

Japan Forum for Internationalization of Universities
“Building a Network of ‘Strategic Partnerships’ to Strengthen International Competitiveness among Japanese Universities” Project
Results of the Questionnaire (Summary)

Outline of the Questionnaire

1-1. Purpose

- Based on the results of the questionnaire, 1) summarize the status of activities related to strategic partnerships in Japan, and 2) identify issues faced by universities that are interested in strategic partnerships but have not yet started such initiatives or are currently considering starting them, as well as gather information on what kind of information those universities would like to have from universities that have already implemented strategic partnerships.
- Use its result as a basis for sharing information on strategic partnerships with JFIU member universities, since there were no prior general data on the state of implementation of strategic partnerships at Japanese universities (as of 2021).

1-2. Method, etc.

Period: November 2 - 18, 2021

Method: Google Form or Excel

Targets: Universities selected (as of November 1, 2021) for the Top Global University Project (hereafter referred to as "SGU"), the Inter-University Exchange Project (hereafter referred to as "IUEP"), and other universities and junior colleges that are members of the Japan Forum for Internationalization of Universities (hereinafter referred to as "JFIU"), a total of 110 institutions.

Questionnaire results

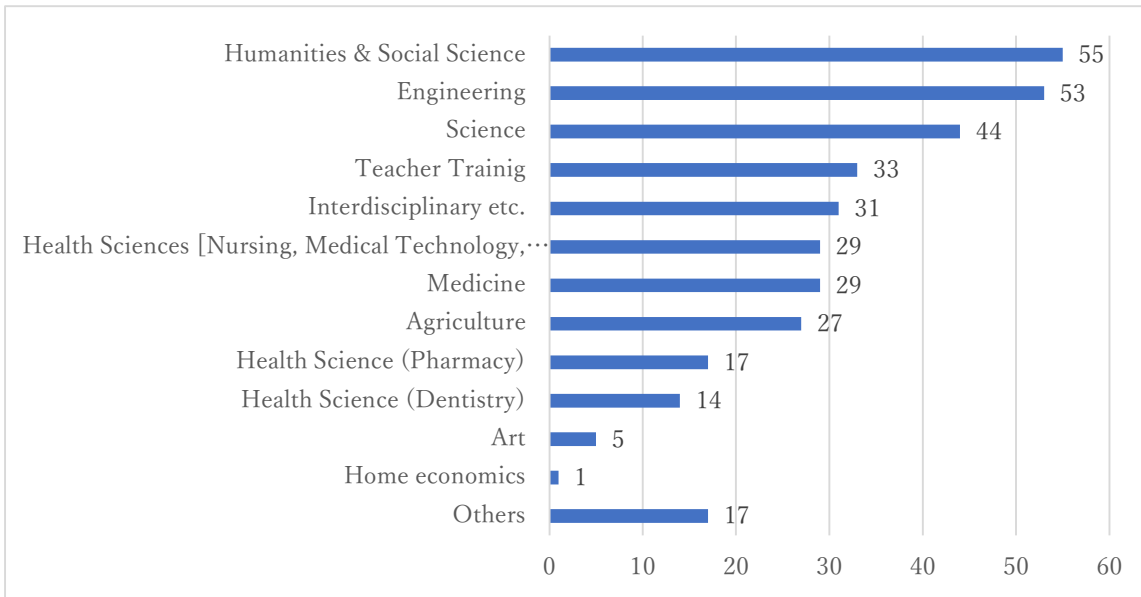
2-1. Summary of Responses

i) Number of responses: 68 (Response rate: 61.8%)

