

# 6. Student Support

## 1. Description of Current Conditions

- (1) **Are policies regarding the student support required for students to focus on their studies and lead safe and comfortable lives on campus clearly stipulated?**

To create and maintain our multicultural campus and ensure that students with a diverse array of values and cultural backgrounds can devote themselves to their studies, we have strived to provide a range of services and student support since APU's inception. APU's ideal human resources are described in our education and research objectives and the diploma policy. In particular, our human resources development through student support is typified by the fact that students can closely interact and collaborate with others through their activities and daily lives. The experience of confronting and accepting each other's differences, be they cultural, religious or otherwise, and seeking to understand them while working toward a common goal is the first step in becoming human resources who can succeed in the global arena and "contribute to creating the future of the Asia Pacific region."

Students deepen their understanding of the languages, cultures, histories, societies and business affairs of the Asia Pacific region in regular lectures while experiencing self-directed activities and daily life, and taken together, this motivates students toward their future career. Creating a cycle in which students can accumulate knowledge (theories) and actual practice (experience) is the job of the university, which provides student support by cultivating human resources on a multicultural campus. In view of this, APU's basic policy for student support comprises the following six items (Ref. 6-1).

- [1] Multicultural student interaction and collaboration (i.e., encourage students to interact and cooperate with each other)
- [2] Emphasis on self-directed activities and enterprising spirit
- [3] Encouraging student peer support
- [4] Encouraging off-campus initiatives and regional exchange
- [5] Linking all activities to post-graduation careers
- [6] Career achievement support

### 1) Multinational student interaction through Multicultural Weeks

Multicultural Weeks are week-long series of events aimed at increasing understanding of a certain country or region by showcasing its culture, arts, cuisine, and so on. In AY2013, events were held for 12 countries and regions. Over 2,000 students joined Multicultural Weeks over the course of the year, and more or less equal numbers of students from the

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country in question, Japanese students, and other international students participated in the events. Multicultural Weeks have grown into one of APU's trademark extracurricular activities (Ref. 6-2). Our students also devise and implement a wide range of multinational exchange events, including but not limited to the Multicultural Camp for new freshmen (Ref. 6-3).

### 2) AP House: A multinational community for living and learning

At AP House, the on-campus international education dormitory, international students spend their first year adjusting to life in Japan before becoming actively involved in all aspects of student life thereafter. Every year, 1,000 students from 40 countries and regions, including Japan, come together in AP House where they develop intercultural understanding and communication skills and develop a sense of belonging to APU.

### 3) Peer learning driven by active student staff

Peer teaching and learning among students serves to encourage significant growth in both the learners and the teachers. Students who have been taught something by another student come to view that student as a role model, which provides a strong motivation to learn and grow. One typical example of this peer learning and peer support at APU is the Resident Assistant (RA) system that we adopted at the time of our inception to assist in the operation of our unprecedented international education dormitory. Using this as a precedent, we have incorporated peer learning and peer support in a variety of initiatives related to university administration.

## **(2) Is learning support for students being adequately implemented?**

### 1) Consultations and guidance to facilitate effective learning

APU offers individual guidance to students who are struggling with completing a sufficient number of credits or who aren't attending enough classes. This support is provided by the Student Office and the Academic Office in cooperation with the faculty in charge of academic advising, the faculty who primarily teach Japanese and English subjects to freshmen, and the faculty who teach First-Year Student Workshop I and II. Also, to ensure that international students maintain their visa status and complete the required number of credits, there is a policy in place for dealing with international students who are absent from their Japanese language subjects for more than two weeks. The Academic Office, Student Office and the faculty who teach the Japanese language subjects share information with each other to provide appropriate support.

With regard to learning guidance and consultation, students with insufficient numbers of credits are classified into a range of categories every semester. We send them regular warnings in writing and via e-mail, and hold face-to-face meetings with them where necessary. In AY2013, we issued warnings to a total of 1,302 students. Also, at the end of

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the first semester after new students enroll, we hold academic advising sessions for those students who did not complete enough credits. In AY2013, 113 students participated in these sessions. Furthermore, interested students can reserve academic advising slots, and we provided study support to a total of 94 students.

Although international students can apply for a College Student visa that lasts four or more years, APU students are only granted the 2 years 3 months visa. When this visa expires in their third year, we screen a range of factors including credit completion status before deciding whether or not they should apply for a renewal. As with international students who reach their fifth year, we advise all students eligible for visa renewals to re-design their study plans. Many international students receive tuition reduction scholarships that require continuation screenings each semester, and we check their credit completion status and GPAs as part of those screenings. Students with poor academic performance are warned once, and if they continue to perform poorly, their tuition reductions are suspended (Ref. 6-4; Ref. 6-5).

