



TOHOKU
UNIVERSITY

Tohoku University's International Strategy

Collaborate. Innovate. Activate.

10 September 2019

International Strategy Office
Tohoku University

Contributing to our International Strategy

In July 2018, the International Strategy Office was established as an organization directly under the President. The decision to establish the office was due to strong recognition of the need for more strategic and agile promotion of our international activities and the formation of international networks, which have been carefully cultivated since the university first opened.

In November 2018, our university published *Tohoku University Vision 2030*, a roadmap for its activities. In order to realize Priority Strategy 17, entitled “International Collaboration ~ Strategic Partnerships for further Excellence”, we formulated Tohoku University’s International Strategy for the purpose of clarifying guidelines and action plans for further internationalization.

Although the current situation for Japanese universities is extremely severe, we must address not only local concerns but also issues facing the entire world. *Tohoku University Vision 2030* clearly shows our conviction and determination to be a global university leading cutting-edge innovation.

As a leading comprehensive research university in Japan with a history of more than a century, Tohoku University will be an important bridge connecting Japan to other countries and states, through our involvement in Education, Research, Industry Co-Creation and Community Collaboration. We will tackle future challenges and fulfill our responsibilities as a “University Engaged with Society” in collaboration with various partners around the world. To do so, we must harness the president’s strategic initiative to encourage inventive and imaginative activities by all individuals at the university. Through such endeavors, we will deepen our strategic international collaboration and will proceed with our plans for comprehensive internationalization without delay.

Never before have universities been expected to play such a leading role in the creation and development of innovation. There will be many bumps in the road ahead, but Tohoku University is determined to progress undaunted on a course of globalization, developing knowledge through the implementation of our *International Strategy*. In this endeavor, we humbly request the cooperation and support of everyone at Tohoku University members and of our many stakeholders.



山口昌弘

Masahiro Yamaguchi

Director, International Strategy Office

Vice President and Professor

1. Circumstances leading to the forming of our International Strategy

Since its establishment in 1907, Tohoku University has always emphasized the three principles of “Research First”, “Open Doors” and “Practice-Orientated Research and Education”.

Tohoku University is noted for its acceptance of international students in its earliest days, and the university has ever since actively promoted international research exchanges, and has a strong international presence due to its outstanding research capabilities. In addition, the university has been chosen to participate in the government’s series of funding projects which aim to enhance the international competitiveness of higher education in Japan, and these have in turn formed the foundation for promoting internationalization efforts unique to Tohoku University. Furthermore, the university has established the Tohoku University International Advisory Board (hereinafter referred to as the International Advisory Board), and has made efforts to formulate international strategies.

In 2016, the International Strategy Proposal Working Group was organized under the Director of the Office for International Initiatives. In April 2018, the group produced *International Cooperation and the Internationalization of Education at Tohoku University: Recommendations for Formulating Future International Strategies*, in which it was pointed out that an international strategy for Tohoku University should be produced in good time.

In July 2018, the International Strategy Office was established as an organization directly under the President, and based on the above developments, our *Tohoku University’s International Strategy: Collaborate. Innovate. Activate* (hereinafter the *International Strategy*) was produced.

2. Mapping out our International Strategy

In October 2018, Tohoku University published *Tohoku University Vision 2030: Collaborate. Innovate. Activate* (hereinafter the *Vision*) as a roadmap for the future. In the *Vision*, Tohoku University outlines its mission to nurture leadership qualities in talented individuals, to create outstanding world-class research results, and to contribute to the development of a peaceful and just human society. All four visions, “Fostering creative talent and future leaders - The global perspective in times of rapid change” (Vision 1: Education), “Creating innovations and pioneering in new academic fields – Academic excellence as a top-thirty leading university” (Vision 2: Research) , “As a member of the community, it is the duty of a university to establish partnerships with diverse sectors, create new societal value and lead innovations toward the future.” (Vision 3: Community Co-Creation), and “Governance Reforms for a virtuous cycle found on excellence in education and research” (Vision 4: Governance Reforms) are based on our taking an international and global perspective. This means that Tohoku University will promote internationalization in a unified manner, and that all individuals at Tohoku University will act with an international perspective in mind.

Our *International Strategy* was created based on this *Vision*, and the basic framework has been incorporated into the *Vision* as “Priority Strategy 17: International Collaboration ~ Strategic Partnerships for further Excellence”. This Priority Strategy consists of the following two goals:

56. Strategic advancement of international collaborations

We will advance and promote strategic partnerships with global universities, academic institutions and the industry as well as communities at home and abroad to increase our global presence as leading university. Based on the various international activities of our members, we will establish an international strategy and further enhance international collaborations.

57. University-wide, cross-sectoral globalization on campus

The international projects conducted individually in education, research and industry or community collaboration will be consolidated and united to promote Comprehensive Internationalization Projects. We will raise awareness and improve the skills of our members in order to establish an environment, in which everybody can participate in international activities, thus creating a culture suitable for a top-thirty global university.

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.

4. Direction of our International Strategy

Tohoku University aims to deepen its international collaborations and contribute to the world through comprehensive internationalization.

- Deepening International Collaboration: To contribute to solving pressing social issues in Japan and overseas, Tohoku University will deepen international collaboration with various outside partners and take a leading role in developing leaders with a global perspective, creating innovative knowledge for the public good, and collaborating with industry across borders.
- Comprehensive Internationalization: To fulfill our duties as a comprehensive research university leading our “knowledge-intensive society”, everyone at Tohoku University is responsible for internationalization and for our becoming a worldwide hub for talented individuals, resources, and networks.