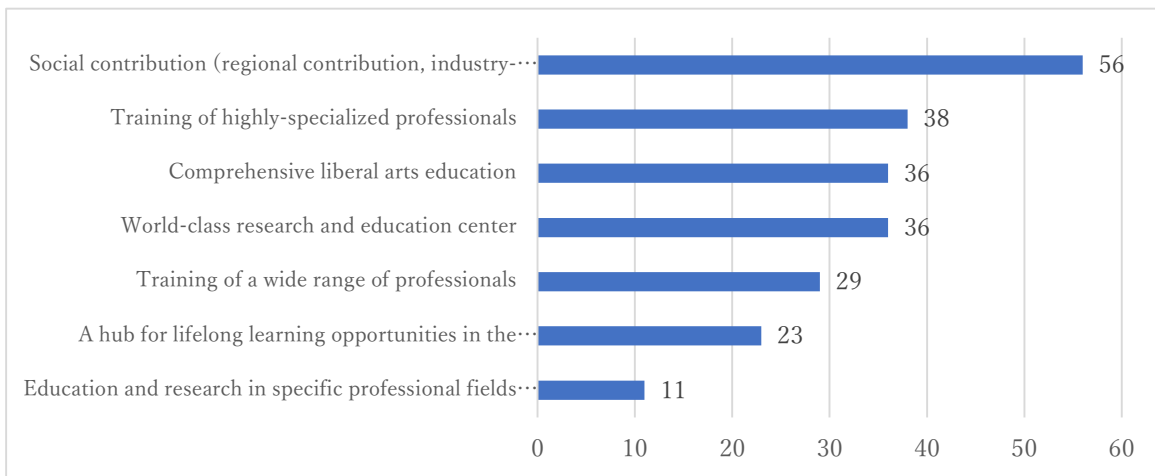
ii) Breakdown of Responses

- a. National universities: 40 (58.8%), private universities: 27 (39.7%), public universities: 1 (1.4%), junior colleges: 0
- b. Universities selected for SGU: 30/36 (83.3%), universities selected for IUEP: 39/48 (81.2%)

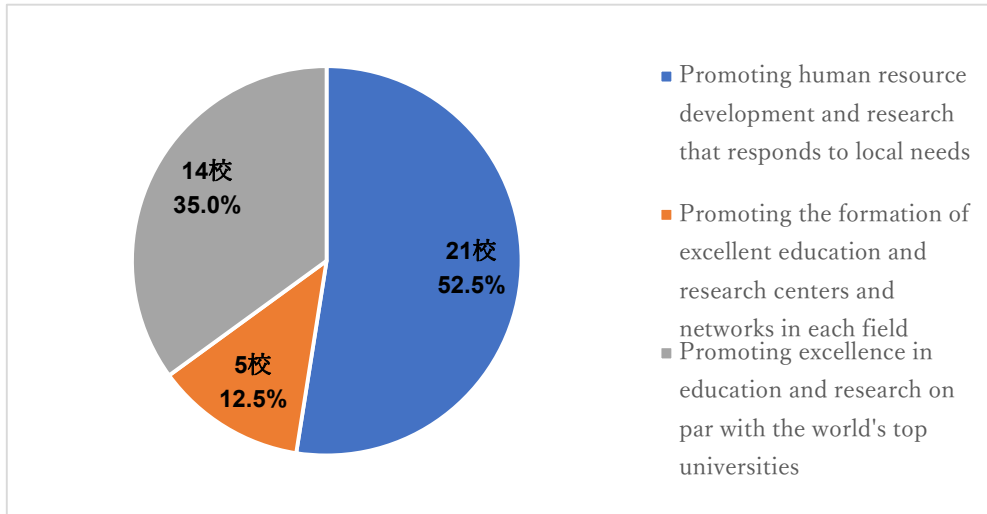
c. Research/area of study at your university (multiple answers allowed)



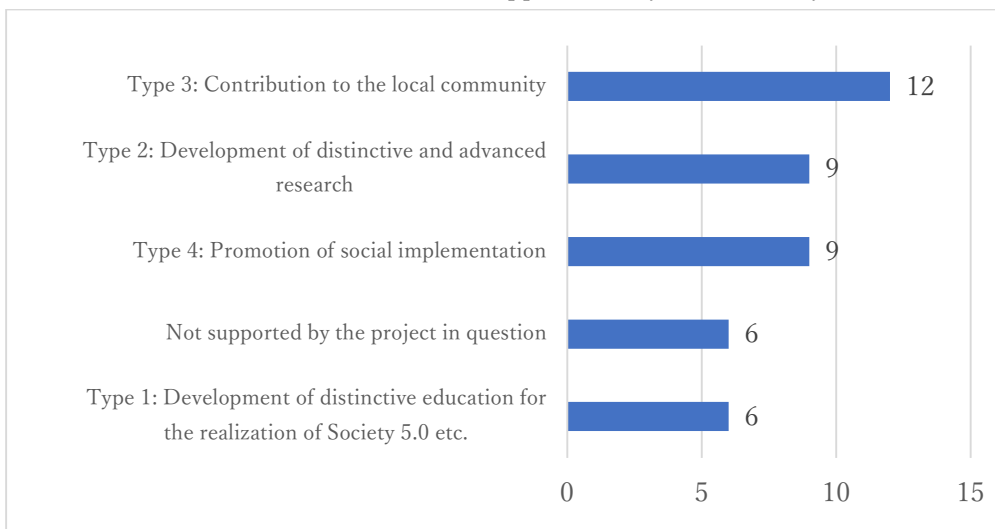
d. Which of the following is closest to your own university's function? (multiple answers allowed)



e. (Target: National Universities) Of the three frameworks proposed by the government for the third mid-term goal period, which of the following did your university select?



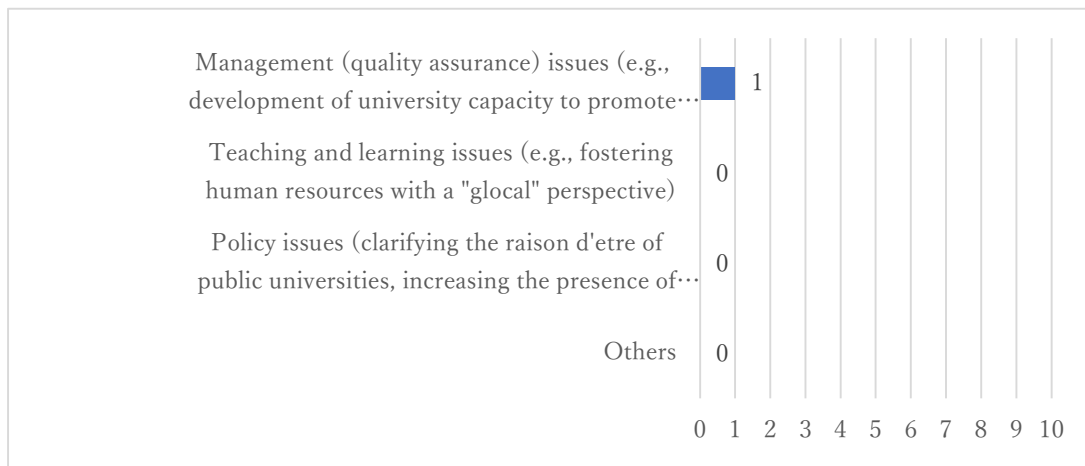
f. (Target: Private Universities) Which of the following types of "Comprehensive Support Program for Reform of Private Universities" is applicable to your university?



g. (Target: Public universities) What is the entity that established your university?

Prefectural university: 1 (100%)

h. (Target: Public universities) What are the current concerns at your university? (multiple answers allowed)



i. Does your university have policies, rules, etc. for international strategy?

	Number of universities	Ratio
Yes	48	70.6%
No	20	29.4%
Total	68	100.0%

j. Has your university established a working group, committee, or other organizational body to study international strategy?

	Number of universities	Ratio
Yes	49	72.1%
No	19	27.9%
Total	68	100.0%

2-2. About strategic partnerships

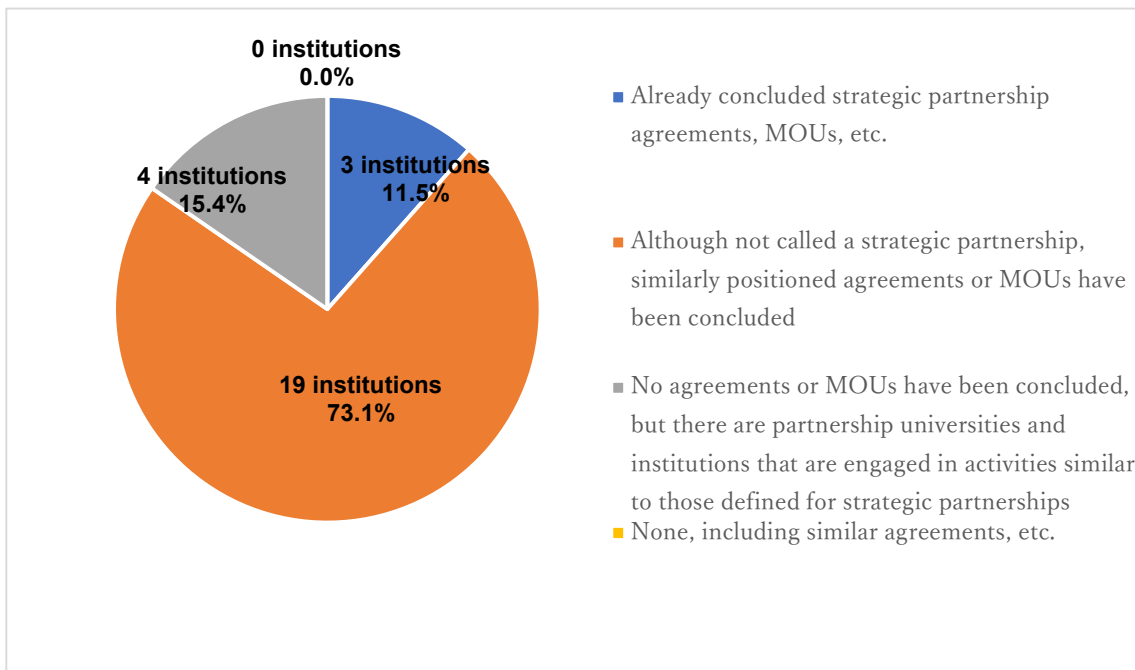
i) Exchanges based on strategic partnerships:

a. Are there exchanges based on strategic partnerships (or equivalent) at your university?

	Number of universities	Ratio
Yes	26	38.2%
No	42	61.8%
Total	68	100.0%

b. (If there are exchanges based on strategic partnerships (or equivalent))

Has your university concluded a strategic partnership agreement, MOU, or similar agreement with an overseas university or research institution to conduct exchanges based on strategic partnerships?



Supplementary information:

- There were eight examples of strategic partnership agreements. (Breakdown: 6 agreements with European universities and 2 agreements with Asian universities)
- In the "similarly positioned agreements", there were 16 cases in which the university had agreements with more than one university or organization. (Agreement partners: Universities, government agencies, organizations, companies, etc.)

c. If you chose "Already concluded strategic partnership agreements. MOUs, etc." or "Although not called a strategic partnership, similarly positioned agreements or MOUs have been concluded" in question (b), please indicate the purpose of the agreement, reason(s) for concluding it(them), and keywords (multiple answers allowed).



"Other" (free description):

- Promoting new international joint research
- Establish a Japanology office (or liaison office) at the partner university to serve as a hub with the local community and neighboring countries.
- Establishment of overseas offices
- Sharing goals among organizations to address common challenges such as the SDGs.

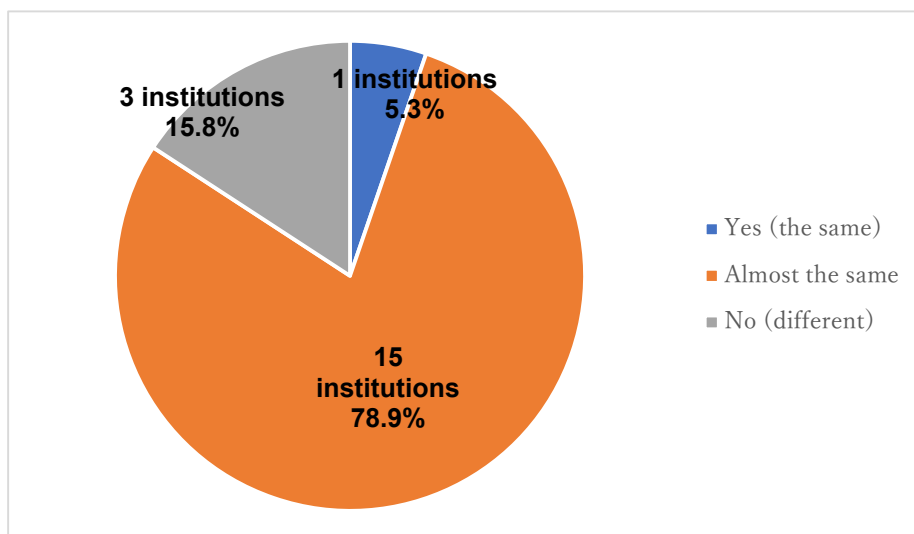
d. If you chose "Already concluded strategic partnership agreements. MOUs, etc." or "Although not called a strategic partnership, similarly positioned agreements or MOUs have been concluded" in question (b), please select the ripple effect within the university as a result of concluding the agreement.



