

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENT LIFE AT OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Japanese Universities began admitting International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) students since 1979. Okayama University was the first national university to accept IB students in 4 faculties and 1 special Matching Program (MP) course without entrance exams. From 2015, all 11 faculties and the MP course welcomed IB students. This report is a step forward in creating a more IB student friendly university environment, based on IB student voices. Nine out of 10 IB students took part in the survey. October admissions, the MP course, low tuition fees, tuition fee waivers, admission with minimum diploma scores and parent recommendations, were among the main reasons for students to choose Okayama University. As the academic year in Japan starts from April, IB students enrolled in October have to take secondary freshman courses before introductory freshman courses, in the following spring. This disparity led to some students being unable to identify themselves as neither freshman nor sophomore, and affected their club activities which also begin in April. IB students who attended Japanese cram schools had no difficulty understanding Japanese lectures and writing reports in Japanese. Some seemed dissatisfied with too many text-book oriented lectures instead of experiments and field work. Students from Japanese IB schools adjusted faster to university life than returnees. All IB students felt non-IB students and teachers had little or no knowledge about the IB education system. In order to encourage IB student university admissions, it is important to understand IB student needs and develop a strong IB student support system.

Keywords: International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, Super Global University, Globalization of Japanese Universities.