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Hokkaido University-National Taiwan University

International Vet Exchange Program 2026

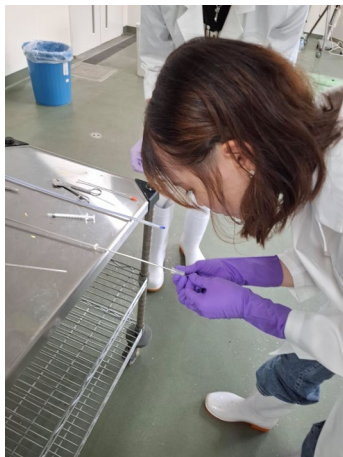
Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education



Photo With Professor Masami During Lab Animals

Student Report from National Taiwan University July 21st to 28th 2026

Preparing Slides For Histology-Anatomy



Trying The Best Pafrait Of The World!



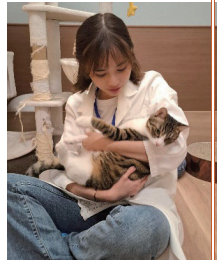
Having Artificial Insemination In Cattle During Theriogenology

From National Taiwan University

Andrea Kwok Sin Ling, 3rd year

What Did You Learn in HU (General)?

During my time at Hokkaido University (HU), I gained many valuable practical skills and experiences. In the laboratory, I learned techniques such as mouse dissection, slide preparation, cell culture, and artificial insemination in cattle. I also learned about laboratory animals, including dogs, rabbits, mice, and rats, and gained a better understanding of managing experimental animals and animal welfare.



Holding Cat During Animal Hospital Tour

Similarities and Differences Between Your Home University(NTU) and HU

There are several similarities between National Taiwan University (NTU) and HU. Both universities place strong emphasis on laboratory-based learning and research. In NTU, we also have to attend laboratory animal sciences, bacteriology and virology in our junior grade. Moreover, the campus environments are also quite similar, with many trees and green spaces. (Also attract many tourists to come and visit the campus.) In addition, both universities have stores that sell their own dairy products like milk puddings and milk ice cream, and NTU is also well known for its raw milk. Architecturally, some buildings feel similar as well (eg, Hokkaido University Museum), likely because NTU was originally established during the Japanese colonial period. However, there are also noticeable differences. HU appears to have more resources and newer facilities. Students have more opportunities to work directly with live animals and participate in practical, hands-on activities. Another difference is the curriculum structure: veterinary education at NTU is a 5-year program, while HU offers a 6-year program.

Suggestions for Improvement of the Exchange Program

My overall experience was excellent, and I am very grateful for this precious opportunity to participate in this summer exchange program. One small suggestion would be to confirm the daily schedule more clearly in advance, as the actual starting times occasionally differed from the schedule that was provided.

I would also like to express my appreciation to everyone involved in the program. Erica, all the professors, and all the staff members were extremely kind, welcoming, and supportive. They were always willing to help us and made our stay in Hokkaido enjoyable and comfortable.

Photo In Otaru Chiikawa Mogumogu Honpo Shop

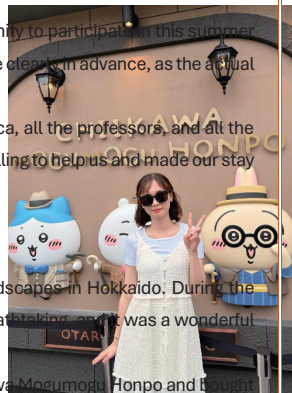
Non-Academic Activities

Outside of academic activities, I had the opportunity to explore many beautiful landscapes in Hokkaido. During the weekend, we visited Furano, which was absolutely fascinating. The scenery was breathtaking, and it was a wonderful place to relax, escape from daily stress, and enjoy nature.

I also visited Otaru, which I found incredibly fascinating. I was excited to visit Chiikawa Mogumogu Honpo and bought many cute souvenirs there. In addition, there was a summer festival taking place in Otaru during that weekend. I really enjoyed the lively atmosphere, local culture, and festive spirit. These experiences made my exchange program even more memorable and allowed me to learn more about Japanese culture beyond the classrooms.

The most unforgettable part of the program

We visited the laboratory animal facilities on the second day. We had to wear protective clothing and change shoes before entering different animal rooms, which showed how seriously HU takes biosecurity and animal welfare. I was impressed that the laboratory animals had dedicated ventilation and water supply systems, as well as emergency water storage in case of earthquakes. The mice were also provided with chew toys and red shelters for hiding, which helped enrich their environment and reduce stress. This visit gave me a deeper understanding of laboratory animal welfare and management.