"Other" (free description):

- Promoting new international joint research
- Develop educational programs in collaboration with partner universities
- Establishment of overseas offices
- Information sharing on efforts among other departments, researchers, and support organizations within the university was promoted.

e. The University of Tokyo defines "strategic partnership" as "a comprehensive, mutually beneficial, and special relationship with overseas universities that goes beyond usual academic exchange agreements". Does your university use the term "strategic partnership" in a similar sense?

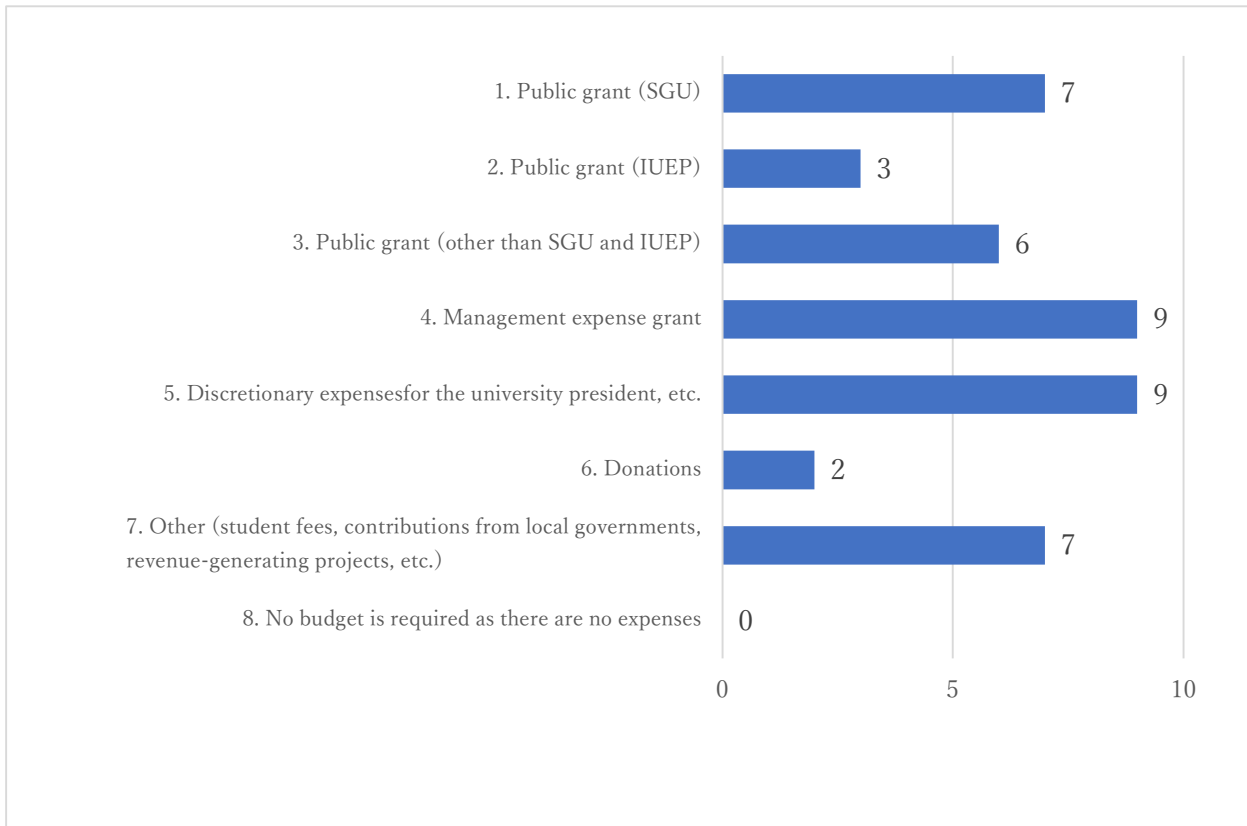


How does your university define "strategic partnership", if any? (Free description; excerpts)

