

VIEWPOINTS OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS ON INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA STUDENTS STUDYING AT OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The number of International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma students taking admission into Japanese Universities is on the rise. Okayama University is a Japanese National University, where 20 IB students are enrolled in 11 faculties and one special course. As a step towards creating an IB friendly University, in 2016, Okayama University Admissions Center (AC), published a study on IB student perspectives about student life at Okayama University. This study is a continuation of the earlier study, highlighting perspectives of Academic Advisors (AAs) of different faculties hosting IB students. From October 2016 to January 2017, 11 AAs were interviewed using a questionnaire regarding their impressions of IB students, in their respective faculties. Interviews revealed that, AAs who were not directly involved in IB admissions, were unfamiliar with IB education. Most AAs were impressed by the positive, interactive and good communication skills of IB students. Regarding academic performance, some AAs reported IB students to be doing exceptionally well, while others thought they were average and few AAs, expected better academic performance. Overall impressions of IB students included serious, cheerful, talkative students, who were also good at group work and presentations. Regarding adaptability in a Japanese educational environment, some AAs felt, IB students from IB schools in Japan, who had some previous exposure to Japanese education, adapted faster. Unlike Japanese high school students who are trained in the traditional Japanese education system of emphasizing knowledge acquisition, IB students seemed more accustomed to discussion based lessons. Okayama University is eager to increase IB student admissions and hopes their educational background, will internationalize Japanese Higher Education and open new doorways into the Global era.

Keywords: Internationalization, International Baccalaureate, Japanese Higher Education, Student Support, Student Friendly University.