

[Student Name]

[Date]

Petition for Approval to Study Away in Japan

My name is [name listed]. Currently, I am registered to study away at the KCP International Japanese Language School in Tokyo, Japan for the academic year of [year listed]. My leave date is scheduled to be [date listed] and I will return in [date listed]. As of today, Japan is at a warning level 2 according to the U.S. Department of State. Even now conditions in Japan are steadily improving, and because my trip doesn't begin until [month listed] there's plenty of time for things to continue to get better.

In Japan, I will continue my education in learning the Japanese language, which I have been studying for almost two years. When I started learning Japanese at Missouri State, I honestly just took it as an elective class. I had no idea the passion I would soon find for it, and the ways it would challenge me and my brain to grow and adapt. Learning Japanese has enabled me to cultivate a better version of myself as a person and as a student. This study away program at KCP is not only essential in completing my Japanese minor at MSU, but on a deeper level an absolutely integral part in my ability to expand my Japanese level. I am also exploring adding a second major in Japanese instead of just doing the minor. Almost any language professional will tell you that immersion is the most important part in learning a language. You can only learn so much from a classroom before you need to be put in the middle of somewhere where the language is spoken natively to grow. The experience I will have at KCP, as a school specifically tailored to learning Japanese, is absolutely necessary and irreplaceable. I have heard countless good things about KCP's program. I remember speaking to KCP representatives at the study away fair my freshman year and being amazed when they assured me I could become fluent in Japanese through this program. It's been a dream of mine ever since, and I am finally in a place where I can make an academic yearlong trip work. I couldn't be more excited to see how much I will learn and grow at KCP. Furthermore, if I'm unable to attend this program in the [semester], it will put me back a full year (if not more) on my track to graduate. This is partially because the program I was signed up to go on in [month listed] (for the [semester listed]) was cancelled last minute. That was a devastating loss for me because of all the work I put into making that trip a possibility. It was incredibly difficult to pick myself up and go through the entire process a second time through a different program provider, but I did it because I know how important it is. Instead of continuing my Japanese language learning in the [semester listed], I had to sign up for some classes last minute at Missouri State in order to keep my status as a student and keep my financial aid. I sincerely hope that I will not have to do the same thing again and would be incredibly grateful for the opportunity to start this program in the [semester listed] instead of being put back another full semester. I do not say this in hopes of pity, rather in an attempt to show you how serious I am about getting this education and how hard I am willing to work for it. Many people have told me I should just give up and graduate already, but I am unwilling to do that before I am able to study in Japan. On a more personal level, I have been counting on the fact that this trip will provide me insight into what I want to pursue for my career in the future. I am currently pursuing a criminology major with a Japanese language minor. However, I have been thinking more and more that I would rather pursue a career in translation than one in criminology. I have also considered moving to Japan after I graduate from Missouri State to get translation work there and to teach English. This year is going to be an extremely important

part in helping me determine what I want my career and my life to look like. It will allow me a chance to live in Japan for a year and see if it is something I could see myself doing permanently. I cannot make these decisions without having this experience first.

Once again, please let me reiterate that I have been preparing for this study away experience for over a year now. The process of applying to this program and completing all of the following requirements in preparation to leave has been long and arduous, and challenged me in many ways that I can't fully describe. That's not to mention having to do it all over again for a second time. I have worked harder for this than I ever have for anything else in my life. I have told myself countless times that the struggle I was going through would be worth it in the end, once I finally got to study in Japan. I have been able to do all this because I truly realize how important it is for me to be able to do this program and get this experience in language immersion.

Obviously, the current threat globally is the Coronavirus. While COVID-19 is absolutely something to be taken seriously, there are many ways to mitigate the risk of contracting it. I will of course follow all reasonable precautions such as washing my hands frequently and with warm water, for 20 seconds. I will make sure to avoid touching my eyes, nose, and mouth when I haven't washed my hands per the CDC's recommendation. I will do my best to practice social distancing and stay 6 feet apart from others when possible. I have multiple masks that I will bring so I can have one on me at all times around others. I also plan on enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to receive alerts and make it easier to locate me in case of emergency. Since Japan is only at a warning level 2 currently, these things are what the CDC recommends in order to stay safe and healthy. Japan had been in a state of emergency at the beginning of the outbreak, but the state of emergency has since been lifted as conditions have improved. Japan has actually been very successful in curbing the virus. As of today, [date listed], Japan has 22,880 confirmed cases as opposed to the whopping 3,609,259 confirmed cases here in the States. I am fortunate enough to be in good health. I am young, and I am not immunocompromised. This means that I am fortunately not a part of the group of people that are most likely to succumb to this illness. I would also like to illustrate that I am very well covered in terms of insurance. I have Geoblue coverage from Missouri State, I will pay for mandatory Japanese National Health Insurance (since Japan requires this). I genuinely feel that I would be better taken care of were I to fall ill in Japan than if I were to here in the states. I have a plethora of staff members as well that are helping to facilitate this trip that I could contact in case of emergency. I have the Missouri State study away personnel, I have KCP coordinators in the US, and I will also have all of the KCP staff on site in Japan. The contact that I have been speaking with at KCP is Michael Anderson ([phone number listed] or info@kcpinternational.com), who has helped me through the application and registration process, as well as applying for a student visa. Furthermore, there is a U.S. Embassy located right in Tokyo that provides assistance for U.S. citizens. I would feel comfortable going to the embassy if anything occurred where I needed help.

The CDC's recommendation to restrict travel to even warning level 2 countries right now is just that- a recommendation. I would feel completely safe, protected, and even in the worst case scenario, taken care of on this study away trip. In fact, as conditions are now, it appears that Japan is having even greater success stopping the spread of the virus than America is. It seems senseless to me to require that I stay here in America, when conditions are worse and more dangerous than in Japan. I honestly would feel safer in Japan, where they've been far more proactive and successful in containing COVID-19. I understand that Japan still has some travel restrictions in place, however there are months between now

and the program start and we cannot anticipate how things will change between now and then. The program advisors at KCP are completely aware of this and are staying updated with the situation. Japan is still issuing student visas, and I have already applied for one.

I ask that Missouri State grant permission for me to go forward with this program, assuming that I am granted my student visa. I completely understand that I would need to sign a special release and a hold harmless agreement in order to go, and I would be happy to do so. I hope I have proven to you that I do take the situation seriously, and that I am staying informed and working intentionally to keep myself safe, and KCP is doing the same. I request from Missouri State that I am granted this petition to continue forward with my [year listed] academic yearlong program in Japan. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.