

Name: Michael Whiteley

Host: Yamanashi University

Host Prof: Hiroyuki Uchida

Dept: Fuel Cell Nano-Materials Centre

Report:

My research entails the reliability analysis of hydrogen fuel cells, and I was lucky enough to visit Yamanashi University in Yamanashi prefecture for the JSPS programme. I went with a solid idea of what I wanted to achieve, and what equipment I wanted to use before leaving the UK. Upon arrival, it took a week to arrange all of the administration tasks, such as accommodation and security cards etc. After settling in, I met with my host to discuss my research plan in detail and to get an idea of who I would be working with.

I would seriously recommend talking to students already at the university, to get an idea of the research lifestyle for the department. The Japanese style is different to the U.K. style, with long hours and many meetings. However you are not expected to try to work out of your comfort zone, so don't try to overstretch yourself to fit in.

From my experience, work groups often socialise outside of work hours. You may find yourself spending evenings with your research group in karaoke bars and restaurants, which wouldn't necessarily happen in the U.K.

As for day-to-day life in Japan, try to speak the language and adopt Japanese customs. The locals will be grateful for your effort, even if you get it wrong!

Top Tip: Practise your ninja chopstick skills in advance, to save embarrassment at your first meal!

Current Contact: m.whiteley@lboro.ac.uk

Research:

