

2026 JRI Economics Department Internship Testimonial

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Internship period: July 17 – September 4, 2026

- **Why did you apply for this internship?**

I am interested in how governments utilize industrial policy to stimulate growth. The JRI Internship seemed like a great opportunity to gain exposure to the policy process in Japan, where the state historically played a strong role in developing the economy. Specifically, I wanted to understand how experienced researchers conduct in-depth analysis of regional economic issues to inform the public and provide input to the government. I also hoped to improve my ability to carry out independent quantitative and qualitative research to evaluate various policy options. It was evident that the research staff at JRI possess deep knowledge of their respective research areas and are renowned for valuable insights. In applying for the internship, I was excited by the prospect of learning from them and seeing how their recommendations translate into tangible actions by the government and other stakeholders.



- **Please describe what you did during the internship, including memorable experiences.**

At JRI, I supported a research project that compares modern industrial policy in Japan and the European Union. I analyzed regulatory text and quantitative indicators to understand outcomes, and response from key stakeholders. In addition to this work, the Internationalization Team at JRI made every effort to make my experience in Japan exciting and professionally fulfilling.

Near the start of the internship, they took me on a tour of major political and economic institutions in Tokyo, including the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the Bank of Japan, and the National Diet. It was extremely interesting to learn about the history of these institutions and how they operate, which truly helped ground my research at JRI. Later on, they took me on a trip to Osaka and Kyoto, where I was able to meet with staff at their regional office and affiliates from Kyoto Research Park. During the trip, I learned about the Kansai Region's unique economic issues and the opportunities it provides for new firms to innovate and grow. I also saw how dynamic the work at JRI can be. Through conversations with the consulting and research divisions, it became clear that JRI is quite capable of turning ideas into actionable policies and business transformations.

- **Please describe skills and knowledge you gained and challenges you overcame during the internship.**

Since JRI's publications are widely read by an external audience, one of the key lessons for me was how to refine my arguments in a way that is measured and accessible while still convincing. Being accustomed to writing for audiences in the United States, where authors often take strong positions, this was especially important. Additionally, I improved my ability to draw insights across many sources, as well as investigate claims from those sources by seeking out, analyzing, and formatting new empirical evidence. Finally, I was able to improve my public speaking in English and Japanese through the presentations I made at JRI.

Beyond these skills, I also gained much deeper subject matter knowledge related to industrial policy. By examining some of the current prevailing arguments for and against industrial policy, I found that I could critically analyze the approaches taken by the EU and Japan. It was also interesting to see how each government defines and addresses obstacles to successful policy implementation, including fiscal limitations, existing regulations, consumer behavior, and supply-chain vulnerabilities.

- **What is your advice for future interns?**

The research staff at JRI were so welcoming and always made themselves available to explain their work. My key advice would be to ask questions, even if it doesn't seem directly related to your project at the time. Not only was it personally enriching to understand topics ranging from monetary policy, to urbanization, to healthcare, but I often found I could ultimately draw connections to my own research. It also helps to be proactive in seeking clarification regarding your research topic. Review sessions and ad hoc conversations with JRI's subject matter experts provided context that improved my interpretation of the data and refined my arguments.