THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

Into a Sea of Diversity: Creating the Future through Dialogue

UTokyo WAY 2023
UTokyo: Leading the Way to a Better Future

For nearly 150 years, the University of Tokyo has stood at the vanguard of education and research, pushing the boundaries of knowledge for the enrichment of humanity. Since our founding in 1877 through the merger of several pioneering schools, UTokyo has grown into Japan’s premier research university and a leader in Asia and the world. UTokyo boasts a legacy of trailblazing achievement that has helped to enable Japan’s important role in today’s world. Alumni who drove this rise include 16 prime ministers, nine Nobel laureates, and many business leaders, scholars, and people of influence in culture and society. UTokyo established pioneering research institutes in fields like medicine, seismology, and industrial science, cementing Japan’s reputation for technological excellence. Today, UTokyo remains committed to blazing new trails of discovery across the sciences, medicine, technology, and the humanities to unlock solutions to humanity’s greatest challenges.

Cooperative spirit necessary to lead progress that serves the common good. These UTokyo pioneers go on to steer Japan and the world as leaders of government, to drive innovation at both well-established companies and entrepreneurial start-ups, and to make groundbreaking contributions in fields as diverse as medicine, literary criticism, and quantum physics. The UTokyo experience ignites a quest for truth and a passion for service to encourage our alumni to tackle humanity’s most important problems.

UTokyo seeks to nurture pioneers—well-rounded, ethical leaders equipped with the global vision and tenacity to create a more just and sustainable world. The university welcomes diverse, talented students from Japan and around the globe into an open, vibrant learning community centered on free inquiry and dialogue across boundaries. Students gain access to cutting-edge facilities, renowned faculty at the pinnacle of their fields, and abundant global opportunities to widen perspectives. The empowering curriculum equips students with both a broad liberal education and expertise in their chosen disciplines while giving them the empathy, integrity, and cooperative spirit necessary to lead progress that serves the common good.

Partnership to Build a Better World

While honoring its distinguished past and present, UTokyo has an ambitious mission—to be a new model for universities in the decades ahead. We recently outlined that vision in UTokyo Compass. This statement of our guiding principles calls for promoting academic excellence, ensuring social inclusion, and addressing shared global challenges through dialogue across differences. This spirit of openness will guide UTokyo in breaking down barriers, bringing people together, and working together with people throughout the world to find solutions to our greatest global challenges.
As humanity confronts myriad global challenges, the role of universities in steering a course toward solutions has never been more pivotal. Now that several years have passed since the University of Tokyo revealed our strategic direction through UTokyo Compass in 2021, it’s time to reflect on our journey.

In UTokyo Compass, we clarified our mission and vision and set our course for the future. But as we started along that course, we realized even more keenly the need to reform the frameworks of everything we do. Our organization, finances, and relationships with students, faculty, and other stakeholders all require transformation.

Particularly important is supporting the next generation of research leaders. These emerging scholars can not only advance their disciplines but also drive the evolution of UTokyo, address Japan’s societal issues, and contribute to the solution of global problems. But that will require an environment where young researchers can thrive, innovate, and lead.

Our approach might be likened to nurturing young athletes for a professional sports team. While scouting star players globally is important, sustainability lies in continuously discovering and supporting emerging talents from within. We envision a cycle where innovative young researchers can flourish, expanding academic boundaries and inspiring students to reach their fullest potential. We see this researcher-nurturing process as extending beyond UTokyo as well. We hope to help many more young scholars take their initial strides with us and then soar globally.

Embracing a culture of both diversity and inclusion becomes even more important as we promote research that might not fit traditional paradigms. In line with these goals, we are also preparing to launch a new College of Design and School of Design, where students will be offered a multifaceted academic experience.

While UTokyo has been a pioneer in entrepreneurial education for over two decades, our focus is not merely on starting businesses. What we care most about is nurturing students passionate about addressing societal challenges through entrepreneurship, in line with UTokyo’s commitment to serving global public interests. We are now working hard to give students more opportunities to collaborate with impact startups and nonprofits, thereby amplifying the momentum of their work toward social change.

But transformation comes with financial challenges. While UTokyo has traditionally been funded primarily by the Japanese government, to prepare for tomorrow we need a new business model—a hybrid of public and private institutions. Taking cues from public universities overseas that have adeptly diversified their income amidst dwindling public funds, UTokyo is now working hard to expand our funding horizons to achieve the three keys to a more robust future: financial flexibility, freedom in investments, and a strong long-term endowment. It is these dynamic financial models, combined with transparent impact reporting, that will ensure UTokyo’s evolution as an essential asset for society.

With the years ahead bringing both challenges and opportunities, I invite you all to accompany the University of Tokyo—a bastion of knowledge, innovation, and service—on our journey as we continue to embrace the potential of our ever-evolving academic community.
About UTokyo

Overview

Independence and Innovation

Established by the Japanese government in 1877, not long after the country's reopening to the world, the University of Tokyo has played a leading role in Japan’s modernization and development. In 2004, UTokyo was incorporated as an institution independent from the government, ushering in a new era of autonomy. With our 150th anniversary approaching in 2027, UTokyo continues to evolve as a pioneer in education and research.

Guided by our commitment to serve the global public, UTokyo pushes the frontiers of knowledge through interdisciplinary collaboration and groundbreaking research. Promoting academic freedom and diversity, we provide a rich curriculum in both the liberal arts and advanced specializations, empowering students to become global leaders. UTokyo aspires to be a university that is open to the world—where scholarship thrives, unhindered by barriers.

Pluralism and Acceptance

As a pioneer in research and education, the University of Tokyo believes that embracing a pluralistic, accepting approach in everything we do is imperative for pushing new boundaries and developing future global leaders. That’s why, in June 2022, we adopted our Statement on Diversity & Inclusion. This document both reiterates and uplifts the principles of the university’s charter, promoting respectful, continuous dialogue and banning any form of discrimination, including in decision-making processes. The statement not only facilitates inclusion within the university but extends this principle to all who cooperate with the institution, promoting a sense of belonging and respect for everyone.

What is Pluralism and Acceptance?

Pluralism and Acceptance at UTokyo: Promoting Respect for Everyone

UTokyo WAY 2023

Education

The University of Tokyo's undergraduate programs are structured into a two-tier system: the first two years comprise general education in the College of Arts and Sciences, while the last two years involve specialized education in the student's chosen faculty and department. This "late specialization" model provides students with a broad liberal arts foundation before they pursue focused study in their majors.

For nearly 150 years, the University of Tokyo has exemplified Japan’s tradition of academic excellence and ingenuity across a wide range of disciplines. A recent study revealed that, from 2018 to 2021, UTokyo scholars produced high-impact publications on over 15,000 research topics. This remarkable achievement reflects UTokyo’s culture of boundary-pushing rigor across the academic spectrum. Unlike many Japanese universities that focus on only certain fields, UTokyo pursues excellence in all areas of scholarship. Our researchers unlock insights stretching from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities to interdisciplinary frontiers.

This comprehensive ethos stems from UTokyo’s mission to advance knowledge for society’s benefit. While honoring Japan’s scholarly traditions, UTokyo also promotes ever-greater global research engagement in English and other languages. By bridging academic cultures and languages, UTokyo seeks to expand the vistas of human understanding.

Research

Programs in English at Komaba (PEAK)

Launched in 2012, Programs in English at Komaba (PEAK) represents an innovative milestone—the University of Tokyo's first undergraduate degree programs taught entirely in English. PEAK aims to share UTokyo's wealth of intellectual resources with outstanding students from around the world. Two interdisciplinary courses are currently offered: the International Program on Japan in East Asia (IPEAK) and the International Program on Environmental Sciences (IEAP). Taught by UTokyo's leading academics, IPEAK and IEAP provide interactive, seminar-style learning in English for a select cohort of undergraduates. PEAK students have access to the full range of UTokyo's academic offerings and join their Japanese peers in clubs and other student activities. Alongside their major, they also study Japanese to advance their understanding of Japan’s scholarly traditions, UTokyo also promotes ever-greater global research engagement in English and other languages. By bridging academic cultures and languages, UTokyo seeks to expand the vistas of human understanding.

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Organization

Locations

The University of Tokyo’s headquarters and main campus are located in Hongo on the east side of central Tokyo. Other primary locations include the Komaba Campus near Shibuya and the Kashiwa Campus in suburban Chiba Prefecture. The university also has numerous affiliated facilities throughout Japan that support our educational and research activities. These include the extensive research forests affiliated with the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, covering a total of approximately 32,300 hectares at seven locations nationwide.

