COLLABORATING WITH JAPAN

POLICY CONTEXT, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES

Contact:
Nicholas Mithen, Policy Officer - Asia
nicholas.mithen@international.ac.uk

Executive summary:
Since 2012, Japan’s government has established a series of policies designed to internationalise and revitalise its higher education sector, which represent an opportunity for UK universities to scale up existing engagement with Japanese universities. This information note provides an analysis of the Japanese higher education landscape; maps the current state of collaboration and available funding sources; and presents UUKi’s recent work and priorities in this area.

Key Action:
Expressions of interest are sought from university representatives with an interest in joining a UUKi-led UK-Japan Higher Education Working Group. Members should be committed to championing and strengthening UK-Japan cooperation in higher education. For more information about joining the group, please contact nicholas.mithen@international.ac.uk

Audience:
Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Directors International and International Office staff responsible for Japan.
**INTRODUCTION**

Japan is one of the most advanced research economies in the world and has a large and high quality higher education system. Since becoming prime minister in 2012, Shinzo Abe has extended higher education policy designed to revitalise and reform the university sector in Japan. These reforms, a response to Japan’s economic and demographic context, have internationalisation at their heart.

As UK universities seek high-quality, sustainable and mutually beneficial international partnerships combining research collaboration and student and staff mobility, Japanese universities have the potential to emerge as partners of choice. While structural, cultural and linguistic obstacles to partnership exist, Japanese government policy is a significant incentive for UK universities to consider collaborating with Japan.

The first section of this information note is an analysis of recent Japanese higher education policy developments and maps out the incentives for UK universities to prioritize engagement with Japan. The second section presents an overview of current UK-Japan collaboration and available sources of funding. A concluding section reviews UUKi’s work in 2018 to establish greater collaboration and outlines proposed next steps in supporting UK universities’ work in Japan in the years to come.
HIGHER EDUCATION IN JAPAN:
CONTEXT AND REFORMS

Japan’s Higher Education Sector in Context

Japan has a large higher education sector serving a highly educated work force and a dynamic research economy. The modern higher education landscape in Japan was established during the Meiji era in the late 19th Century, with public, and some private, universities modelled on the Prussian institutional model. Following the Second World War the Japanese higher education sector grew rapidly, alongside Japan’s ‘economic miracle’ and significant population growth. The relaxing of regulation for establishing universities in the 1980s encouraged the diversification of higher education provision, and the growth of private universities to cater for a growing and diversifying population and economy.

The structure of the Japanese higher education sector in the early 21st century reflects this history. National universities, which include many of Japan’s most prestigious institutions, including the ‘Imperial Universities’, are publicly funded institutions and have typically been centrally governed by the Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The state is also the primary funder of regional higher education institutions, known as public universities. Alongside the public sector, around 80% of Japanese universities are private, and most Japanese students study in the private sector. Whereas national and public universities receive most of their income from government grants, private universities have a much greater financial reliance upon student fees.

Since the 1990s, economic stagnation and demographic decline have represented the greatest threat to Japan’s higher education sector. Japan’s 18-year old population was 1.19 million in 2016, significantly lower than the first and second peaks in Japan’s demographic trajectory in the latter 20th Century, of 2.36 million in 1968, and 2.05 million in 1992.1 While rising enrolment figures counteracted this shortfall through the 1990s and early 2000s, numbers have flattened out since 2012, seeing negligible increase only among female students.2 With both trends expected to continue, oversupply is likely to be an existential problem for Japan’s higher education sector through the 21st Century.3

Japan is a global research and innovation powerhouse, with strengths in medical sciences, biology, physics and space sciences, chemistry and materials science, engineering, computing and artificial intelligence. While the majority of Japan’s total investment in research and development comes from industry and private sources, universities are important sites for science, knowledge production and innovation. MEXT funds research and innovation directly, while the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) is the major funding agency. Other major funding agencies include the Japanese Science and Technology

Note
1. http://nbakki.hatenablog.com/entry/Changes_in_the_18-year-old_Population_in_Japan

In general, Japan’s higher education sector is of high quality and is well-governed by international standards, although it has seen a decline in high-quality research output in recent years. In the Times Higher Education Supplement’s 2019 global rankings, 103 Japanese universities were listed among the world’s top 1250, overtaking the UK for the first time and moving into second place overall, behind the United States. There are only two Japanese universities, however, in the top 250 (Tokyo and Kyoto). Japanese universities have retained relatively hierarchical structures of authority and a relatively inwards-looking institutional culture, as compared to Anglophone norms.

