

Japan Ryugaku Awards special

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Schools lauded for COVID-19 response, support

The number of international students enrolled in Japanese universities and vocational schools is on the rise. In May 2019, this number stood at 312,214, up from 164,000 in 2011, and the number of students who chose to work in Japan after graduating has more than doubled since 2013.

Supporting this influx of international students and bolstering initiatives to make their lives easier is a network of universities, vocational and language schools.

On Sept. 26, the Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education hosted its annual Japan Ryugaku (study abroad) Awards to recognize the educational institutions that went above and beyond in their initiatives.

The Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education launched the Japan Ryugaku Awards in 2012 to boost the number of international students in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

At that time, many students at Japanese language schools returned to their home countries. Since then, Japanese language schools have selected award recipients based on numerous criteria. Providing easy-to-understand materials, establishing separate tracks for international students, simplifying application procedures and developing support systems to help students find jobs in Japan are among the factors considered.

By establishing criteria to assess institutions' accommodations for international students, the association hopes to provide a framework that schools and universities can use to improve their learning environments.

This year marked the ninth Japan Ryugaku Awards ceremony, which was held online out of consideration for social distancing guidelines related to the coronavirus pandemic. The ceremony was attended by faculty and staff of universi-

ties and Japanese language schools, as well as affiliated business representatives.

This year, 176 Japanese language schools submitted 469 votes to select 50 institutions across five categories: vocational schools, private liberal arts departments, private science departments, public universities and graduate schools. Ten institutions separated into "west Japan" and "east Japan" divisions were awarded within each category. A grand prize was awarded to one institution in each division. Award-winning schools were recognized for their support for international students, educational content, excellence in their screening system and readiness to accept international students among other points.

Tokyo International Business College received the east grand prize in the vocational school category and Ehle College, the corresponding west grand prize. In the category for private liberal arts depart-

ments, Takushoku University received the east grand prize, while the west grand prize went to the University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences. In the category for private science departments, Tokyo University of Science received the east grand prize and Kindai University, the west grand prize. Yokohama University received the east grand prize in the national university category and Kobe University, the west grand prize. Lastly, in the graduate school category, Yokohama National University received the east grand prize and Ritsumeikan University, the west grand prize.

In addition to acknowledging the achievements of vocational schools and universities, the Japan Ryugaku Awards present an opportunity to address issues concerning international students. One aspect touched upon at this year's ceremony was the coronavirus pandemic's effects on the internationalization of

Japan's education.

The pandemic has severely disrupted Japanese-language schools, which play an important role in preparing students to enroll in vocational schools and universities. According to surveys conducted by Japanese language schools, approximately 35,000 students could not enter the country to participate in courses that commenced in April and July. The Japan Student Services Organization suggests this figure is nearly half the number of students enrolled in all language schools as of May 2019 — 83,811.

Although the government eased travel restrictions for international students from October, it remains to be seen how immigration procedures will affect enrollment. Furthermore, the economic fallout of the pandemic may force prospective students to cancel their plans to study in Japan.

Language schools are a major part of the educational ecosystem for international students. School staff are intimately aware of enrollment procedures for universities and vocational schools and guide students through the application submission process, making them uniquely qualified to select recipients of the Japan Ryugaku Awards. Therefore, the pandemic's impact on language schools will, have far-reaching effects on the internationalization of education in Japan.

Another area of concern is the pandemic's effect on student motivation. The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) and the Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU) were both scheduled to occur in June, but were canceled. Many students are worried they will not be able to sufficiently improve their language abilities to enroll in a university or vocational school. Generally, prospective students must

pass level N2 of the JLPT before entering a program conducted in Japanese. But some educators observe that students who have passed this exam may still have trouble understanding their instructors and classmates. Japanese language schools generally teach their curriculum over two years. Still, students from different regions sometimes find themselves at entirely different levels by the end of the curriculum. Students from China and Korea typically demonstrate a greater success rate due to their prior knowledge of kanji.

These factors, compounded by the dramatic decrease of inbound students and the JLPT's cancellation, which many vocational schools and universities use to evaluate prospective students' language abilities, have forced institutions to adjust their admissions procedures. In place of examination certifications, some institutions are referring to students' performance at their respective language schools and conducting online assessment interviews.

