



# GIFU UNIVERSITY NEWS Letter

Japan



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For International Exchange  
Gifu University

March 2025



## Gifu Joint Degree Symposium 2024

December 6

On December 6, Tokai National Higher Education and Research System (THERS) hosted 'Gifu Joint Degree Symposium 2024.' The 'Main Symposium' was attended by 119 participants both in-person and online. THERS Chancellor MATSUO Seiichi and President YOSHIDA Kazuhiro of GU gave the opening remarks, followed by a keynote speech by guest speaker, Ms. TAKEDA Kuniko from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), titled '*Promoting Student Mobility and Internationalization of Universities.*'

In the subsequent panel discussion, representatives from Nagoya University, Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto), Kyoto Institute of Technology, and GU discussed the impact of Joint Degree Program (JDP<sup>1</sup>) graduates within their institutions and their future prospects.

Next, there was an Industry-Government-Academia-Banking Institution Collaboration session titled, '*Challenges in Solving Global Issues through Glocalization,*' with 95 attendees. Initiatives for bamboo resource utilization were presented, leading to active discussions among panelists on the future of the sector. During this session, a 'Certificate of Appreciation' was presented to companies involved in the establishment of JDP.

In parallel with the symposium, a booth exhibition for the companies was held in the Faculty of Engineering building. It showcased successful examples of industry-academia collaboration. Through this symposium, the member organizations reaffirmed the significance of JDP for campus internationalization and regional revitalization.

The JDP is a central element of GU's ongoing drive for regional invigoration with a global perspective.

1) A joint degree offers an international graduate school-level education that enables students to complete their master's or PhD studies while being enrolled in GU and its overseas partner universities. A joint degree is conferred to a student from GU and its overseas partner university.



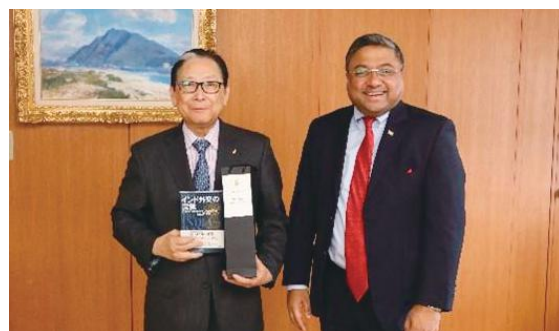
## Ambassador of India to Japan Visits Gifu University

December 20



On December 20, His Excellency Mr. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan visited GU. He was welcomed by the board members, including President Yoshida, GU-GLOCAL Executive Director KOYAMA Hiroyuki, Specially Appointed Professor MIWA Shinichi (GU-GLOCAL), and Director NONOMURA Haruko of the Student Affairs Department. They discussed the promotion of international education and research and the expansion of student- and researcher- exchanges between GU and India. After the meeting, the ambassador was invited to meet 18 students, faculty members, and alumni, all from India. The ambassador underscored the importance of strong ties between Japan and India in business, academia and research. He also expressed his high expectations for the younger generation, who can serve as a bridge between the two countries. At GU, 21 students have completed the JDP since its launch with the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG). GU is the sole university in Japan that has implemented a JDP with an Indian university. Within a JDP, the two institutions offer educational and research opportunities, including short-term study programs. There is a steady inflow and outflow of students helping to create and advance new businesses and research projects between Japan and India.

GU plans to hold a JDP symposium at IITG in March 2025, aiming to further strengthen collaboration among universities and regions. It is our hope that the ambassador's visit will pave the way towards a new phase of cooperation between our two countries.





**O**n December 2, President Yoshida received a courtesy visit from Ms. Anna Wang, Principal Officer from the U.S. Consulate in Nagoya. During the meeting, there was a productive exchange of opinions about the history and prospects of academic and cultural exchanges between GU and the United States.

GU has signed academic exchange agreements with American universities, including San Diego State University, Northern Kentucky University (NKU), and the University of South Florida (USF), establishing close relationships through education and research activities over many years. In January 2024, GU signed a research exchange agreement with the Center of Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation (CALMS) at the USF. We are expecting to see a resulting development of collaborative research and personnel exchanges in the medical field soon. Additionally, GU students from the Faculty of Education go to NKU every summer for about a month through a student internship program. In 2023, the Executive Director of the Center for Global Issues and International Affairs at NKU visited GU.