Recent Higher Education Policy Reform in Japan

The election of Shinzo Abe as prime minister of Japan in 2012 signalled a step-change in domestic policy. The long-term sustainability of ‘Abenomics’ – a combination of liberalisation, institutional reform and cautious fiscal stimulus – as a pathway for economic prosperity is unclear. Nonetheless, Abe and his ministers have articulated a coherent vision of reform, which has manifested in his government’s higher education policy.

Policy reforms to higher education since 2012 can be grouped into four interlinked themes: internationalisation, institutional autonomy, competitiveness and strategic research funding.

Internationalisation has been the most persistent objective of Abe’s government’s reform to higher education. On this reading, Japan’s research and economic culture is limited by its conservative and inward-looking culture. Encouraging international collaboration and two-way mobility within higher education is seen as key to a broader cultural and economic revitalization.

The flagship project for university internationalisation is the ‘Top Global University Project’, running from 2014 to 2023. This project – a consolidation of previous policy frameworks – has incentivized an elite group of 27 Japanese universities to intensify their internationalisation activities and elevate their positions in world rankings. Targets have been set for incoming and outgoing student mobility, as well as international faculty in departments. Since 2013 several focused policy measures (for example; Tobitate! [Leap for Tomorrow Programme]; Reinventing Japan Project; Study in Japan Global Network Project) have consolidated these ambitions. Japan has also sought to relax its visa regulations to encourage international students to remain in Japan after graduation.

Increasing institutional autonomy among Japan’s elite national universities has been identified as a strategic priority by Abe’s government. This builds upon previous attempts to encourage greater structural and fiscal independence and the establishment of a culture of management efficiency within the sector. In 2004 Japan’s national universities were reorganized as corporations, a measure intended as partial privatization of the state-governed sector. In practice, MEXT has maintained a role in the governance and administration of public universities, and a culture of hierarchy pervades the sector.

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The corporatizing objectives of the 2004 reform were restated in 2010 and were integrated into the Top Global University Project, which promoted a more dynamic culture of management. Moves towards autonomy were accelerated once more in 2017 through the introduction of the Designated National Universities project, identifying a small number
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of national universities which would receive significantly higher central funding coupled with greater financial autonomy. The project was further expanded in 2018 to incorporate a total of five elite universities.

Abe’s government sees institutional autonomy as central to the long-term prosperity, research innovation and international competitiveness of Japan’s higher education sector. Questions remain, however, over the prospective success of a top-down enforced move to autonomy. Furthermore, academics and institutional leaders have resisted reforms which they see as disrupting traditional models of governance, and as a cover for funding cuts.

Cohering with the shifts towards internationalisation and autonomy is an ambition to inject greater competitiveness into Japan’s higher education landscape. On the one hand this is envisaged as enhancing the domestic competitiveness of Japanese universities, by tying central funding to structural reform, internationalisation objectives and research productivity. This has replaced a system largely based on block-funding granted to institutions, to be distributed internally. Since reforms in 2017, more research is funded through open competition, designed to encourage creativity and innovation, and to counter excessive specialization.

On the other hand, policy reforms are designed to increase Japan’s competitiveness on the global stage. Greater attention has been paid to the status of Japan’s universities on global higher education rankings. A shift towards English-language teaching and the relaxing of visa regulations for students and researchers are designed to enhance top Japanese universities’ capacity to attract high quality students and researchers from abroad.

A final key feature of the reform of higher education in Japan, coherent with the promotion of internationalisation and competitiveness but in tension with the furthering of autonomy, is the move towards strategic research funding. Since coming to power in 2012, Abe and his cabinet have sought to refashion higher education as a tool for stimulating economic growth and responding to societal challenges.