The effects of the pandemic highlight the need for a healthy support system to help students navigate uncertain waters, giving special meaning to this year's awards ceremony. During the latter half of the ceremony, representatives from universities and vocational schools awarded grand prizes discussed how they are supporting students amid the pandemic.

The universities and vocational schools shared details about their holistic support for current and prospective students. In addition to online courses, some institutions are offering hybrid classes and on-demand courses. They are also making sure every student receives the attention they need by ensuring they have access to one-on-one consultations with instructors and advisers.

2020 Ryugaku Award winners

• Grand prize winners

Senmon gakko (vocational schools) category

East
Tokyo International Business College
West
Ehle Institute College

Private university bunkei (humanities, social studies, literature, etc.) category

East
Takushoku University
West
University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences

Private university rikei (science, math, engineering, etc.) category

East
Tokyo University of Science
West
Kindai University

Public university category

East
Yokohama National University
West
Kobe University

Graduate school category

East
Yokohama National University's graduate school
West
Ritsumeikan University's graduate school

• Award winners

Senmon gakko (vocational schools) category

East
Chuo Computer & Communication College
Nippon Omotenashi College
Nihon Kogakuin College
Japan Electronics College
West
ECC Kokusai College of Foreign Languages
Syusei Technical College
Tsujii Culinary Institute
Tokyo International Business College Kobe Campus

Hall of Fame

(Schools that have won grand prizes for five consecutive years)

- Waseda University (graduate school category; inducted in 2017)
- Fukui University of Technology (inducted in 2018)
- Ashikaga University (inducted in 2018)

Private university bunkei (humanities, social studies, literature, etc.) category

East
Seigakuin University
Toyo University
Hosei University
Waseda University
West
Kwansei Gakuin University
Nagoya University of Economics
Yokkaichi University
Ritsumeikan University

Private university rikei (science, math, engineering, etc.) category

East
Shibaura Institute of Technology
Tokai University
Tokyo Denki University
Waseda University
West
Osaka Sangyo University
Nagahama Institute of Bio-Science and Technology
Meijo University
Ritsumeikan University

Public university category

East
Chiba University
University of Tsukuba
Tokyo University
Tokyo Metropolitan University
West
Osaka University
Osaka Kyoiku University
Kyoto University
Shizuoka University

Graduate school category

East
Aoyama Gakuin University's graduate school
Tsukuba University's graduate school
Tokyo University's graduate school
Tokyo Metropolitan University's graduate school
West
Kansai University's graduate school
Doshisha University's graduate school
Nagoya University's graduate school
Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology



GETTY IMAGES

Up to 100 international students can receive funding of ¥360,000

Won Japan Ryugaku Awards for 5 consecutive years in vocational school category!

Our school offers 104 programs in 34 departments

Creators College Broadcast/Film • Voice Acting • Theater Staff • Manga/Animation	Design College Game • CG • Graphic • Illustration • Interior • Product
Music College Performer • Vocalist • Music Creator • Recording • Concert Event Staff • Dance	IT College IT Specialist • AI • Mobile • Network • Security • Business • Software • Hotel • Bridal
Technology College Vehicle Maintenance • Biotechnology • Robotics • Electronics • Architecture • Civil Engineering • CAD	Sports & Medical Care College Sports Training • Fitness Training • Sports Instruction • Sports Business • Soccer/Tennis • Acupuncture and Moxibustion • Judo Therapy • Medical Clerk

Job and University Placement Record

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Affiliated University 東京工科大学
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After graduating from Nihon Kogakuin College, students who transfer to Tokyo University of Technology are exempt from the admission fee.

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Japan Ryugaku Awards special

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The following 11 schools received this year's Japan Ryugaku Awards, recognizing their excellence in supporting international students.

Nihon Kogakuin College Ideal education in ideal environment

We have worked to provide specialized yet comprehensive education, striving to develop talented graduates with practical skills. Founded in 1947, our school has produced creative individuals under the motto, "ideal education in an ideal environment." We provide an optimum environment for imbuing individuals with not just knowledge, but also creativity. Foreign nationals are expected to play an important role in Japan. We aim to ensure they feel secure studying with their Japanese counterparts.