Divisions

The University of Tokyo has a total enrollment of nearly thirty thousand students across 10 undergraduate faculties and 15 graduate schools. It also hosts affiliated research institutes in fields ranging from historiography, social sciences, and cultural studies to atmospheric and ocean science, mathematics, and seismology, as well as dozens of collaborative research organizations and the University of Tokyo Institutes for Advanced Study. With abundant world-class facilities, UTokyo provides premier conditions for education, research, and international engagement.

People

With over eleven thousand faculty and staff, the University of Tokyo is a large comprehensive university that serves as a world-leading platform for education and research. An increasing number of our full-time faculty come from outside Japan, and every year we welcome many scholars from throughout the world for short-term stays. Our professional staff includes many who are fluent in English as well as Japanese, helping to make international collaborations go even more smoothly. The university also works together with leading research institutions and private companies throughout Japan and worldwide.

Faculties/College

- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Letters
- Faculty of Science

Graduate Schools

- Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology
- Graduate School of Education
- Graduate Schools for Law and Politics
- Graduate School of Economics
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Graduate School of Science
- Graduate School of Engineering
- Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Affiliated Institutes

- Institute of Medical Science
- Earthquake Research Institute
- Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia
- Institute of Social Science
- Institute of Industrial Science
- Historiographical Institute
- Institute for Quantitative Biosciences
- Institute for Cosmic Ray Research
- Institute for Solid State Physics
- Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute
- Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology
Sustainability

Green Transformation and Climate Action

The Green Transformation (GX) movement has gained much momentum in Japan in recent years. UTokyo's goal for GX is to make our social and economic systems regenerative within the limits of nature in order to achieve a sustainable, inclusive, and just society in which everyone can live happily and with dignity. Toward that goal, we are focusing particularly on carbon neutrality, nature positivity, and a circular economy. We have pledged that all faculty, staff, and students will work together to promote the GX of our university.

In October 2021, UTokyo became the first national university in Japan to join the International Race to Zero campaign launched by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. One year later, we announced our detailed plan, called UTokyo Climate Action. The plan's goal is to halve our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and to make our campuses carbon-neutral by 2050.

UTokyo Climate Action calculates the university's greenhouse gas emissions for Scopes 1, 2, and 3 as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and sets reduction targets in three phases (Table). Our latest calculations have revealed surprisingly large impacts in Scope 3 from indirect greenhouse gas emissions induced by the purchase of goods, including mining of raw materials, manufacturing of products, and transportation (Figure). While it won't be easy for UTokyo to cut those indirect emissions, we have made a firm commitment to tackle that challenge.

Of course, the elimination of greenhouse gas emissions by UTokyo alone will make only a small contribution to solving the global climate crisis. But if we achieve our goals and thereby show progress toward Green Transformation, we can inspire other universities, governmental organizations, private companies, and society as a whole to follow our lead.

UTokyo Sustainability Week 2023

In June 2023, UTokyo’s Komaba Campus buzzed with activities on one theme: Food & Drink. The occasion was UTokyo Sustainability Week, an event inspired by students’ desire for a greener tomorrow.

Organized by the UTokyo Sustainable Network (UTSN) with university-wide support, this five-day event showcased the synergy among students, faculty, and the university co-op in their united efforts towards sustainability.

One of the highlights was the Water Server Stamp Rally, aimed at reducing the use of disposable plastic bottles by promoting awareness of the water dispensers around campus. Stamps from five of the dispensers earned the collector a bowl of miso soup made with Fukushima seaweed (Photo 1), which has been shown to have particularly low lifecycle CO₂ emissions.

Equally noteworthy were the special food offerings at the co-op cafeteria. From dishes made with the low-CO₂ seaweed to ones made with soy meat (Photo 2), the food was a hit among both vegans and nonvegans alike. UTSN-chosen books about sustainability were displayed in the co-op bookstore, and eco-friendly products like reusable thermos bottles (Photo 3) and shopping bags were for sale.

The main attraction was the UTokyo Sustainability Talks (Photo 4). Fifty faculty, students, and others spoke about both local actions and global perspectives. The short, ten-minute talks, followed by interactive Q&A sessions, fostered a vibrant academic atmosphere.