In the Fifth Science and Technology Basic Plan, established in 2016, the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation laid out the objectives for Japanese research to support the realization of ‘Society 5.0’, and for Japan to become “the world’s most innovation-friendly country”. Incorporating the promotion of competitiveness, internationalisation and institutional reform, Japan’s national research strategies have sought to direct public funding towards applied research in service of societal problems such as sustainable energy or ageing. As well as ‘Society 5.0’, the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals have also been used as parameters for funnelling public research grants in Japan.

Abe’s cabinet has also aimed to strengthen the relationship between academia and industry, to further promote applied research and economic growth. Although the Japanese private sector invests huge amounts in research and development, the amount of collaboration between industry and universities has typically been low. By increasing the amount of ‘earmarked’ public research funding, MEXT and Abe’s government have received criticism from academics for cutting funding for the social sciences and humanities, as well as neglecting ‘blue skies’ research.

Note
10 https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/201806/_00036.htm
11 https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-02896-0
12 https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/japan-shakes-up-research-funding-system
**Summary: Persistent challenges**

By incentivising internationalisation, institutional autonomy, competitiveness and more strategic approaches to research funding in their universities, the Japanese government has articulated a coherent policy framework aimed at reforming higher education in Japan. Their approach has been ambitious, seeking to liberalise the structure and culture of Japanese higher education, whilst directing the sector towards resolving economic, demographic and cultural challenges specific to Japan.

Despite ambitious policies and significant achievements, in, for instance, attracting international students, Japan’s demographic context makes the long-term outlook of its higher education sector challenging. The success of wholesale university reform in Japan rests upon successfully making the transition from top-down directives to bottom-up initiatives.
UK-JAPAN COLLABORATION: OPPORTUNITIES, OBSTACLES

The present state of UK-Japan collaboration

Japan and the UK share a strong research relationship. This relationship has been historically structured through direct research collaboration, inter-institutional partnerships, and, more rarely, consortia of institutions. The UK ranks fourth among Japan’s international partners for research collaboration (after the US, China and Germany) with almost 19,000 co-authored papers published in the period 2013-2017. Of these papers, the most significant research areas were Physics and Astronomy (21.8%), Medicine (19.5%), Biochemistry and Genetics (16%) and Engineering (15.8%). Conversely, Japan ranks only 13th among the UK’s international partners when ordered by the number of joint-citations. Given the typically high quality of UK-Japanese research collaboration, and the complementary nature of their research expertise, this indicates that there is scope for more collaboration.

Research collaboration

Bilateral partnerships between UK and Japanese institutions, typically at the level of departments, individuals or groups of researchers, are the main form of research collaboration. RENKEI (the Japan UK Research and Education Network for Knowledge Economy Initiatives) is an example of a multi-institutional collaboration between six research-intensive UK universities and six elite Japanese universities, supported by the British Council.

At the system-level, various bodies fund and support collaborative research partnerships. In 2018, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and UK Research and Innovation released the first call for a major joint funding scheme for research in Life Sciences and Environmental Sciences16, and Social Sciences and the Humanities.17 These are the first calls resulting from direct collaboration between UKRI and JSPS, announced in 2017.18 Japanese researchers have been represented through UK funding bodies: in 2018, 14 Japanese researchers were awarded Rutherford Fellowships to pursue programmes of research at UK universities (three at University of Hull, five at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, six at University of Sussex).

Mobility

Student mobility between the UK and Japan is supported through institutional partnerships and funding bodies. According to HESA data, in 2016-17 a total of 645 UK undergraduate students and 75 UK postgraduate students experienced a period of mobility in Japan. In the same year, there were 1,485 Japanese undergraduate students studying at UK universities and 1,435 postgraduates. The number of Japanese students on UK programmes has been gradually declining since 2007/08, when there were 2,405 undergraduate and 2,060 postgraduate students. The most popular subjects for Japanese students in the UK are Social Studies, Business, Creative Arts and Design and Language.

