

Learning Across Borders

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As an international student experiencing university life both at The University of Sydney and at Hosei University, I've gained an interesting perspective on the structural and cultural differences in educational settings.



At USYD, classes can start at various times, such as 11:00 am, 12:30 pm, or even in the evening. There isn't a standardized timetable, which allows students a degree of flexibility in designing their weekly schedules. In contrast, Japanese universities operate on a fixed-period system with defined slots from "Period 1" to "Period 7," each slot accommodating a single

class. This structure means classes always begin at the start of these periods, creating a more regimented timetable.

The number of classes and the depth of content also differ noticeably between the two systems. In Australia, we generally do 4 subjects/semester, with around three contact hours per week, per subject. Additionally, at least 2 hours of self-directed study is expected outside of class hours. In Japan, there are often more classes (some students taking 12!), but with less intensive weekly contact per subject. The Japanese system appears to prioritize a broad exposure to diverse topics, while the Australian system places emphasis on a few subjects with more intensive study.

Finally, the class formats reflect different educational philosophies. At USYD, classes are split into lectures and workshops. This separation helps to reinforce learning through different methods and allows for interactive sessions where students can engage with their peers and instructors in smaller, more intimate groups. Meanwhile, in Japan, classes typically follow a single, longer 100-minute session format. This style allows for an uninterrupted deep dive into a subject but offers less opportunity for varied engagement within a single session.