Value Creation Highlights

UTokyo WAY 2023

50% Reduction target

2040 Deadline

Scope 2 Scope 3, category3 Scope 3, others Scope 3, offsets, NETS

2030 75% 25%

25%

Value Creation Highlights

3

Total (with offsets) UTokyo WAY 2023 UTokyo WAY 2023

2 50%

2 100%

Figure. Calculated amounts of UTokyo’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Category 0: fuel- and energy-related activities / Offsets: discrete GHG reductions used to compensate for GHG emissions elsewhere / NETS: negative emissions technologies / Emissions were calculated using the life-cycle assessment database IDEA (version 3.3 and 3.1). For Scope 3, the amount of activity was estimated from financial data for each year. These calculation results include a degree of uncertainty. UTokyo’s Race to Zero plans do not include CO₂ sequestration at UTokyo’s seven forests across Japan, which is estimated to be equivalent to 119,794 tons of CO₂ per year (2020).
Incubation

UTokyo’s Thriving Entrepreneurial Landscape

While long recognized as a leader in education and research, over the past 20 years the University of Tokyo has also evolved into a hub for entrepreneurial innovation. Recognizing the vast potential of university-linked ventures, we have created programs in entrepreneurship education, gap funding, and incubation services, with the aim of shaping an ecosystem that offers unwavering support to university-connected ventures.

In 2016, we took an important leap forward with the establishment of the UTokyo Innovation Platform Co., Ltd. (UTokyo IPC). By strategically operating two distinct investment funds with synergized objectives, this investment company ambitiously seeks to expand UTokyo’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Those two funds, which also elicit significant private-sector participation, direct investments through UTokyo IPC into myriad enterprises, including universities, research institutes, venture capital firms, and private start-ups.

The fruit of this unwavering commitment has been the impressive creation of over 30 start-ups per year. In March 2023, the total number of supported start-ups reached 526, boasting a total market capitalization of 2 trillion yen and including 26 IPOs and 60 M&As. Now UTokyo stands unmatched among Japanese universities in entrepreneurial investment, and we are working hard to catch up with leading universities overseas as well.

For decades, UTokyo has been a beacon of scholarly contributions. But now we also recognize that academic prowess must be complemented by entrepreneurial innovation. A growing cadre of students, inspired by real-world challenges and aided by external resources, are embarking on ventures designed to address societal needs. This shift matches UTokyo’s broader strategic vision. We are actively nurturing this entrepreneurial enthusiasm, and we aspire to expand our startup support activities significantly. Our target, while ambitious, is clear: to scale up our support to 300 fresh ventures every year within the next decade. And our ambitions are not limited to Japan. Understanding the importance of global markets and collaborations, we are also reaching out to influential entrepreneurial ecosystems overseas, with cities like Boston and Singapore on the radar. Partnerships now being forged will enable UTokyo to play a central role in a globally interconnected entrepreneurial network.

The Faculty of Engineering’s Entrepreneurship Education Design Endowed Course, with active participation from industry experts and leading scientists, offers an unparalleled startup-oriented curriculum.

Cultivating Pioneers in a Globally Connected Startup World

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An ambitious project is unfolding to create bioplastics that can degrade in the ocean without sacrificing durability. Led by Professors Kohzo Ito of the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences and Naoko Yoshie of the Institute of Industrial Science, the project harnesses agricultural waste to create novel multi-lock materials that can degrade in seawater while remaining durable during use. These innovative bioplastics could provide sustainable alternatives to conventional plastics in products ranging from packaging to fishing nets. By integrating expertise across academia, industry, and government, the project exemplifies UTokyo’s commitment to tackling plastic pollution through materials innovation.

The Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology is home to the world’s first laboratory specializing in the emerging field of animal linguistics. Led by Associate Professor Toshitaka Suzuki, the lab is at the forefront of decoding animal communication systems across species. By fusing ethology, linguistics, and cognitive science, the researchers aim to unravel the meanings, functions, and cognitive origins of animal vocalizations and gestures. Their pioneering work exemplifies UTokyo’s commitment to advancing science across disciplinary boundaries.