### [1] Supplementary education

To ensure that a diverse array of students can smoothly transition to university level learning, faculty in the Center for Language Education and the Education Development and Learning Support Center work with the Academic Office to provide pre-enrollment learning support. Examples of this include i) Campus Visit Day, which aims to provide scheduled enrollees and their guardians with a better understanding of APU, ii) the Schooling sessions held at four locations around Japan, iii) the pre-enrollment Basic Skills Brush-up Course, a retreat-style course held in the international education dormitory, and iv) the APU Notebook, a self-directed study assignment on countries or regions from which an international student hails.

The bulk of international students enroll with no prior knowledge of Japanese, so all international applicants are sent a Japanese language textbook called *Tobira* at the enrollment processing stage and are encouraged to study Japanese before coming to APU by completing the assignments in the book.

Also, we established a learning corner in the library in cooperation with Kumon Institute of Education as part of our supplementary education for students. The learning corner, which aims to strengthen students' basic Japanese, English and mathematics skills, is manned by a supervisor who provides support to students (AY2013 users: Japanese: 35 students; English: 37 students; Mathematics: 68 students). Furthermore, weekly supplementary sessions and summer break supplementary sessions are offered to freshmen with low English proficiency.

### [2] Handling student leaves of absence and withdrawals

Requests for leave of absence and withdrawal are not permitted until students are interviewed by a Student Office staff member and cases are deliberated by the Student

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Status Committee, which comprises the Deans of the Colleges, the Deans of the Graduate Schools, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and members of the Division of Student Affairs (Ref. 6-6, Article 3). At APU, there is no system in place to allow students to repeat a year.

With regards to a leave of absence due to medical reasons, students are required to submit a doctor's certificate when they apply for the leave and another certificate when they apply for reinstatement. This will then be used to decide whether or not the student is ready to return to campus. Students who require mental or physical support upon reinstatement are assisted by the Student Office for campus life matters and the Academic Office for matters pertaining to their studies, in cooperation with the nurses in the Health Clinic and the counselors in the Counseling Room. In addition, we offer training to teach faculty and staff how to properly accommodate students with mental health issues and developmental disorders. Leaves of absence and withdrawals are reported to the Faculty Council by the Dean of Student Affairs.

Regarding international students who are unable to graduate in the minimum four-year standard period for graduation, a supervisor in the Student Office will meet with them and advise them on redesigning their study plan. The office also acts on behalf of students apply to the Immigration Bureau for the visa extension they need to continue studying in Japan.

### [3] Learning support for disabled students

At APU, the Working Group for Disabled Student Support engaged in multiple discussions over the course of one year starting in December 2011 to formulate a policy for disabled student support. In December 2012, this was reported to the Faculty Discussion Meeting (Ref. 6-7). In AY2013, we provided support tailored to the needs of each disabled student, including providing reasonable accommodations in class, assigning note-takers, and providing enlarged question and answer sheets for examinations.

## 2) Financial aid

### [1] Scholarships for undergraduate students (Ref. 6-4)

The Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship is the basic form of financial support provided to undergraduate domestic students, of whom 1,015 received this scholarship in AY2013. We also operate our own scholarship system to complement the JASSO system. APU's scholarships come in the form of either grants or tuition reductions. There are three types of aid: domestic student academic support scholarships, scholarships for students admitted by internal recommendation, and financial aid scholarships for domestic students. First two types are decided prior to admission while last type applies to the financial change happened after the entrance.

For international students, we operate our own tuition reduction system, which consists of 5-tiers of reductions (100%, 80%, 65%, 50% and 30%). Looking at the percentages for AY2013, 68.5% of international students received tuition reductions in the spring semester,

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while 73.5% received them in the fall semester. In addition, 932 international students have secured grant-type scholarships from private scholarship foundations outside of the university.

One scholarship that is open to both domestic and international students is the Makino Textbook Scholarship, which aims to offset the cost of textbooks. Original scholarships to provide financial support for diverse kinds of learning include the ANDO Momofuku Award, the ANDO Momofuku Honor Prize, the Domestic Student Academic Support Scholarship, the Resident Assistant Scholarship (for students appointed as Resident Assistants in the AP House dormitory), and the Kyushu Oil Labor Union Stork Scholarship—a scholarship that targets talented individuals who can contribute to regional development and encourages recipients to participate in regional exchange and contribution activities.

### [2] Scholarships for graduate students (Ref. 6-5)

In terms of financial aid for graduate students, we operate our own tuition reduction system, which consists of 5-tiers of reductions (100%, 80%, 65%, 50% and 30%), for both domestic and international students. In AY2014, 52.9% of graduate students received scholarships.

Some graduate students also secure scholarships from foreign governments or other external sources, so the percentage of graduate students with some form of scholarship, including the aforementioned tuition reduction recipients, is 83.4%. Other aid for research include a subsidy program for Master's program field research and a system to support PhD students presenting at conferences. In AY2013, 28 graduate students received these subsidies.

### 3) Multicultural student interaction and collaboration

The core aspect of multicultural student interaction on campus is shared living in the AP House international education dormitory. As a rule, all international freshmen live in the dormitory for the first year so they can learn Japanese language and culture as well as residency rules while adjusting to life in Japan. In addition, around 50% of domestic freshmen reside in the dormitory. This means that, upon admission to APU, approximately 70% of all new students live side-by-side with international students from 57 countries and regions (as of May 2014). The university assigns rooms, and each floor (33 ~ 56 rooms) is home to students of several nationalities. There are 378 shared rooms, each of which accommodates one domestic-international student pair, and 932 single rooms in the dormitory. Floors are the fundamental unit of the dormitory, and two upperclassman Resident Assistants (RA) are assigned to each floor. Each floor holds a monthly meeting to assign a range of tasks, such as the cleaning of the communal kitchen and the separation and disposal of trash. RAs also plan floor events, and there are events held by each building and the entire dormitory. In this way, we encourage multinational student interaction through a wide range of events, including both student-led and university-organized initiatives.

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Multicultural student interaction also forms the basis of student activities. The balance of domestic and international student membership is an important factor we look at when approving student organizations. All told, 46.2% of students belong to a student organization, which suggests that multicultural student interaction is robust in student activities as well (Ref. 6-8).

### 4) Emphasis on self-directed activities and enterprising spirit

The interests of our students are wide and varied, and in many cases, our students belong to more than one student organization or start new clubs. As such, organizations are not required to continuously engage in activities to remain in the register. Every year, we screen existing organizations, as well as requests to establish new ones, to ensure a lively range of extracurricular activities. Furthermore, to encourage self-directed student activities, we also have a registered student event organization system that allows organizations established temporarily for a certain purpose or event (e.g., international competitions, student-organized volunteer projects etc.) access to campus facilities (Ref. 6-8).

### 5) Encouraging student peer support

One unique aspect of APU's mechanism for encouraging student growth is student peer support. One example of how this has become part of everyday life is the aforementioned RA system. As upperclassmen who reside in the dormitory, RAs serve to provide support to new students for their entire freshman year. RAs not only serve as role models for new students, they also grow by helping others. Aside from the RA system, other platforms for student peer support include the following.

Teaching Assistants (TA)	Students who assist with lectures. In First-Year Student Workshop, TAs facilitate group work.
Academic & Learning Resource Core Staff (ALRCS)	A student group that provides a range of support, such as leading database and presentation seminars and offering learning consultations, to help students engage in self-directed learning.
FeLlow Advisory Group (FLAG)	A student group that assists with freshman orientation, student-life and registration guidance sessions, making themselves available for all types of student consultations.
Student Activity Station (SAS)	A student group that supports and promotes various student-led local exchange events.
Technical Support Staff (TSS)	A student group that offers technical assistance, such as lighting and sound, for student-organized events like Multicultural Weeks.
Student Exchange Advisors (SEA)	A group of former student exchange program participants who offer advice to students who want to study abroad.
Peer Advisors (PA)	A group of students who teach each other languages.

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Scholarship, Honors, and Award Recipients Peer Support (SHARPS)	A group of top-performing scholarship recipients who support other scholarship recipients.
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### (3) Is support for student life being adequately implemented?

#### 1) Institutional initiatives

The APU campus is equipped with a Health Clinic, which is in charge of maintaining student, faculty and staff health and can provide support in both Japanese and English. The Clinic works closely with one general hospital in the region and other related institutions to offer bilingual support for most types of illnesses and injuries. Given our high student mobility, we place importance on medical examinations, and 94.6% of our students received them in spring 2014. Based on the results of these examinations, the Clinic recommends detailed examinations or treatments and takes measures to prevent infectious diseases.

We hold regular first aid and taping courses for students who belong to sports clubs. We also hold crisis management lectures for students participating in regular curriculum programs that include overseas travel and students who travel abroad as members of student organizations, and we advise these students to get vaccinated against infectious diseases.

Furthermore, the Student Health Management Support Network Meeting, which is chaired by the school physician and whose members include local medical and healthcare professionals from the Beppu Medical Association, the Eastern Oita Health Center, and the Beppu City Social Welfare Health Department, convenes once a semester to share information on student health management, exchange ideas and form a close-knit cooperative framework.

