

World University Rankings' and Internationalization of Japanese Universities

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There are many different university rankings around the world, and each has its own evaluation methods and indicators. Generally speaking, Japanese universities score low in terms of internationalization in every ranking. Japanese universities need to strengthen their overall competitiveness in teaching and research. In the QS World University Rankings, Japanese universities scored considerably lower on international students and international faculty than on academic reputation and employer reputation.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet adopted the *Japan Revitalization Strategy* as a strategy for growth. University reform is deemed a key area for the future. The document states, "The government will make efforts so that ten or more Japanese universities will be ranked in top 100 universities in the world within the next decade." This target was discussed in the Council for Industrial Competitiveness and the Education Rebuilding Implementation Council. The Japan Revitalization Strategy was adopted by the cabinet, so the government is officially committed to this target. This is the first time that the Japanese government has in an official document committed to raising its world university ranking.

The internationalization of higher education as international student mobility increases and the education of the next generation as globalized talent are serious issues for Japanese society. Our ministry provides two types of support: to universities and to individual students. The budget for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) scholarships,

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which goes to international students and other aid, is about 28 billion yen. We are also trying to increase the number of Japanese students going abroad to study, and the budget for these efforts is about 9.2 billion yen.

We implemented a project called *Global 30* between 2009 and 2013 as organizational support for universities. This project aimed to increase the number of international students by establishing more degree programs in English at Japanese universities. About 150 degree programs, which are mainly graduate courses, were thereby established at Japanese universities.

We are also implementing other projects such as the five-year *Go Global Japan* that began in 2012. The aim of this project is to increase outbound student numbers by sending students abroad with quality assurance including obtaining college credits at overseas universities. This project will involve 16,000 students studying abroad by 2016.

Since 2011, the *Re-inventing Japan* project has aimed to strengthen the international education networking and negotiation skills of Japanese universities with foreign universities in other regions. We started with China and South Korea then extended to the U.S./E.U., ASEAN countries, Russia/India, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Turkey. Educational programs with universities in those areas help us to bolster the ability of Japanese universities to expand its education throughout the world. This program also has ever greater significance in supporting foreign policy through inter-collegiate collaboration.

The biggest project is *the Top Global University Project*, launched in 2014. We selected 37 universities. Thirteen top Japanese research universities were selected as *Top Type* universities having the potential to be ranked in the top 100 in international university rankings. The project will help *Top Type* universities develop and reform their education and governance systems up to world standards while strengthening international compatibility and competitiveness. Another 24 Japanese universities were selected as *Global Traction Type* universities. The project will support their pioneering efforts at internationalization. MEXT will support both types of universities for 10 years. This project entails 37 universities setting up quantitative indicators for reconsidering the start and end times of the academic year as well as admissions of foreign students.

The Japanese government will bolster the international compatibility and competitiveness of Japanese universities, tracking many kinds of world rankings in order to avoid the biases of particular indicators. Internationalization accounts for just 7.5% of the *Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings*. Since Japanese universities start with an extremely low

internationalization score, a large jump in rankings is unlikely even if we make improvements. In this context, raising the citation index, which accounts for 30% of the *THE World University Rankings*, is the best way to raise the ranking of Japanese universities. Internationalization of universities is important, but we should rather consider that from the perspective of raising the rankings, internationalization provides a foundation for raising the performance of university research.

The Japanese government provides various types of support to enhance the research performance of Japanese universities. In the *World Premier International Research Center Initiative* (WPI) project, we established highly internationalized research centers at major international universities and institutions. Many researchers from around the world are invited to these research centers, which undertake research of the highest global standards. The *Program for Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities* is a project to help universities hire university research administrators (URA). URAs work to promote the internationalization of research, promote industry-academia collaboration, and help with applications to competitive grants.

Japanese universities find it difficult, however, to internationalize themselves, strengthen their research performance, and raise their world university rank. I would like to talk about these difficulties in the last part of my presentation.

The *management expenses grant*, which is basic financial support for national universities from the Japanese government, decreased 147 billion yen over the past decade, between 2004 and 2015. This has brought the grant figure to a level whereby national universities can barely pay the salaries of their existing faculty and staff. Young faculty staffs tend to be unable to secure tenure posts as the age of the existing faculty at national universities rises. Universities also struggle to increase the number of papers, however the growth of the number of papers from Japanese universities and research institutions is stagnate during the last decade.

Let me conclude by noting that the World University Rankings have much more impact in raising student mobility throughout the world. The international factors of Japanese universities remains quite low, so government initiatives have begun to support improvement of these scores. Improving the research citation index is the best way for Japanese universities to move up in the ranks. Japanese government initiatives have also begun to strengthen such efforts.

The *management expenses grant* to universities has been reduced due to Japan's dismal fiscal situation. This has resulted in growing employment

precarity for young teachers and sluggish growth of the number of papers published. The internationalization of universities is one foundation for improving university research and education.