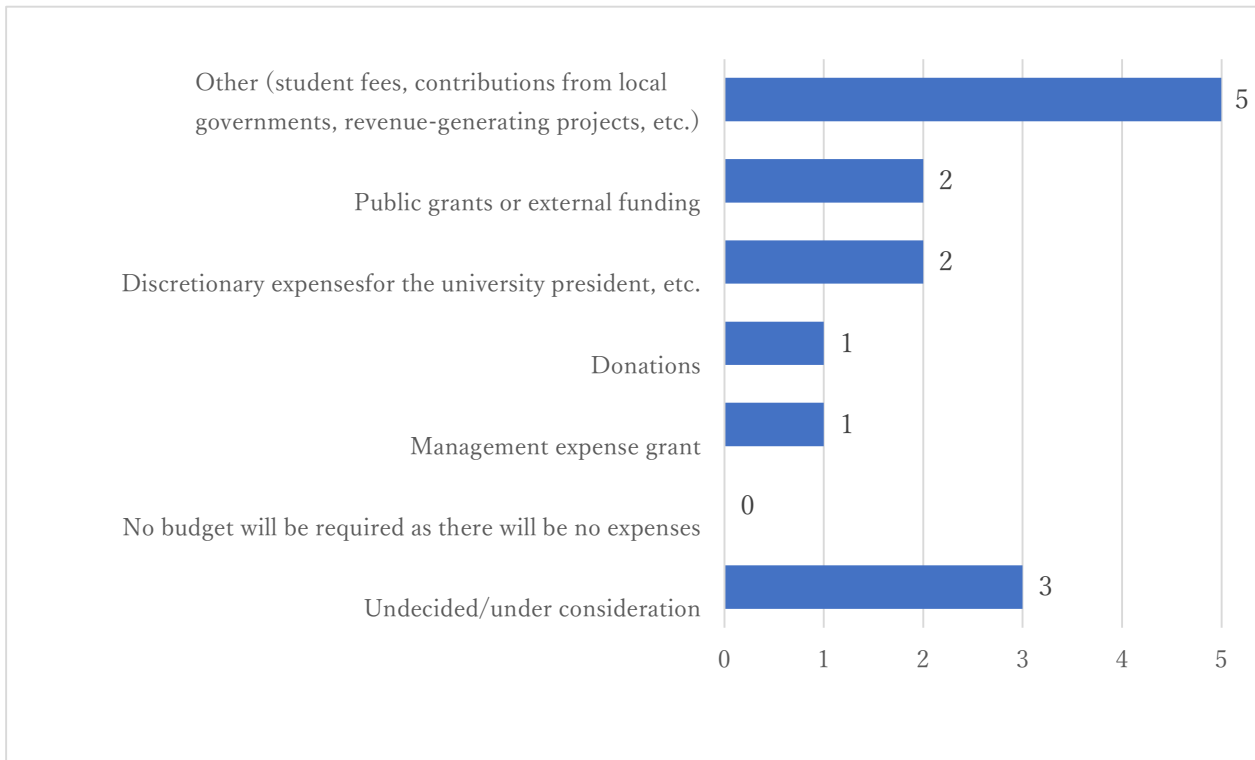
- At present, we see it as a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with universities with which we have concluded double degrees in the field of education.
- Relationships that promote the quality of education, the development and supply of human resources, the creation of innovation, and the enhancement of industrial competitiveness.
- To establish mutually beneficial and closer relationships with a limited number of foreign universities beyond the usual inter-university exchange agreements to enhance mutual performance and increase the universities' international presence.
- Among the world's preeminent universities with which we have signed inter-university MOUs, "Strategic Partnership Universities" are those universities that we will strengthen collaboration with, based on an agreement at the executive board level in order to develop active research exchange in each department across disciplines and promote joint research and human resource mobility in new academic fields.

(ii) Activity budget

a. Budget for the main activities of the current strategic partnership projects:



b. (If the current budget for the activity is the SGU grant) Planned financial resources and budget plan for the strategic partnership project after the SGU grant ends:



“Other” (free description)

- Self-financing resources acquired through SGU projects (including self-financing after the grant ends)
- Continued budget will be allocated to the lead department within the university
- Ordinary expenses, International Cooperation Promotion Fund, SGU Fund
- External funds, payments from students, etc.
- Recurring expenses of the university's headquarters.