We formulated the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Harassment Prevention Regulations and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Harassment, and the Administration Office serves as the secretariat for the Harassment Prevention Committee (Ref. 6-9; Ref. 6-10). Faculty and staff members are appointed to serve as advisors who provide day-to-day consultations. Students are notified of this information as well as awareness raising activities via the university homepage and leaflets. In AY2014, the Harassment Prevention Committee held two training sessions—one in April and one in September—for new faculty members, and one training session for management-level staff. Furthermore, in November 2014, a training session on sexual harassment prevention was held in the Faculty Discussion Meeting, which is attended by all faculty members.

#### 2) Counseling Room

With one full-time receptionist, one full-time counselor and four part-time counselors, the Counseling Room offers counseling services to students, faculty and staff. In order to accommodate the diverse make-up of the APU faculty, staff and student body as much as

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possible, the Counseling Room offers consultations in four languages: Japanese, English, Chinese and Mongolian. In addition, the Counseling Room General Meeting is held once a semester with the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of Student Affairs, Student Office staff members, Health Clinic nurses, and Counselors in attendance. They share information and exchange opinions regarding mental health support for students, faculty and staff and work to build a close cooperative relationship.

### 3) Support systems for protecting physical well-being and property

The Ritsumeikan Trust Risk Management Regulations have been formulated with the aim of preventing accidents and disasters in Ritsumeikan Trust facilities and protecting the life, physical well-being and property of all students, faculty, staff and other personnel of the Ritsumeikan Trust (Ref. 6-11). We have established the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Safety Management Committee to ensure that these objectives are achieved.

There are seven automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on campus, and a first-aid training workshop is held for all faculty and staff. We have also organized a volunteer fire brigade, and we hold regular emergency drills with the cooperation of students, faculty and staff. At the AP House international education dormitory, we hold an evacuation drill for all residents once a semester.

### 4) Efforts to raise awareness of drug abuse prevention and smoking cessation

To help prevent drug abuse, we engage in awareness-raising activities during the spring and fall freshman orientations. With the mid-term objective of making APU a smoke-free campus, we have relegated smoking to the designated areas on campus, and there is an ongoing campaign to educate smokers about proper smoking etiquette and to encourage them to quit smoking.

## **(4) Is support for student job placement being conducted adequately?**

### 1) On-Campus Recruiting

One of the biggest parts of our career support is on-campus recruiting. Companies primarily recruit in the major urban areas, which puts our students at a disadvantage since they have to spend their time and money to look for jobs. To help alleviate this burden, we invite companies to visit the campus to hold information sessions and interviews. At present, 355 companies (the number of companies recruiting AY2013 graduates) visit the campus, thus providing students with opportunities to enter a wide range of industries (Ref. 6-12). These initiatives also help students scheduled to graduate in the fall in their job search. Initially, many of these companies only recruited our international students, but now more than 70% of them recruit both international and domestic students.

### 2) Job placement and advancement guidance in the regular curriculum

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To incorporate a focus on career development in the regular curriculum from the first and second years, we offer Career Design I ~ III, which cover everything from self-analysis to industry research, as well as Internship, a subject that allows us to send students to companies and organizations with which we have cooperative agreements. The number of students who registered for these subjects in AY2013 was 192 for Career Design I, 287 for Career Design II, 81 for Career Design III, and 103 for Internship (for credit; 67 host companies).

Even as the need for global human resources heightens and companies hire more foreigners, most companies use the same hiring standards, including Japanese proficiency, for foreigners as they do for Japanese. For this reason, in addition to our regular Japanese language education, we offer Career Japanese in cooperation with the Division of Academic Affairs to those students who intend to seek employment in Japan. In AY2013, 117 students took this subject.

### 3) Office counter support and guidance sessions

The Division of Careers is responsible for the career support framework at APU. Under the supervision of the Dean of Careers (who is a faculty member), the Deputy Director and all Career Office staff work together to analyze the advancement and job placement trends and to draft, execute and improve upon policies. The Career Office has 19 staff members, of whom five permanent staff members and three contract specialists offer individual consultations in both Japanese and English. All permanent staff members possess application processor certification for status of residence applications and provide advice to students and companies in accordance with the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act.

There are also two student-led support organizations. The first group, Junior Assistant advisers for Careers (JAC), focuses primarily on providing job placement support to second-year students. It works to raise students' career awareness through guidance sessions and other support activities and prepare them for their future job hunting activities. The second group, Student Career Advisers (SCA), is a group of fourth-year students who have already received job offers. Based on their own experiences, they provide job placement support to job-hunting third-year students. In addition to these support systems, the Career Office also conducts a variety of guidance sessions, events, seminars and lectures year-round (Ref. 6-13).