The main purpose of our *International Strategy* is to fully achieve Tohoku University’s mission and vision through two processes: deepening international collaboration and comprehensive internationalization. To this end, this *International Strategy* promotes these two processes in all of Tohoku University activities. The *International Strategy* shows the activities that should be undertaken, divided into four targets: education, research, university-industry collaboration, and the tackling of social issues, and it also details the two processes that will guide us towards reaching those targets. The International Strategy Office, acting directly under the President, will contribute to the university-wide realization of each target by promoting activities focused on the two processes. Through the above, under the leadership of the President, by promoting and supporting open and international open academic exchanges by various actors within the university, by promoting international development in line with the unique strategies of the university as a whole and of individual departments, we will develop an organizational culture that encourages deeper international collaboration through the participation of everyone at the university, and progressively implement Tohoku University’s *International Strategy*.

5. Process 1. Advancement of International Collaborations

We will accumulate knowledge together with a variety of external partners and advance effective international collaboration autonomously and strategically

Actions:

- We will develop international exchanges in a more open manner through the clear guidelines for international academic exchange agreements
- We will strategically strengthen partnerships with overseas universities with whom Tohoku University can build mutually beneficial relationships
- We will stimulate international exchange through effective monitoring and assessment based on an integrated database on international exchange
- We will effectively use overseas bases and participate in inter-university consortia
- We will stimulate international exchanges tailored to each region and country using networks inside and outside the university
- We will enhance Tohoku University's overseas network beyond regions and generations by using organizations such as the overseas alumni associations
- We will improve our international presence through the development of our international public relations

Process 2. Comprehensive Internationalization

Through cross-border “Open Doors”, we will develop a hub for diverse talents, resources, and networks from around the world

Actions:

- Based on the principle of “Open Doors”, we will create a university community that does not discriminate with regard to nationality, religion, race, gender, age, values, disability, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and so on, and we will establish an environment where members can demonstrate their diverse talents
- Moving away from the idea of internationalization through a separate specialized division, we will foster an organizational culture of comprehensive internationalization through a university-wide campaign and through networking to promote international perspectives on all activities
- We will realize a comprehensive Japanese-English bilingual system so that non-Japanese speakers can actively participate and contribute to all of the university's activities
- We will aim to realize an internationally competitive remuneration system and attractive working environment
- Through the restructuring of international relations departments and committees, we will strengthen planning functions and accelerate decision-making

6. Target 1. Education with a Global Perspective

We will attract talented students and faculty members from home and abroad, and foster future leaders with a global perspective for the age of global change

Actions:

- We will strategically enroll excellent international students based on the expansion of international degree courses delivered through the medium of English
- We will reform undergraduate education programs to refocus on our main goal of fostering talented individuals who will lead the global society
- We will enhance the International Joint Graduate Programs which provide international collaborative education connected to world-leading research and professional education
- We will widen our international co-education to all undergraduate students and graduate students, and foster concrete understanding and action on global citizenship and diversity
- We will strengthen support for students' studying abroad and international careers through the improvement of foreign language skills
- We will accelerate campus internationalization throughout the university through the active use of University Houses (international mixed-residence dormitories), which boast the largest capacity among dormitories at national universities

Target 2. Cutting-Edge Research

We will create innovations and become pioneers in new academic fields through cutting-edge research and knowledge creation

Actions:

- We will further develop the Core Research Cluster to include the fields of Materials Science and Spintronics in which Tohoku University leads the world, and in fields in which we are expected to lead: Disaster Science and Next Generation Medicine
- In fields where Tohoku University has world-class potential and research resources, we will deepen collaborations with overseas partners and form an International Research Cluster which will lead the world
- We will develop research on a global scale through Joint Laboratories and cross appointments in cooperation with leading overseas universities and research institutes
- We will establish an open research environment by promoting diversity, and by supporting autonomous and vigorous research exchange and international joint research among diverse individuals
- We will improve our international presence by promoting strategic international joint research based on data and analyses of global research trends

Target 3. Cross-border University-Industry Collaboration

We will develop international university-industry collaborations through global innovation campuses and international networks

Actions:

- We will accelerate large-scale university-industry collaborations with global enterprises based on the “Vision Co-Creation Partnership”
- We will expand the B-U-B (Business-University-Business) model, open innovations at Tohoku University, on a global scale.
- Through the active usage of the Aobayama Campus, as a global innovation campus, and the Next Generation Synchrotron Radiation Facility, we will further pursue innovations in science and technology
- We will foster and support globally competitive entrepreneurs through strategic partnerships with leading overseas universities
- We will facilitate international university-industry collaboration based on the appropriate protection of intellectual property and international contracts, and a system for security export control

Target 4. Solving Worldwide Social Challenges

Through Community Collaboration, we will play a leading role in solving various global social challenges

Actions:

- We will contribute to the improvement of the world’s capacity to prevent disasters through cooperation with the UN via the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and we will collect and archive information on disasters at the Global Center for Disaster Statistics
- We will contribute to solving worldwide social challenges through active participation and leadership in SDGs for the achieving of a sustainable world via multidisciplinary international joint research on global environmental change
- We will promote international joint research for social challenges which Japan and Tohoku face in advance of the rest of the world, such as the declining birth rate and super aged population, while collaborating with local communities using our core research bases such as that for Next Generation Medicine