(iii) Good Practices

a. Specific initiatives and good practices of the strategic partnership (free text, excerpts)

- Joint degree and double degree programs
- Undergraduate semester exchanges and credit transfers
- Establishment of overseas offices
- Developed seed fund scheme to create opportunities for collaborative research
- Joint laboratories were mutually established. Research groups stay in each other's laboratories for long periods of time, promoting joint research, increasing co-authorship after establishment, and obtaining many external funds, leading to autonomous laboratory management.

b. Are there any good practices or specific examples of research and student exchanges that have been promoted due to the the strategic partnership agreement, despite the restrictions on travel during the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Number of universities	Ratio
Yes	19	79.2%
No	5	20.8%
Total	24	100.0%

Specific examples (free description)

- Education and research collaboration with multiple universities
- Joint remote learning
- Online short-term programs for students
- Joint research guidance program

c. Challenges concerning strategic partnership: What are some of the difficulties or challenges your university faces in working on strategic partnerships? (free text, excerpts)

- Due to restrictions on travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, exchanges to deepen relationships with partner universities at a higher level have stalled.
- There are limits to what can be tackled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Online research and student exchange opportunities can be created during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are not as effective as face-to-face exchanges.
- Limited event times for online exchanges due to time zone differences.
- Support for international development in specific fields such as the university's priority areas
- For two-way exchanges, both sides must make the effort to secure budgets for travel expenses for faculty, staff, and students. In most cases, especially when the counterpart country is a developing country, it is necessary for the Japanese side to provide the support.
- Securing stable financial resources.
- In some cases, when establishing a joint fund, it was difficult to come to terms with the conditions insisted on by the partner university.
- Valuation index.
- Collaboration is limited to connections between individual researchers and has not developed into large-scale interdisciplinary research activities involving both universities, though it was one of the original objectives of the project.

(iv) The impact of COVID-19

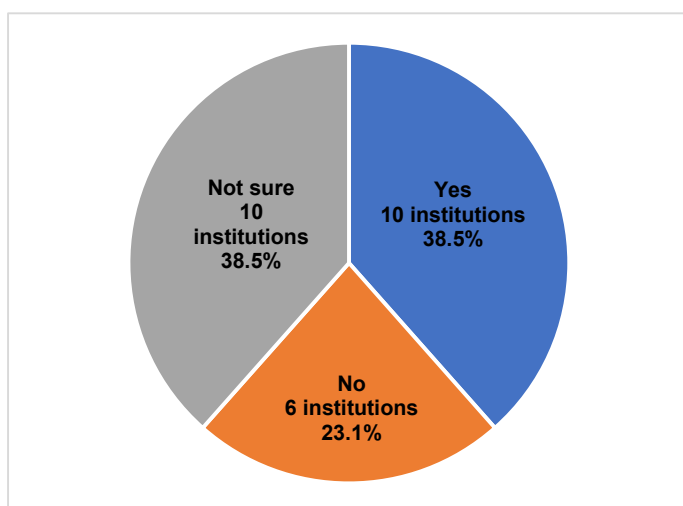
a. Are you reviewing the strategic partnership agreement in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Number of universities	Ratio
Yes	2	7.7%
No	24	92.3%
Total	26	100.0%

- Reasons for not reviewing the agreements (free response, excerpts)
- We hope that the spread of vaccination and other measures will improve the situation and bring it back closer to the situation before the pandemic.
- Because exchanges can take place within the framework of conventional agreements as they did before the pandemic.
- Since the strategic partnership agreement at our university was concluded with the aim of strengthening partnerships from a long-term perspective, rather than focusing on individual projects, we do not believe that changes should be made due to the short-term impact of the pandemic.

- Even though mobility is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic, research exchanges and webinars are being held through regular online meetings, and for the time being, we plan to continue with the activities that can be done based on the current agreement.
- The partner universities are affiliated with the aim of achieving a track record of exchange and further mutual development, etc., and are not influenced by the impact of the pandemic.

b. Do you think new strategic partnership agreements in the future will be affected by COVID-19 pandemic?



