



CHANGES IN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

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In Japan, the internationalization of higher education has traditionally focused on international student

mobility, particularly inbound-flows such as the *100,000 International Students Plan* and *300,000 International Students Plan*. Through these endeavors, the government has played a central role with strong initiatives, for instance, government scholarship programs, funds for tuition reductions and exemptions, subsidies for the construction of student accommodations, and relaxing immigration regulations, supporting host institutions of international students. However, both the country's prolonged, demographic decline of 18-year-olds and a rapidly growing global economy have reshaped Japan's rationales and approaches to international education. New policy rationales such as the "skilled migration approach," which promotes the post-graduation employment of international students in Japan (brain gain from overseas), have emerged, and lower-tiered, private institutions are partnering with commission-paid agents to aggressively recruit international students mainly from China (revenue-generating approach) to fill their classrooms. Both

approaches are currently prevalent within international education in Japan, weakening the traditional, "cooperation and mutual understanding approach." Furthermore, international university rankings, which prospective international students often use as a guide to identify universities to which they should apply, have become part of internationalization since they are now considered in the discussion of how Japanese universities can increase their international competitiveness so as to attract high-quality students from overseas.

Under these circumstances, internationalization of higher education in Japan has encompassed many new cross-border movements and thereby broadened its original concept, rationalizing and basing these new efforts on commercialization and competition in order to cope with serious global issues within higher education, such as the decrease in public funding and an ever-intensifying global talent war. Recently, the term "international" is being replaced by "global" in Japanese higher education, e.g., from international education to global education, in line with advances in an era of globalization. Accordingly, in order to meet the increasing demand for global-minded graduates (workforce) at rapidly globalizing Japanese

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universities to expand their English-taught courses and study abroad programs.

Beyond student mobility, however, internationalization has been less developed in Japan, especially in terms of curriculum reform. The government and universities have historically typified the approach of importing knowledge and technology from overseas, modifying them for Japan's use with the main purpose of advancing the country's modernization (internationalization for modernization). Since the vast majority of course content originally came from the West, this model has prevented Japanese universities from internationalizing their curricula for a long time. However, as a new trend, there are a growing number of international liberal arts institutions offering international learning experiences, incorporating a high percentage of English-taught courses, a highly diversified student population and faculty, and a variety of study abroad programs. Beyond just adding so-called international programs to the traditional curricula, these institutions have thus made the internationalization of education and learning the first priority within their missions and efforts.

Internationalization has increased in importance in both education and research, taking a more mainstream role

companies, the Japanese government has embarked on new initiatives of globalizing higher education, such as supporting

in Japanese higher education. Concurrently, however, as the country's public debt has reached 200% of its GDP under a prolonged period of economic stagnation, there is a growing expectation of society, coupled with the concern of taxpayers, that universities be able to clarify both the added value of their international dimensions and the impact of internationalization on their specific institutions. Currently, one of the crucial challenges for Japanese universities is to develop an effective evaluation process of their internationalization efforts. This challenge lies in balancing the needs between trusted quality control, which creates a "bottom line" in terms of accountability, transparency, and resource management, and quantitative expansion. In addition, such an approach requires a creative assessment structure and its related evaluation methods (e.g. peer review and benchmarking), which can account for and encourage overall internationalization initiatives and adds a strategic dimension to further university internationalization.

Lastly, the Japanese government is expected to continue to support the strategic initiatives of university internationalization in order to provide a catalyst for the functional transformation of Japanese universities towards meeting the demands of the 21st century's global knowledge-based society. For example, the government should provide not only competitive funds for pioneering internationalization efforts and innovative, international collaborations of institutions in education, research, and administration, but also implement further deregulations combined with effective quality assurance programs in Japanese higher education as a whole.