After the courtesy visit, Ms. Wang was invited to meet seven GU students who have studied or traveled abroad. They discussed a wide range of topics, including students' experiences overseas and how the knowledge gained from studying abroad has influenced their current student life and plans. The meeting was an invaluable opportunity for the students to broaden their global perspectives and engage in direct dialogue with the American diplomat, who has rich international experience.

GU is deepening its cooperative relationship with the United States, promoting more and more exchanges in diverse fields.



**O**n October 18, a delegation from Andalas University (Unand) in Indonesia, visited GU. The delegation members included Dr. Efa Yonnedi, President of Unand, Prof. Dr. Syukri Arief, Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Affairs), who is a graduate of GU Graduate School of Engineering, and Prof. Dr. Erizal Mukhtar, Head of the Biology Study Program.

The relationship between GU and Unand began in the 1990s, through the Faculty of Engineering (mainly in the field of chemistry). The two universities signed an academic exchange agreement in April 2001. Currently, GU United Graduate School of Agricultural Science (UGSAS) and Unand are implementing a 'Dual PhD. Degree Program.' Furthermore, Unand is a crucial member of 'UGSAS-GU Symposium & Roundtable,' an international conference hosted by UGSAS for 12 years.

In a courtesy visit to President Yoshida, first, President Yonnedi introduced himself as the new Unand president. His introduction was followed by active discussions between GU board members and the Unand delegation, generating a lively exchange of opinions and highlighting our more than 20-year partnership. Most significantly, plans for research collaboration in fields other than the well-established ones of agriculture and engineering were tabled.

We will continue to strengthen our collaboration with Unand and accelerate educational and research exchanges going forward.



## Studying Abroad

### Overseas Study Fair 2024 in Autumn

November 20

**G**U-GLOCAL held the autumn 'Overseas Study Fair 2024 in Autumn - Let's Expand the Circle of Study Abroad' on November 20. The fair was inaugurated in 2012 with the aim of providing information on required language skills and study-abroad programs that Gifu University is offering.

The fair began with a greeting from Professor SHIMA Mutsuhiro, Head of the Study Abroad Promotion Division, GU-GLOCAL. This was followed by an explanation of study-abroad programs by the Inbound and Outbound Student Affairs Office staff. Later, students who had participated in short-term English training programs the previous year and in 2024 shared their study abroad experiences with the audience. Students across faculties, who had been abroad through exchange programs and short-term outbound programs also made speeches, demonstrating their growing confidence and motivation, as well as increased awareness of diverse values. After the fair, many students questioned individual speakers, showing widespread interest in studying abroad.



## Studying Abroad



**KAWAGUCHI**  
**Yuma**  
Graduate School of Education

University of  
Technology,  
Sydney



### My Study-Abroad Experience – Days immersed in English

**A**s an exchange student, I studied at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Australia for approximately ten months. During my classes, I was able to learn a wide range of English, from casual to academic contexts. Australia is a country with a high number of immigrants, and Sydney, in particular, has a large Asian population. I was exposed to diverse English influenced by their cultural backgrounds, which made me feel more comfortable and confident in my own accented English. Initially, I was worried about whether my English skills would improve by attending an exchange program, but now I can confidently say that they have. My study at UTS was truly an invaluable experience for me.





The Collaborative Video Making Program (CVMP) 2024 ran for four months from July, on the theme, 'Thinking about SDGs.' Sixteen students - seven from GU, four from IITG, and five from the National University of Malaysia (UKM, Malaysia) - split into fours, and each group created a video. They received guidance on smartphone video shooting techniques from a producer at an Australian creative agency.

On December 12, the 'CVMP Final Competition' was held in a hybrid format (via Zoom Webinar and presentations at OKB Gifu University Plaza on campus) with 37 attendees. Vice President LIM Lee Wah, GU-GLOCAL Executive Director Koyama, UKM Prof. Siti Aishah Hasbullah, Ms. TAKEMURA Yukiko, documentary filmmaker and podcast producer, and Mr. MAE Ichiro, Director of Plus Factory Inc. provided critiques of the videos as special judges. Screening was followed by voting by both the judges and the audience. First place was awarded to the Group 1 video, 'Beat the Heat.' Check out all the videos on the GU-GLOCAL Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrNWL5oYxiK9aHppLz9nEMIRcTuARBk3c>). We hope these excellent productions will inspire more students to study abroad.