- Reasons why you think new strategic partnership agreements in the future will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (free descriptions, excerpts)
 - The lack of face-to-face interaction is significant and should be considered.
 - Face-to-face exchanges are not possible, and at the same time, the budget burden due to quarantine measures in both countries would be too great.
 - It takes time for meetings, etc. until the agreement is signed.
 - Although discussions can be held online, we are keenly aware that face-to-face meetings are still necessary to develop new partners.
- Reasons why you think new strategic partnership agreements in the future will NOT be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (free descriptions, excerpts)
 - Because partnerships do not depend on a means of exchange
 - Even in the case of a new strategic partnership agreement, we believe that the purpose of the agreement is to strengthen the partnership from a long-term perspective, and therefore, it should not be changed due to the short-term impact of the pandemic.
 - Agreements with three universities have been concluded while under the circumstances of the pandemic. From the beginning of our project the strategic partnership was envisioned for 5-6 universities, therefore, we have no plans to aggressively expand the number of agreements.

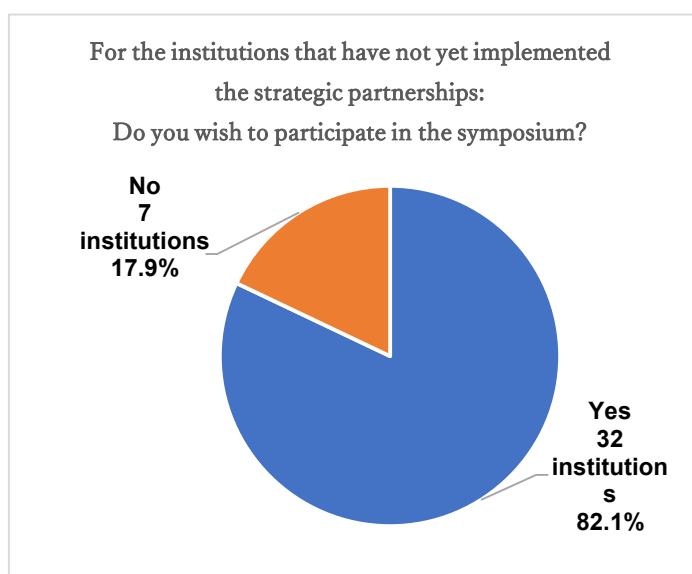
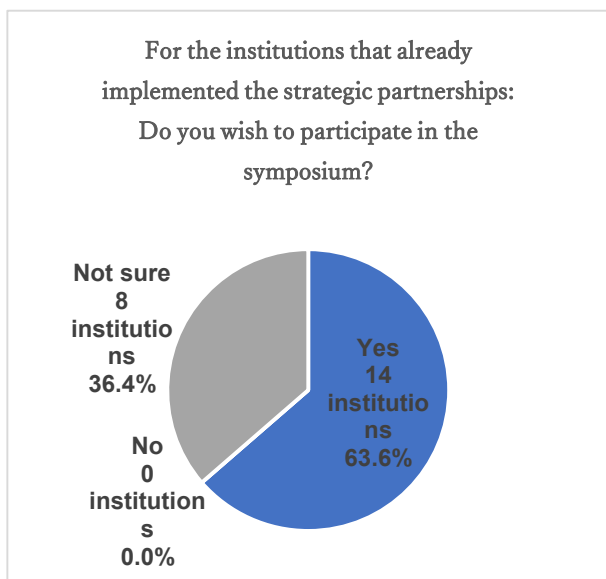
2-3 Provision of information and return of results (meetings and symposiums with participating universities)

i) Activity plan - Do you wish to participate in the member universities meetings of the project?

	Number of universities	Ratio
No	33	82.5%
Yes	7	17.5%
Total	40	100.0%

- (For universities that responded "Cannot participate in the meetings but would like to receive information on initiatives and results") What kind of information would you like to receive? (free answers, excerpts)
 - Content, duration, budget size, specific results and issues, and method of selection of partner institutions for strategic partnership projects
 - Methods of coordination within the university (with departments)
 - How to obtain licenses when opening an office, etc., to serve as a base of operations overseas
 - Good practices promoted with partner universities without financial support.

ii) Do you wish to participate in a symposium organized by the project?



- What information do you hope to gain from the symposium? (free answers, excerpts)
 - On good practices and the relevant know-hows.
 - Process and procedures for establishing strategic partnerships, how to select partner institutions, etc.
 - Specific initiatives for strategic partnerships, information on strategic partnerships with foreign countries in regional inter-university consortia
 - Specific outcomes in strategic partnerships and the extent to which they have been more effective than usual agreements
 - Content of strategic partnership projects, duration, budget size/projects, issues.