From National Taiwan University

Ricky Hsu Mu En, 3rd year

Participating in the exchange program at Hokkaido University (HU) was an unforgettable experience that broadened my academic knowledge while allowing me to experience Japanese culture and university life.



Throughout the program, we attended lectures, laboratory sessions, and facility tours across the department of veterinary medicine in HU. The combination of hands-on activities and interactions with professors and students gave us valuable insights into both veterinary education and research in Japan.

In microbiology, we were introduced to current research on avian influenza. Besides learning about the project's objectives, we practiced basic cell culture techniques, including the proper use of pipettes, biosafety cabinets, suction devices, and laboratory disinfection procedures. These fundamental techniques demonstrated the importance of maintaining sterility and accuracy in microbiological research.

The forensic veterinary medicine lecture was another memorable part of the program. We learned the basic concepts of veterinary forensics, as well as the current development of this field in Taiwan and Japan. Several real animal abuse cases were presented, illustrating the strong correlation between animal cruelty and human violence. These discussions emphasized the important role veterinarians can play in protecting both animal welfare and public safety. In the laboratory animal facility, we toured HU's modern animal housing facilities and learned how infectious diseases are controlled in laboratory environments. We also observed the husbandry methods for various laboratory animals, including mice, rats, birds, dogs, and cattle. In addition, we participated in mouse dissections to inspect internal organs and collect tissue samples.

In theriogenology, we learned about reproductive research that aimed at improving birth outcomes in cattle, particularly multiple births, also the principles of artificial insemination, oocyte collection and implantation, we even had the opportunity to create our own glass suction tubes, which was a unique hands-on experience that highlighted the precision required in reproductive technologies.

In anatomy, we toured the lecture hall and specimen room while learning how histological slides are prepared. We also explored the use of three-dimensional kidney models and practiced identifying different organs under microscopic histological slides, allowing us to better connect anatomical structures with microscopic features.

Comparing Hokkaido University with my home university, National Taiwan University (NTU), revealed both similarities and differences. HU benefits from significantly greater funding, resulting in a much larger campus, newer buildings, facilities and equipment. Dedicated in research and laboratory work, HU requires mandatory laboratory sessions whereas NTU requires more clinical training. Students in HU also have opportunities to practice clinical skills using simulators, artificial intelligence, and real animals. Furthermore, HU places strong emphasis on large animal medicine, including cattle, pigs, and horses. In contrast, NTU focuses primarily on small companion animals and exotic pets. Due to relatively limited resources, students generally have fewer opportunities for hands-on practice with live animals, and the curriculum is more clinically oriented than research focused.

Overall, the exchange program was exceptionally well organized and rewarding. Beyond academics, we also had many opportunities to explore Hokkaido. I visited Sapporo TV Tower, Hokkaido University Museum, Pokémon Center Sapporo, Odori Park, Otaru, Hokkaido Shrine, Maruyama Zoo, Nakajima Park and much more. These visits allowed us to appreciate the beauty, history, and culture of Hokkaido while strengthening friendships with fellow participants. This exchange program not only expanded my academic perspective but also deepened my appreciation for international collaboration in veterinary medicine. It is an experience that I will always value and carry with me throughout my future career.

From National Taiwan University

Angela Yu-Han Kuo, 3rd year

-What did you all learn in HU (General)

Throughout the program, we visited different laboratories, attended lectures, observed practical sessions, and learned about the facilities and research resources available at Hokkaido University. It was inspiring to see how each laboratory specializes in different fields of veterinary medicine while working together within such a well-supported academic environment. I truly appreciated the opportunity to learn more about HU and its Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Professors from each laboratory guided us through their facilities and introduced their research, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of their work.

One of the most memorable experiences was visiting the Laboratory Animal Science Laboratory. At NTU, we mainly learn the theories and regulations of laboratory animal welfare through lectures and textbooks, and only see pictures of the facilities. However, on that day, we were able to observe how animal welfare is implemented in practice. We changed into special protective clothing and entered the SPF animal facility. We were able to observe the strict protocols followed to maintain a clean and controlled environment. Seeing these procedures personally helped me better understand the importance of animal welfare and the strict standards required in laboratory animal management.