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15 Figures from scival
16 https://www.ukri.org/research/international/international-funding-opportunities/ukri-jsp-2017-call/
17 https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-ahrc-uk-japan-ssh-connections-grants/
While the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students experiencing mobility between the UK and Japan is currently low, voices on both sides have stated ambitions to raise participation in student exchange. On the Japanese side, MEXT has identified significantly increasing the amount of incoming and outgoing student mobility as a strategic priority, which it has supported through various funding schemes.\(^{19}\) On the UK side, Universities UK International has led a campaign to encourage UK universities to support their students to study abroad. In this context, Japan has emerged as the most popular non-European and non-Anglophone destination for UK students considering spending a period of time abroad.\(^{20}\)

Growing interest in Japan among UK students, sustained interest in immersive English language training among Japanese students, and a common recognition of how student mobility can support research collaboration means the prospects for increasing existing levels of student mobility between the UK and Japan are good. This can be enabled through better promotion of existing frameworks funding student exchange, a clearer mutual understanding of the obstacles to mobility, the strengthening of inter-institutional partnerships, and a focus on short-to-medium term mobility.

**Key opportunities and funding sources**

A range of public- and private-funded initiatives support scholarly collaboration and student exchange between the UK and Japan. The below list includes annual as well as occasional calls which have supported mobility and collaboration between UK and Japanese research and student communities:

**UK/Japan government funding schemes**

**JSPS:** JSPS is the most important agency funding research in Japan and offers a range of scholarships for short- and long-term academic mobility to international applicants. These including a summer programme (two months), pre/postdoctoral fellowships (6-12 months), postdoctoral fellowships (12-24 months) and both short-term (14-60 days) and long-term (2-10 months) research fellowships. A special programme supports past JSPS fellows to revisit and consolidate their work in Japan. JSPS also supports joint research projects and seminars across the academic disciplines and facilitates researcher exchanges. [https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/programs/index.html](https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/programs/index.html)

**MEXT Japanese Government Scholarships:** The Japanese government awards six kinds of government scholarship, or Monbukagakusho, aimed at research students, teacher training students, undergraduates, Japanese studies students, vocational students and special training colleges respectively. The awards support international students to study at Japanese universities. [https://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/mext_postgrad.html](https://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/mext_postgrad.html)

**Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO):** JASSO’s International Student Scholarship for Short-term Study in Japan provides scholarships for foreign students who are accepted by Japanese universities on the basis of student exchange agreements, etc. on a short-term basis between eight days and one year.\(^{21}\) [https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/short_term.html](https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/short_term.html)

**UKRI-JSPS Joint Calls:** Since 2018, UKRI and JSPS have coordinated joint calls in specific disciplines affiliated with UK research councils. The first two joint calls, totalling around £8.5 million, focussed on Life Sciences and Environmental Sciences and Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities respectively.\(^{22}\) Further funding calls jointly administered by [https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/_icsFiles/afidfile/2018/06/26/scholarships_2018_e.pdf](https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/_icsFiles/afidfile/2018/06/26/scholarships_2018_e.pdf)

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**Note**

20 Source: British Council Broadening Horizons report, 2017
21 JASSO has produced an exhaustive information document on international scholarships for students to study in Japan: [https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/__icsFiles/afidfile/2018/06/26/scholarships_2018_e.pdf](https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/study_j/scholarships/__icsFiles/afidfile/2018/06/26/scholarships_2018_e.pdf)
22 https://www.ukri.org/research/international/international-funding-opportunities/ukri-jspa-joint-call/
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JSPS and UK indicate the most significant funding of pure research.

