

1) Why did you choose NMS?

In order to complete the final year of my medical studies, I had to find and participate in a research project. Since I'm specifically interested in the field of Plastic Surgery, I chose NMS for my research internship. Prof. Ogawa, Dr. Dohi and their department at NMS are pioneers on a worldwide scale when it comes to research on keloids and hypertrophic scars. Even though this is not a common condition in Caucasian populations, due to the Netherlands' (and especially Amsterdam's; my home city's) multiculturalism, a lot of people of Asian or Afro-American descent present with this problem.

Apart from that, it's always been a dream of mine to live in Japan for a couple of months.

2) How was your study in Japan?

I had a great time working on my research project at NMS. Whatever I needed or whenever I had questions I could always let anyone at the department's office know and they would try their best to help me out. The mentoring was also great and I would specifically like to thank Dr. Dohi and Dr. Cho for supervising me. They are the best mentors anyone could wish for!

It was also an honor to have been given the opportunity to present my research project at the hospital's International Research Conference, amongst all the talented international doctors and students that NMS hosts.

I learned a lot about conducting medical research and all the steps and challenges involved in undertaking such a project.

3) How was your life in Japan?

I had high expectations of how my life in Japan would be, but despite that it still managed to exceed every single one of them. It was my third time in Japan and Tokyo, so I knew some things about Japanese culture and life there beforehand. However, every time I find myself in Tokyo again, I can't help but be totally impressed and in awe. This time was no different. Living there for 5 months has been an amazing experience to say the least. I made some great friends and met some amazing people, who I'm convinced I will stay in touch with. Japan is truly a unique country and I love how it seems to flawlessly combine the modern with the traditional in everyday life.

4) Any comment on NMS?

I have nothing but praise for all the people at NMS. Everyone was very welcoming and helpful from the first moment I arrived. They all seemed genuinely interested in why I chose NMS to study at and the research project I was working on. The room at the international dormitory in Kanamachi, provided by NMS, was also perfect for a stay like this.

5) Do you have a message for people who are interested in studying at NMS?

I would totally recommend studying at NMS to anyone! I have zero regrets and would definitely do it again, if the opportunity arises. A tip to get the most out of your stay in Japan: try learning the language (even the basics are fine) and roam around all the neighborhoods of Tokyo and other cities to discover and experience the culture first-hand. Connect with the locals and let them show you their favorite places. I promise you'll have an unforgettable time!

6) Memories of Japan

I could truly write a book about all my experiences and memories of Japan. But I want to encourage anyone reading this to go out there and experience everything for themselves. One memory I would like to share, however, is when I visited the Fushimi Inari shrine in Kyoto at night. We climbed to the top of the shrine and it was a truly magical experience...

I will treasure all the memories I made in Japan and at NMS. The city, the hospital, my research project, the food (especially gyudon!), but most importantly, all the wonderful people I met. All the doctors, the staff of the dormitory and the international exchange center, the other international doctors/students and all the local people. During my time there, I even met someone who turned out to become very special to me, so you never know what life might bring you during an adventure like this.