Vice President
Kazuaki Tohyama

Aoyama Gakuin University For all people and for society

AGU provides support for international students such as the advisor/tutor system giving each freshman academic and everyday life support. Several scholarships are available. The Career Planning and Placement Center has specific staff for international students to support job-seeking. Students can also act as chat leaders in the Chat Room, communicating in foreign languages about various topics with students of Aoyama Gakuin from elementary to university.



Vice President/Director of
International Center
Tatsuya Uchida

Kindai University Learning for the real world

Kindai University is one of the largest universities in western Japan. Our founding principles are "learning for the real world" and "nurturing intellectual and emotional intelligence." We have nearly 500 international students from 18 countries this academic year. Kindai has been highly evaluated globally, ranked between 801 and 1,000 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021. We strive to promote active globalization and expand enrollment of international students.



Vice president Hisashi Fujiwara

Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT) Go abroad and see the world

The faculty and staff will make every effort to make your days at SIT prosperous and successful.

At the same time, we hope you will spend your time being eager and enthusiastic. Do not underestimate your own potential. You may be surprised how much you can do when you really try. Don't listen to discouraging advice and don't give up easily. Keep your goal high.



President Masato Murakami

Takushoku University Nurturing well-rounded people

Takushoku University, which marks its 120th anniversary this year, has ample experience in teaching Japanese to many international students. This past April, we launched the Department of Global Japanese Language in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. Our focus is not just on teaching Japanese and specialized knowledge, but also on providing career education, including business Japanese. This academic year, we will introduce a new entrance examination system for international students.



President Akio Kawana

Tokai University Think Ahead, Act for Humanity

Tokai University, enrolling 1,247 international students from 47 countries as of May 1, provides various support for international students, including advice on academics and career, health consultation, tutoring system and scholarship. It also promotes international exchanges in academics, culture and sports. We aim to earn the reputation as an excellent international university and continue to educate our students to be globally skilled individuals.



Executive Director of
International Education Center
Yoshio Yamamoto

Tokyo Denki University Giving to society via technology

To contribute to society through technology, individuals must not only acquire specialist knowledge, but also have strong language skills, be able to process their thoughts and be articulate. Tokyo Denki University offers international students a regular curriculum to acquire "academic Japanese" to help them gain knowledge and conduct scientific and technological research. Rich extracurricular activities encourage students to interact with diverse people and help them become engineers who can work collaboratively with others.



Director of International Center
Makoto Shishido

Tokyo Metropolitan University Pursue an ideal state of humanity

TMU, as the only public university of the Tokyo Metropolis, offers quality education based on research prowess with rich academic resources in Tokyo.

We have seven faculties and seven graduate schools that provide international students with an ideal study environment. Almost all international students are granted tuition waivers and scholarships. We look forward to welcoming you!



Vice President/Executive Director of the International Center
Masao Ayabe

Tokyo University of Science Studies that lead to employment

Since its founding in 1881, the Tokyo University of Science has stuck to a policy of providing competency-first education in which only students who have acquired true competency can graduate — a major feature of the university. To support international students, we provide freshman-specific guidance, assign a senior student as adviser to each international student, help students maintain their residency in Japan and operate an international student dormitory.



Vice President Masato Wakayama

Yokohama National University Be active, innovative, open, global

Yokohama National University, where international students account for 10% of its entire 10,000-student enrollment, offers a variety of services for non-Japanese students. These include scholarships arranged by Yokohama National University, four dormitories mainly for international students, support for job hunting at Japanese companies, consultation on daily life, studies and job hunting in collaboration with various organizations and student groups, as well as support on Japanese language and culture.



President Yuichi Hasebe

University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences We train students for business

We offer many study programs closely connected to the business world to prepare you as a business professional. First-year students are assigned to classes with faculty members in charge. Also, there is a specialized support section for international students to receive advice on study, life in Japan, and employment. Almost all international students receive scholarships and reduced tuition rates upon enrollment. Many scholarships and tuition remission programs are available for sophomores and above, based on the previous year's grades.



President Keigo Fujii

Takushoku University

Tokyo, Japan
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Grand Prize Winner of the Ryugaku Awards 2020
in the Categories of
"National and Public Universities"
and
"Graduate Schools"

Five reasons to study at YNU:

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