**Riken:** Riken, the Japanese national research institute for the sciences, offers a range of research fellowships, mainly aimed at early career researchers. Some of these are for Japanese or non-Japanese researchers, while others targeted specifically at foreign researchers. [http://www.riken.jp/en/careers/](http://www.riken.jp/en/careers/)

**Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme UK:** The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) seeks to help enhance internationalization in Japan, by promoting mutual understanding between Japan and other nations. JET has so far given more than 10,000 young people in the UK the opportunity to learn more about Japan, through their experience as Assistant Language Teacher, Coordinator for International Relations, or Sports Exchange Advisor. [https://www.jet-uk.org/](https://www.jet-uk.org/)

**International Foundations**

**Canon Foundation in Europe:** The Canon Foundation in Europe funds for up to 15 researchers from Japan and Europe, including the UK, to spend between 3 and 12 months in their respective countries, affiliated with a host university, undertaking research across all disciplines. [https://www.canonfoundation.org/](https://www.canonfoundation.org/)

**Suntory Foundation:** The Suntory Foundation runs various grant schemes, mainly in the humanities and social sciences, and some focused at early career researchers. While available to international researchers, applications must be submitted in Japanese. [https://www.suntory.com/sfnd/research/](https://www.suntory.com/sfnd/research/)

**Mazak Foundation:** The Mazak Foundation awards grants to institutions and individuals in the disciplines of engineering, information-network technologies and robotics. While grants typically are awarded to Japanese researchers, the Foundation also supports international conferences. [http://www.mazak-f.or.jp/eng/02.html](http://www.mazak-f.or.jp/eng/02.html)

**Matsumae International Foundation:** The Matsumae International Foundation awards annual fellowships to non-Japanese researchers with a doctorate to be hosted by a Japanese university or research centre for between three and six months. [http://www.mif-japan.org/fellowship/announcement/?hl=en](http://www.mif-japan.org/fellowship/announcement/?hl=en)

**Toshiba International Foundation:** The Toshiba Foundation funds research directly, as well as supports symposia, seminars and lectures which promote international understanding of Japan. The application deadline for grants is the end of November every year. [https://www.toshibafoundation.com/past_grants.html](https://www.toshibafoundation.com/past_grants.html)

**Specialist research funding schemes**

**Human Frontier Science Program:** The Human Frontier Science Program is an international program of research support in the biological sciences. Both the UK and Japan and members, and the postdoctoral and research awards for research can support partnership between UK and Japanese research communities: [http://www.hfsp.org/funding](http://www.hfsp.org/funding)

**JSPS-Royal Society Postdoctoral Fellowship:** JSPS funds an annual postdoctoral fellowship programme delivered through the Royal Society. The fellowship supports early career researchers working in the natural sciences. [https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/jsps-postdoctoral/](https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/jsps-postdoctoral/)

**Japanese Respiratory Society:** The Japanese Respiratory Society annually awards the Harasawa Fellowship to international early career researchers working on respiratory medicine to spend a period of time researching and training in Japan. [https://www.jrs.or.jp/modules/english/index.php?content_id=2](https://www.jrs.or.jp/modules/english/index.php?content_id=2)

**Novartis Foundation (Japan) for the Promotion of Science:** The Novartis Foundation in Japan funds research in the life sciences and related areas through awarding around 35 grants, to which international applicants are eligible to apply. The Foundation also awards five grants for international conferences annually.
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**Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council:** In 2018 the BBSRC offered small grants to support partnership links between UK and Japanese universities, and to support the exchange of scientists, especially those in an early stage of their career.  
https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/japan/

**UK-Japan Cultural Organisations**

**British Association for Japanese Studies:** BAJS offers small grants to support annual studentships, conference and seminar attendance and prizes for students.  
https://www.bajs.org.uk/funding-and-prizes/

**Japan Society of the UK:** The Japan Society of the UK awards small grants for projects which raise awareness and understanding of Japan within the UK.  
https://www.japansociety.org.uk/grants/

**Japan Foundation in London:** The Japan Foundation in London supports cultural activities, language-learning and research in the fields of Japanese studies, the humanities and social sciences, through a range of grants and funding for conference organisation.  
https://www.jpf.org.uk/funding.php

**Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation:** The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation is a UK Charity, founded in 1988, aimed at supporting closer links between Britain and Japan. As well as sustaining a series of cultural activities, the Foundation offers scholarship and small grants for student mobility and academic research.  
http://dajf.org.uk/

**Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation:** The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, in collaboration with the Nippon Foundation, supports UK-Japan relations through grants and awards, including a postgraduate studentship programme including up to 30 postgraduate studentships. The Foundation also funds travel grants for PhD students, cultural tours for students, and a dedicated fund, the Butterfield Awards, for high-level UK-Japan collaboration in medicine and health.  
http://www.gbsf.org.uk/grants/overview/

### Challenges to mobility and collaboration between the UK and Japan

Well established political, economic and civil-society links between the UK and Japan translate into a wide array of potential sources of funding for research collaboration and academic mobility. However, these opportunities are not always taken up, indicating persistent cultural and structural challenges for collaboration.

