

JOINT STATEMENT

The theme of the 8th HeKKSaGOn German-Japanese University Presidents' Conference is "How universities can contribute to building healthy, safe and resilient societies." This theme reflects our collective and individual experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has not only threatened our health and well-being, but has also caused great socio-economic disruption to our global society. In this time of crisis, we, the leaders of the HeKKSaGOn universities, reaffirm our belief that the knowledge produced by higher education institutions is important in seeking solutions to global challenges, and we agree to work together to implement the following:

Premises

1. Lead the advancement of multidisciplinary research and the dissemination and transfer of knowledge to address and solve global issues in health, safety and resilience, with a focus on areas of existing academic collaboration.
2. Advance our engagement with local and global communities to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals through collaboration with each other and with other parties in research, education, and transfer / social engagement.
3. Make the best use of existing and emerging technologies and methods of digitalization to exchange and disseminate knowledge in research, education, and transfer / social engagement, in addition to conducting these activities in the traditional in-person manner.
4. Enhance organizational preparedness with respect to multi-hazards such as natural disasters and pandemics to allow universities to continue conducting research and providing education.

The HeKKSaGOn Alliance intends to pursue the above premises through the following actions:

- Invite both early-career and senior researchers to participate in the defined *priority areas* of research and education as well as on the *working group projects* of the HeKKSaGOn Alliance to provide them with the opportunity to jointly contribute to solving the global challenges for the future.
- Promote further opportunities for early-career researchers to engage in collaborations and encourage them in particular to share their ideas for shaping the post COVID-19 era, taking into consideration their respective institutional strengths.
- Enable students to supplement their academic qualifications with the opportunity to experience intercultural exchanges that allows them to grasp global challenges and develop innovative approaches to solving them.

- Jointly promote in-person as well as online events through symposia, workshops, and programs in order to maintain a stable environment in which the member universities have opportunities to engage in advanced research and education development.
- Jointly disseminate outstanding research outcomes and best practices that are the result of HeKKSaGOn activities related to globally challenging issues, especially those in the fields of health, safety and resilience, to academic communities and civil societies.
- Make every effort to resume in-person academic exchange among its members at the earliest date possible, and share the latest information on COVID-19 prevention measures at the member universities with the assistance of the HeKKSaGOn liaison offices in Kyoto and Heidelberg.

September 10, 2021