

3. Background to the International Strategy

The issues behind the need for Tohoku University's international strategy are as follows.

- The world is going through a period of great change, and universities must play a greater role on the world stage

The globalization of the economy continues to progress at a hitherto unseen rate. At the same time, the structures that exist within countries and the local communities where universities are based are being greatly influenced by knowledge creation and the mobility of intellectual human resources. Under these circumstances, it is essential for universities, in respect of their global activities, to have an international strategy that outlines how their activities will affect and address global, regional, national, and local communities. In addition, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digitalization are effecting changes globally in the structure of innovation-based industry, and universities can play an important international role in knowledge creation and innovation in order to lead such changes. Furthermore, as the “knowledge-intensive society” continues to develop, the responsibility has fallen on universities to nurture talented individuals who can play an active and leading role in our new society — a society that promotes the sharing and aggregation of knowledge on a global level, creating values and solving social problems.

- Expectations are increasing regarding the role that universities should play in solving social issues both in Japan and overseas

Japan is facing a number of social issues at an earlier stage than the rest of the world, such as those posed by our super-aged society and ever-increasing population decline. In addition, there are many social issues that affect the entire world, and efforts to address them include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations for the realization of a sustainable world; the Paris Agreement, which seeks to contribute to solutions for environmental problems; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which addresses how we can respond to disasters, including mitigation and reconstruction measures. Under such circumstances, expectations are increasing regarding the role that universities should play in solving these domestic and worldwide social issues.

- Strategies with an international perspective are indispensable for the realization of Tohoku University's identity as a global research university leading cutting-edge creation and innovation

As a comprehensive research university, Tohoku University continues to address the challenges of the future, based on its history of more than a century of developing advanced knowledge for the world. In addition, as a “university engaged with society”, we welcome a great variety of talented individuals, and we seek to contribute to the world through the development of such individuals and through the creation of knowledge rooted in practical science. In addition, the university plays a role in helping the Tohoku area and Japan form connections with global society, which both the region and country have the potential to develop. To realize Tohoku University's identity in this way, it is necessary to clearly define strategies with an international perspective and to carry out activities based thereon.