Both the UK and Japan struggle to persuade their students of the value of studying abroad. In Japan, this is often blamed upon an ‘inward-looking’ culture among young Japanese. Very high levels of graduate employment, partly a result of lengthy application processes, are also seen as disincentivising internationalisation of the student body. Similarly, the UK has very low rates of student engagement in international mobility, relative to comparative Western countries. This has been accredited to anxieties about language, fear of isolation, lack of knowledge of available opportunities, as well as about disrupting domestic academic schedules, as well as those relating to student accommodation.

On both sides, the costs of studying abroad for the student have been cited as key obstacles.

In Japan the government has taken an active role in encouraging Japanese students to study abroad during their degree; in the UK, this has been the work of higher education advocacy groups. In both contexts, it falls upon universities to work to better communicate the value of international mobility to their students, as well as to facilitate two-way mobility as best as possible.

Two structural issues frequently seen as restricting levels of student mobility between the UK and

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**Note**

23 For critical assessment of this claim, see:  

Japan are the different academic calendars of the two countries and the problems of credit transferability. The Japanese academic calendar runs from April to March; the UK academic calendar begins in September. The UK and Japan also operate different regimes of academic credit. Potential solutions to these problems include focusing on short-term mobility at convenient times of year (August-September), establishing a credit equivalence mechanism, or waiving credit requirements altogether.

The levels of research collaboration between the UK and Japan are limited by the relative lack of familiarity between the two higher education systems. Low levels of student exchange contribute to this context; language also remains an essential challenge. There are very low levels of Japanese knowledge among UK students and researchers, and Japanese researchers have relatively low levels of English proficiency by global standards.

Japan’s government has promoted the use of English in Japanese universities, both to attract international students to Japan, and to strengthen Japanese students’ own English ability. The number of Japanese universities offering classes, and in some instances full course, in English has increased. Despite these attempts, and expanding English teaching at school, levels of English-language proficiency among Japanese students continue to remain low. Similarly, an extremely small proportion of UK students not enrolled on Japanese studies programmes have any level of Japanese proficiency.

Summary
The UK and Japan both have world-class research economies and higher education systems and share a strong research relationship. Collaboration in research is supported by a wide range of public and private funding bodies, while there is also significant support for student and academic mobility programmes. The overall level of mobility between the UK and Japan, however, remains low, and this limits the further strengthening of research collaboration as well as mutual understanding between the countries.

Note
LOOKING AHEAD

UK-Japan relations in 2019

While 2018 saw relatively little high-level diplomatic interaction between the UK and Japan, 2017 saw significant meetings between Theresa May and Shinzo Abe in London and Tokyo. These led to the announcement of a Lead Agency Agreement on research collaboration, part of a Joint Declaration on Prosperity Cooperation.\(^{26}\) The first fruits of this agreement, integrated into UKRI’s Fund for International Cooperation, were jointly administered funding calls delivered in the second half of 2018.

As the UK aims to establish a less Euro-centric geopolitical outlook, liberal democracies committed to the rule of law with highly developed research economies, such as Japan, are natural strategic partners. It is in both the UK’s and Japan’s long-term interests to maintain and strengthen diplomatic relations with one another. Research collaboration and student and staff mobility have the potential to be stimulated through the maintenance of high-level political cooperation. This equation was evidenced during Shinzo Abe’s visit to the UK in January 2019, during which £30 million of investment in collaborative research was announced in the context of a “new alliance to shape the 21\(^{st}\) Century”\(^ {27}\).