Professor Kaori Karasawa of the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology is spearheading Responsible Innovation with Conscience and Agility (RInCA), an initiative to address proactively the ethical, legal, and social issues arising from emerging technologies. By considering social implications early in R&D and providing feedback to developers, RInCA aims to foster responsible innovation. By guiding technology’s progress with conscience and agility, the program exemplifies UTokyo’s leadership in establishing collaborative frameworks to ensure that research benefits society responsibly. RInCA thus paves the way for emerging technologies that resonate with human values.

A research team in the Institute for Solid State Physics led by graduate student Masatoshi Ito and Research Associate Tomoko Fujino under the supervision of Professor Hatsuniru Mori has achieved a major innovation in ambipolar semiconductor development. By optimizing molecular packing, they have engineered high-performance, air-stable compounds that conduct both positive and negative charges. The materials also boast solution processability, allowing streamlined, low-cost fabrication. The breakthrough highlights UTokyo’s leadership in engineering materials that responsibly drive electronics innovations forward, from solar cells to LEDs.
Scientists in the Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute have launched a new research hub on Amami Island south of Kyushu to study Japan’s changing climate. Led by Professor Yusuke Yokoyama, the Subtropical Kuroshio Research and Education Center will investigate the past, present, and future of Japan’s ecosystems, resources, and environment as subtropicalization progresses due to climate change. By fostering collaboration and nurturing young talent, the research hub aims to promote climate resilience and disaster preparedness while engaging closely with local communities.
The University of Tokyo receives annual subsidies from the government that are linked to six-year medium-term goals that are also set by the government. After UTokyo became a national university corporation in 2004, funding for university operations initially came mainly from those government subsidies as well as student tuition. However, due to the government’s strained finances in recent years, those two sources of income are no longer sufficient to fund the university’s ambitious mission. We have therefore been actively seeking to diversify our finances by promoting collaborative research with private companies, attracting donations both domestically and internationally, effectively leveraging our fixed assets, and managing our capital investments more strategically. The university also operates two hospitals—the University Hospital affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine, and the Institute of Medical Science Hospital—that together generate about 21% of the university’s total revenue.

Diverse Sources

The funding that the university receives from the Japanese government has many strings attached. It must be spent for specific purposes that are aligned with government policy, and funding for projects is limited to a fixed number of years. To secure more flexible, long-term financing that can be deployed more agility, UTokyo has become the first national university in Japan to issue corporate-style university bonds. In 2020 and 2021, the university issued two rounds of 40-year bonds, attracting a total of 30 billion yen in investment. Compared to public funding, these university bonds offer greater discretion over how the money can be spent. They also provide more stable financing that is not susceptible to government budget cuts or program expiration dates. They therefore enable long-term, large-scale planning and investment in the infrastructure, resources, and human capital that are pivotal to the university’s global leadership in education and research.

Discretionary Funding

For almost a century and a half, UTokyo has been at the forefront of learning and innovation, dedicated to fostering the next generation of leaders. However, even stalwarts face challenges, and UTokyo is no exception. The university is currently focused on resolving three pressing financial issues: a relatively small endowment, fewer financial resources available for investment compared to our international counterparts, and limited success so far in attracting philanthropic support from abroad. Historically, our emphasis was on expanding the size of our operations. Now, however, in a decisive strategic shift, UTokyo is working to create a new financial model for future decades built around a strong and growing endowment.

Towards an Endowment-Based Model

For more information about donating to UTokyo, see the link below.
UTokyo by the Numbers

Founded in 1877

Students 28,218
International students 4,257

Academic staff 5,962
Administrative staff 5,563

International staff 856

Total assets (FY2022) 1,470 billion JPY (10.1 billion USD)
Number of acquired patents 4,924

Total ordinary revenue (FY2022) 266.4 billion JPY (1.8 billion USD)

Total ordinary expenses (FY2022) 271.5 billion JPY (1.9 billion USD)

As of March 31, 2023

Cited papers 581,162
Number of times that UTokyo papers published from 2018 to 2022 were cited by papers indexed in Web of Science during the same five-year period (Source: Essential Science Indicators database, accessed on September 20, 2023)

Nobel Prize Winners 13

THE World University Rankings 2024 29th
QS World University Rankings 2024 28th

UTokyo Foundation Amount of funds invested (FY2022) 13 billion JPY (87.1 million USD)

Overseas facilities and offices 31
International exchange agreements 554

The World’s Best Hospitals 2023
The University of Tokyo Hospital ranked

17th
2nd in Asia
1st in Japan