The microbiology session also left a strong impression. Instead of simply introducing different viruses, the professor presented us with clinical scenarios and encouraged us to think through the diagnostic process ourselves. We discussed what diseases should be suspected, how we should collect the samples, and what evidence should be considered before reaching a diagnosis. This problem-based teaching approach was very different from the lecture-based learning I am used to, and it showed me how to connect theoretical knowledge with real clinical situations.

During the theriogenology session, we had the rare opportunity to practice an ovary transfer procedure using a bovine reproductive tract. By using a dissected cow uterus, it allows us to directly observe and feel the actual structures when practicing the technique ourselves. We also had an enjoyable conversation with Dr Yanagawa about not only veterinary medicine but also life in Hokkaido and student life at HU, making the session both educational and memorable.

Another unforgettable experience was in the anatomy laboratory, where I made a histology slide entirely by myself for the first time. After experiencing every step of the preparation process, from tissue sectioning to slide preparation, I realized how difficult it is to produce a perfect tissue slide. As someone who used to complain about artifacts a lot when studying histology and pathology, now I have a much greater appreciation and respect for the effort behind every microscope slide.

-Similarities and differences between your home university and HU

One of the biggest differences I noticed between NTU and HU is the veterinary education system. Veterinary medicine is a five-year undergraduate program in Taiwan. While in HU or Japan, offers a six-year curriculum that includes master's-level training, allowing graduates to continue directly to a Ph.D. program after graduation if they choose.

Another major difference is the balance between theoretical learning and practical training. At NTU, the curriculum places greater emphasis on lectures and textbook-based learning, while opportunities for hands-on practice are relatively limited. Practical sessions are usually designed to complement the lectures rather than serving as a major component of the curriculum.



Osteology Collection

Anatomy is a good example of this difference. At HU, students dissect not only dogs, cats, and chickens but also large animals such as cattle, horses, and pigs. We learned that students spend several days focusing on the dissection of a single large animal, allowing them to connect textbook knowledge with real anatomical structures through extensive hands-on experience. At NTU, we also perform dissections of dogs and cats, although the curriculum and opportunities for hands-on experiences on large animals are organized differently. Experiencing HU's approach gave me a new perspective on anatomy education and showed me another effective way of integrating theory with hands-on learning.

-Suggestions to the exchange program for improvement

Overall, the program is well organized. The laboratory visits, facility tours, and brief lectures plus introductions provided a general understanding of the excellent resources and strong research supporting system in Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at HU. The schedule was thoughtfully planned, with activities usually ending around 3:30 p.m. each day, allowing us enough time to explore the city and experience local food and culture. I found the balance between academic activities and personal time to be just right, and each activity gave us valuable insights into different areas of veterinary medicine.

My only suggestion would be to communicate any schedule changes more clearly, especially regarding class starting times. There were a few occasions when adjustments caused some confusion, and unfortunately our group arrived later than expected, which kept the professors waiting.

-Non-academic activities

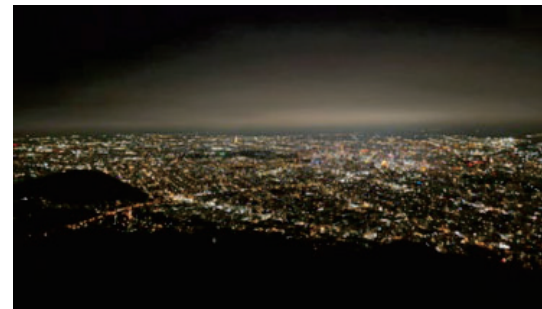
In addition to spending time in Sapporo, I also had the chance to explore Eastern Hokkaido (including Shiretoko, Akan, and Kushiro.) Hokkaido is an extremely beautiful place with lots of natural resources and breathtaking landscapes that I could never get tired of. The diverse scenery, from mountains and forests to lakes and coastlines, allowed me to experience

the unique charm of Hokkaido beyond the university campus. Another thing that impressed me was Sapporo's well-planned city layout. The streets are arranged in an orderly grid pattern, making navigation simple and creating a clean, organized atmosphere. One evening, my phone ran out of battery while I was on my way home, so I had to rely on my memory and sense of direction instead of navigation apps. Thanks to Sapporo's clear and structured street system, I was able to find my way back without difficulty. As someone who appreciates neat and organized environments, I found this small but thoughtful feature of the city particularly enjoyable during my stay.



My Favorite Soup Curry in Hokkaido

Night View from Mt. Moiwa



Otaru Fireworks Festival

