

Suspension of the March 2020 Graduation and April 2020 Entrance Ceremonies

To the graduating class of March 2020 and the incoming class of April 2020; their families, friends, members of the local community; and all friends of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University:

In consideration of the recent situation with the novel coronavirus and associated pneumonia, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University has made the difficult decision to cancel the March 2020 graduation and April 2020 entrance ceremonies.

While there have been no reports of the coronavirus in Oita Prefecture at this point in time*1, there have been cases of infection reported in other parts of Japan. There is a possibility that the number of cases in Japan may increase in the future. You have likely heard in the news that the Japanese government, companies, and other organizations have considered or have decided to cancel large events.

About 95% of APU's students are from outside Oita Prefecture—either from other parts of Japan or from overseas. Every year, graduating students and newly enrolled students alike are joined by friends, family members, and alumni at their respective graduation and entrance ceremonies. Most of the people attending these ceremonies travel from far and wide to commemorate their student's or graduate's APU journey.

The health of our students, their families, the local community, and other members of the APU family is of utmost importance to us. To hold an event that brings a large number of people from various places together in one location increases the risk of exposure to this disease. The scheduled dates for these ceremonies are still many days away, but there is no way to tell when the situation will improve. Because of this, we have made the difficult decision to cancel these ceremonies at this early stage.

I know that the students, their families and friends, and many others have been looking forward to celebrating these momentous occasions. A large number of people in the local community are involved in the preparations for the graduation and entrance ceremonies every year, and they also look forward to these ceremonies.

Given the importance of these events, I am certain that for many of you this news is heartbreaking. However, I hope you can understand the difficulty of the decision that we were

faced with. Please keep in mind that we have students and families of students, especially in China and other impacted areas, with very real concerns. I would ask that if any of your friends are facing a difficult situation, please offer them support and encouragement. Likewise, the university will make every effort to support the entire APU community.

Information regarding this will be posted to the university website, linked below. The information will be updated as needed; please review it as necessary.

I thank each and every one of you for your understanding, and ask for your continued cooperation.

Haruaki Deguchi
President
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

February 20, 2020

*1 Update on March 5, 2020

There were no reports of coronavirus in Oita Prefecture when APU made the announcement regarding the cancellation of Spring Graduation and Entrance Ceremonies on February 20, 2020. However, on March 3, 2020, the Oita Prefectural and Oita City governments reported the first case of coronavirus in Oita City, Oita Prefecture. Please see the local government website for further information.