Japan has been critical of the UK’s approach to exiting the European Union;\(^ {28}\) relative stability and coherence in Japanese domestic politics contrast with instability and uncertainty in the UK. Nonetheless, the longer-term outlook for the two countries’ cooperation is positive.

UUKi work in Japan in 2018

The prospects for UK-Japan relations are promising, and UUKi has made supporting UK universities to work with Japanese partners a priority. UUKi signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016 with JANU, the Japan Association of National Universities. JANU represents the interests of Japan’s national universities, and has had, since 2013, an overarching international engagement strategy.\(^ {29}\)

In the context of UUKi and JANU’s common goals, the MoU identified four key areas for collaboration:

- Sharing of information relating to domestic developments in higher education policy that could impact the ability of universities in both countries to collaborate with one another.
- Sharing of information on existing exchange programmes provided by universities in both countries and exploring a new scheme to enhance exchange of academic staff and students for the purposes of encouraging new collaborations in both countries.
- Exploring a scheme of exchange and training of administrative staff members of both Parties and their member universities to strengthen the basis for the above.
- Exploring government funding in both countries that will allow for universities in Japan and the UK to create new institutional partnerships.

Between the 29\(^{th}\) and 31\(^{st}\) October UUKi led a delegation of nine UK universities to Tokyo to meet with key stakeholders, to participate in a workshop and to visit two of Japan’s elite universities, Tokyo University and Keio University.\(^ {30}\) The workshop

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**Note**


30 Brighton, Bristol, Glasgow, Hull, Keele, Leicester, London School of Tropical Medicine, Reading, Worcester.
included sessions on university governance, challenges in faculty and staff mobility, and the prospects of increasing the amount of student mobility between the UK and Japan.

Discussions focused specifically on student exchange continued in London in November, as UUKi co-hosted a large delegation of Japanese universities, led by Keio University and coordinated by the British Council in Japan. At a workshop, speakers from the British Council, UUKi, Keele University and York St John University presented the current state of student mobility between the UK and Japan and looked at successful case-studies of inter-institutional partnerships.

This series of events in 2018 reinforced the rationale for furthering collaboration between the UK and Japan. Most significantly, the UK-Japan dialogues indicated the need for universities to better exploit and promote existing opportunities for collaborative activity, and to communicate the merit of these opportunities more effectively to students and researchers.

**Objectives for 2019**

To build on the momentum achieved over the course of 2018, a series of projects will be pursued by UUKi in 2019:

**UK-Japan Higher Education Working Group:** UUKi is assembling a working group of university leaders, academics, representatives from higher education policy, government, civil-society and private-sector stakeholders committed to championing UK-Japan collaboration. This will provide a sustainable framework for intensifying higher education relations between the two countries. The process of establishing this working group is underway; please contact nicholas.mithen@international.ac.uk for further information.

**UK-Japan Mobility and Collaboration Guide:** Building on this information note, UUKi will work with Japanese partners to produce a two-way mobility and collaboration guide designed to be of operational value for institutions. This will be published in Japanese and English and include case-studies from Japanese and UK institutions, highlighting best-practice and common challenges encountered in facilitating mobility and collaboration.

**JANU delegation to UK, June 2019:** Following the UUKi-led delegation to Tokyo in October 2018, a return visit of Japanese universities, led by JANU, will be hosted by UUKi in June 2019. The purpose of the delegation will be to assess progress made towards the goals established in the 2016 MoU and during the 2018 delegations. The Japanese delegates will also take part in a major colloquium, led by UUKi, on higher education in the UK and Japan.

**Short-term Mobility Programme:** While there are several existing UK-Japan mobility schemes, and universities operate their own exchange programmes, participation is sometimes restricted by lack of awareness and differences between the university systems in the UK and Japan. In this context, the development of an ‘umbrella’ body housing diverse exchange and mobility programmes, focussing on short-term mobility, could help to scale up the number of students moving in both directions by promoting opportunities, consolidating existing funding sources and helping to identify where there are gaps. This would then act as a platform to attract further funding in the future.

*Note*

https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/Pages/uuksi-visits-japan.aspx