported me during this time.



#### Kim, Geonho

Department of Neurosurgery  
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine  
Period: January 19 – February 13, 2026

**D**uring my one-month internship at Hokkaido University, I had the incredible opportunity to work in both the plastic surgery and neurosurgery departments. This experience was invaluable, as I was able to observe and assist with a variety of complex procedures, including jaw reconstruction surgery, various flap techniques, skin grafting, deep brain stimulation, spinal surgeries, and cerebral bypass surgeries.



#### Lee, Hyunwoo

Department of Plastic Reconstructive Surgery  
Department of Neurosurgery  
Period: January 19 – February 13, 2026

Throughout my time there, I gained a deeper understanding of surgical methodologies and the importance of precision in each procedure. Working alongside experienced surgeons allowed me to appreciate the intricacies of each operation and the critical thinking required in the operating room. I was particularly fascinated by the deep brain stimulation surgery, as it highlighted the intersection of technology and medicine.

One suggestion I have for future interns is to engage more with patients pre- and post-operation. This would enhance the learning experience by providing insights into patient care and recovery processes. Overall, my time at Hokkaido University was enriching and has further ignited my passion for pursuing a career in medicine.



Voice of the International Students 医学研究院 国際連携部門だより Vol.42  
Issued by the International Relations Division, Faculty of Medicine, Hokkaido University

Correspondence to : [relation@med.hokudai.ac.jp](mailto:relation@med.hokudai.ac.jp)

Website URL : <https://edu.med.hokudai.ac.jp/international-relations/>