## Studying in Japan

### Winter School Program 2024

December 5- 20

GU-GLOCAL hosted its eighth two-week-long inbound program, 'Winter School Program 2024' in December. Six IITG students and two UKM students attended. IITG and UKM are JDP partner universities overseas of GU.

Whilst in Japan, the students visited Japanese companies, such as a vinegar brewery and a tea plantation in Yaotsu in Gifu Prefecture, attended Japanese culture and Japanese language classes, took lectures on corporate Japan, held talks with university and high school students, and attended a *Juni-Hitoe* (traditional Japanese twelve-layered kimono) workshop. They also participated in the 'Gifu-JDP Symposium' on campus on December 6.

Under the theme, 'Studying the Science of Japanese Food,' the students conducted research on *Koji* (malted rice) and learned some traditional Japanese cooking methods.

Through these widely varying experiences, they were able to immerse themselves in real Japanese life, thus enhancing their understanding of Japanese people, culture and tradition.

\*Winter School Program has been supported by the Inter-University Exchange Project of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan.



## Initiatives of the Center for Japanese Language and Culture (CJLC)

### Japanese Culture Workshop - *Juni Hitoe* (Twelve - Layered Kimono) 2024

December 11

The Center for Japanese Language and Culture (CJLC) held a 'Japanese Culture Workshop - *Juni Hitoe* (twelve layered kimono)' 2024' on December 11. It was attended by 50 people, including Winter School students from IITG and UKM, international students studying at CJLC, faculty-and staff members of GU. Ms. ITO Keiko (professional alias: Houshoukei) and four invited instructors provided instructions on how to put on *Juni Hitoe*. There was also a live *koto* harp performance, conveying and enhancing the charms of *Juni Hitoe* in a solemn and elegant atmosphere.

First, CJLC Professor TSUCHIYA Momoko gave a detailed explanation of Japanese history and the basics of *Juni Hitoe* in Japanese and English. Next, Ms. Tran Thoa Thi Kim, a CJLC student from Vietnam, who was selected as a dressing model, entered the room wearing a small-sleeved 'kosode' and 'nagabakama' trousers, with her makeup prepped. The five instructors, while showing respect to Ms. Tran, dressed her in layers of kimono in the order of 'hitoe,' 'itsutsuginu,' 'uwagi, karaginu,' and 'mo.' Participants asked many questions, such as "Did people wear *Juni Hitoe* every day?" "How were they stored?" and "How did they manage bathroom breaks?" to all of which the instructors politely provided answers. Every participant seemed to truly appreciate the depth and beauty of this traditional Japanese culture.

1) A traditional Japanese court attire worn by noble women during the Heian period (794 to 1185). It consists of multiple layers of silk robes, typically twelve, and is known for its elegance and intricate color combinations.



## Studying at GU



**MAINA FRANCIS IRUNGU**  
Graduate School of Engineering



Kenya

### Embracing Research and Adventure: My Journey in Japan

I write from a beautiful journey in Besançon and Marseille, France, during my master's. I am now fortunate to be a PhD student at Gifu University. Coming from the small town of Nyeri in Kenya, this experience is an exciting new chapter. One of the biggest challenges has been mastering the Japanese language—deciphering countless Kanji is both daunting and exhilarating. My time in Japan has been filled with unforgettable moments, from yakiniku at a Japanese yakiniku restaurant to the Tejikara Fire Festival, Nagara River Fireworks, and the snow-covered Shirakawa-go. With my thesis ahead, the adventure continues!





# 'Aigi' Career Development Consortium for International Students: Gifu Region Workshop 2024'

October 30

On October 30, 'Aigi' Career Development Consortium for International Students<sup>2</sup>: Gifu Region Workshop 2024' was held to provide international students and local companies with employment matching opportunities. The 7<sup>th</sup> workshop was jointly organized by four member institutions of the Consortium : GU, Gifu Prefectural Government, Gifu Employer's Association, and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Gifu.