Furthermore, we provide counseling on job hunting and related activities in both Japanese and English. These consultations are available to first and second-year students as well as upper level job-hunting students, and in AY2013, we counseled a total of 2,088 students. Counseling services are also available at the Ritsumeikan Tokyo Campus and Ritsumeikan Osaka Campus in order to support job-hunting students in the metropolitan Tokyo and Kansai regions. Permanent APU staff members who understand our students' situation well are assigned to the Tokyo Campus, and we add more career counselors

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during busy periods (February ~ June: 2 additional counselors; July ~ September: 1 additional counselor).

### 2. Assessment

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#### (1) Items that are Showing Results

##### 1) Multicultural student interaction and collaboration

Multicultural student interaction and collaboration is put into practice in every aspect of campus life, including extracurricular activities, self-directed student activities and life in AP House. Of particular importance are 1) multicultural living in AP House, 2) student collaboration during the Multicultural Weeks, and 3) student peer support systems. With these kinds of initiatives, every student can engage in some form of multicultural interaction and collaboration during their time at APU.

##### 2) Career support

Our job placement support for international students who want to work in Japan or for Japanese companies overseas is highly commendable because of our students' Japanese proficiency, adaptability to Japanese culture, understanding of Japan's unique job hunting situation, and understanding of the career paths in a Japanese company. This is evidenced by a 90.0% job placement rate in AY2013.

Our domestic students are also held in regard because they undergo intercultural experiences on a daily basis and can collaborate in multinational teams. This resulted in a 94.4% job placement rate in AY2013 (Ref. 6-14).

#### (2) Areas for Improvement

##### 1) Learning support

At present, we have not analyzed the reasons underlying student withdrawals. We have many systems in place to prevent early withdrawals, but the correlation between these systems and actual withdrawals is unclear.

##### 2) Career and Job Placement Committee

The Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Career and Job Placement Committee is set forth in the regulations, but it does not convene because the Career Office analyzes advancement and job placement trends and formulates policies (Ref. 6-15).

##### 3) Support for students advancing to graduate school

Despite a track record of sending our graduates to the APU Graduate Schools, other graduate schools in Japan and renowned foreign graduate schools, we have not

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established a system to provide institutional support to students advancing to graduate school. We will need to consider academic frameworks and faculty-staff collaboration mechanisms for providing support to students advancing to graduate school.

### 3. Strategic Direction for the Future

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#### (1) Items that are Showing Results

##### 1) Multicultural student interaction and collaboration

Since our inception, we have developed a wide array of systems for promoting multicultural student interaction and collaboration. Going forward, we will need to qualitatively and quantitatively visualize student growth by determining which segments of the student population make use of these systems and how their involvement therein contributes to growth, and it will also be important to connect these efforts to the continuous improvement cycle.

##### 2) Career support

In addition to the robust support we offer to students seeking jobs in Japanese companies, we will work to develop systems to offer job placement support to students who want to work overseas.

#### (2) Areas for Improvement

##### 1) Learning support

We will analyze why students withdraw, verify the effectiveness of the various initiatives in place to prevent withdrawals, and seek to make improvements.

##### 2) Career and Job Placement Committee

We will reconfirm the significance and roles of the Committee and work to make it function again as a body that regularly convenes to examine advancement and job placement support.

##### 3) Support for students advancing to graduate school

As we reexamine the status of the Career and Job Placement Committee, we will also consider ways to provide support for students advancing to graduate school.

### 4. Supporting Resources

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6-1: Formulation of Policies Pertaining to University Evaluation (Accreditation) (same

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as Ref. 4(1)-7)

- 6-2: Multicultural Week 2013 Report
- 6-3: AY2013 Overview and AY2014 Policy for Regional Exchange
- 6-4: Guide to Scholarships for Undergraduate Students
- 6-5: Scholarships for Graduate Students
- 6-6: Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Faculty Council Regulations (same as Ref. 2-2)
- 6-7: Report on Discussions by the Working Group for Disabled Student Support
- 6-8: AY2013 Overview and AY2014 Policy for Support for Extracurricular Clubs
- 6-9: Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Harassment Prevention Regulations
- 6-10: Guidelines for the Prevention of Harassment
- 6-11: Ritsumeikan Trust Risk Management Regulations
- 6-12: Report on On-Campus Recruiting Results for AY2013 Graduates
- 6-13: List of Career Office Events
- 6-14: Job Placement for AY2013 Graduates
- 6-15: Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Career and Job Placement Committee Regulations