

The Japan Association of National Universities (JANU)

July 13, 2020

The Honorable HAGIUDA Koichi
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
Government of Japan

RE: Request concerning the impacts of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on international students and researchers coming to universities in Japan

Dear Minister HAGIUDA:

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads around the world, it is hugely affecting education and research at national universities throughout the country. Following the global spread of infection, international students who have temporarily returned to their home countries/regions continue to be in a difficult situation where they are not allowed to re-enter Japan to re-continue their studies, and international students newly admitted to Japanese universities are still uncertain as to when they will be able to enter Japan because visas are not currently being issued to them. Furthermore, international researchers are now not allowed to visit or re-enter Japan, and this restriction is seriously impacting the progress of collaborative research activities.

The coronavirus's rapid spread across the world may be perceived as one of the negative consequences of globalization. Nevertheless, we would like to request that you specially consider and negotiate with relevant ministries about easing restrictions that have been hindering our country from providing eager young people around the world—in whose hands the future of “the world after coronavirus” rests—with opportunities to study in our country, as well as the implementation of the following moves concerning international researchers who come to Japan for advancements in science and technology that are by no means considered “non-essential and non-urgent”.

–Relaxing restrictions and regulations on the entry of international students

and researchers into Japan

(I) On the condition that measures to prevent the spread and contraction of the coronavirus are thoroughly conducted, we would like to request that international students and researchers who already possess valid visas to study or conduct research at Japanese universities will be immediately allowed to re-enter Japan and that they will be guaranteed to have opportunities to re-continue their learning activities or research in Japan.

(II) Depending on the current coronavirus situation in each country or region, we also would like to request that Japanese embassies or consulates across the globe promptly resume the processing of visa applications for international students and researchers that have been newly accepted to universities in Japan.

Once such international students and researchers arrive at their host universities in Japan, their host universities will assume complete responsibility for preventing them from contracting the coronavirus: they will constantly confirm where they live, manage their contact details, and take other necessary measures to protect them from the coronavirus.

Thank you very much for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

NAGATA Kyosuke
President