

A Guide for International Students on How to Choose Their Research Title

Research is challenging work, especially when you are studying abroad. Misunderstanding and lack of communication, and fear of not knowing or speaking a foreign language add to this stress and sometimes push students hard. As I have noticed, the biggest challenge for international students after joining the university in Japan is to decide their “Research Titles.” It is tough to decide what to study in a specific lab because once a title is decided, there is no turning back, and things will go two ways, either too easy or too hard. So below, I have some recommendations on how to choose your Academic Research Title.

- ❖ Be sure to search and inquire enough about the lab you want to study in the future, understand research themes, lab activities, and previously submitted thesis.
- ❖ Because you will have an academic advisor, be sure to check your prospect professor’s research background. Check his published papers, research activities, and memberships of different associations. This will give you enough idea on what topic to choose.
- ❖ Selecting a correctly matching research title to your lab or academic advisor’s field of expertise is crucial because it is your academic supervisor who will help you all time during your research, and his ideas and guidance will help you find your way. If you choose a title outside your academic advisor’s field of expertise, you will not receive enough support from him/her, and all research responsibility will be on your shoulders.
- ❖ Try to read previously written thesis by your prospect lab members; it will help you select a title that will be unique but at the same time not too complex or challenging.
- ❖ Try to think how practical your research is and how much it makes sense because proposing a title is easy but completing it will be challenging. Running too much after the nobility of your research will cost you much time and maybe your degree. Just understand that every study is unique, even if you change a small parameter of the study and expect a different result.
- ❖ Try to think about the materials, data, and information you will use in your research. Do you have enough data? Do you have the required material? What if you were studying in Japan and your research title is about another country? For example, in that case, can you collect enough data to prove your study and nobility of research? It would be best if you thought about these parameters.
- ❖ Do not think your academic supervisor will do everything for you; it is a false hope; in a research theme degree, most of the responsibility is on the student, so be ready for it.
- ❖ Confirm your title with your prospective academic supervisor; it is essential to convince him and take his approval; otherwise, you will lose the chance to study in that specific lab, or maybe you will ultimately be responsible for your study.