In the first part, titled 'Utilizing Highly Skilled International Talent in the Central Tokai Region: From the Perspective of Promoting Permanent Residency,' lectures were given by two guest speakers. Opening, Mr. USUDA Ryuji, President of Kyowa Co., Ltd.<sup>3</sup> spoke about hiring Vietnamese employees and efforts to retain these employees. Next, Ms. Kunnaratana Suwapith from Techno Preknead HIDA Co., Ltd.<sup>4</sup>, shared her experiences of job hunting, her current job, and her career path, all in Japanese.

In the second part, students were invited to visit company booths, where they interacted with company representatives. This year, 13 representatives from 11 companies and 14 international students from six countries participated. When surveyed following the event, students' feedback was largely positive. Here are some quotes - "The workshop was quite beneficial for students seeking jobs in Japan." "I gained a lot of useful information on how to find a job in Japan." "I strongly felt the appeal of central Tokai region as a place to live in and work for."

Company representatives also provided encouraging comments in review, such as the following: "After hearing about job-hunting experiences from the students, we now intend to review our hiring practices." "We deeply thank the workshop organizers for giving us invaluable opportunities to hear directly from the students." "We were able to build connections with individuals and organizations to find international talent."

GU does its utmost to help match international students with local companies and assist all its students in finding employment in Japan.

1) Short for Gifu Prefecture and Aichi Prefecture

2) Established in 2017 to support the domestic employment of international students through the collaboration of universities, local governments, economic organizations in Aichi and Gifu prefectures aligned with the objectives of MEXT of Japan.

3) Manufacturer of industrial and special purpose machines located in Seki City, Gifu Prefecture

4) Manufacturer of industrial rubber, and original chemical masterbatch "PREKNEAD," located in Kawabe Town, Kamo-Gun, Gifu Prefecture



## Gifu—Lithuania Ties



### A Special Lecture by Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to Japan

October 29

On October 29, GU-GLOCAL held a special lecture, for which His Excellency Dr. Aurelijus Zykas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to Japan, was invited as the guest speaker. This event was held as part of Gifu Prefectural Government-sponsored project 'Lithuania NOW 2024.' In the opening remarks, President Yoshida described the history of exchanges between GU and the Republic of Lithuania, including research and student exchanges with Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU). GU signed the interuniversity agreements with these two in 2012 and 2010, respectively. We also had the honor of welcoming President Gitanas Nausėda of Lithuania to give a special lecture in 2019.

In his lecture, Dr. Zykas spoke about his country's geography, culture, history, current affairs, and support for Ukraine. His speech in Japanese captivated the approximately 200 attendees, who displayed their intense interest by asking questions on a wide range of topics, such as the nation's high self-sufficiency in food, defense concerns, and energy policies, as well as the unique collaboration project between Lithuanian home cooking and a major Japanese chain restaurant.

This event was another fine example of the rewarding experiences in international exchange that GU offers to its students, staff, faculty members, and local residents.



### An Exchange Event with Kaunas University of Technology

October 17

On October 17, GU-GLOCAL welcomed a folk-dance group 'Nemunas' from Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) in the Republic of Lithuania. Approximately 80 people participated, including GU students, academic- and administrative - staff. The event started with opening remarks by President Yoshida. This was followed by a presentation on the history and features of GU and Gifu Prefecture given by the GU English Club. In return, Nemunas members gave a presentation on KTU, along with dance and song performances. Japanese participants were invited to join in Lithuania's traditional singing and dancing and gained some knowledge of the nation's cultural heritage. It is expected that the event will boost the numbers of student and faculty exchanges between GU and KTU.



## Message from Alumnus

### Life of International Student after Joining Industry as a Researcher

I graduated from the program at Gifu University in Sept. 2019 and worked as a Postdoctoral Researcher for two years and a Specially Appointed Assistant Professor for the following two. Since then, I have been working for Juzen Chemical Corporation at Toyama as a Researcher in the Oligonucleotide<sup>1</sup> team. My duties are to synthesize oligonucleotides as well as design new molecules and strategies for process development.

In addition to my research activities, I also make presentations to foreign companies for our overseas business development. I firmly believe that my lab activities and the International Students' Circle greatly helped me to grow as a researcher and develop my language ability.

1) short-chain molecules that link to form DNA or RNA



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