



# OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY

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## SDG University Management and Global Engagement Strategy



A student of Okayama University is selected as one of the representatives of the world youth at the One Young World summit.

### Promoting the ESD/SDGs initiatives in an integrated manner under the ESG for 2030

As a community-based and globally-oriented university, Okayama University places importance on the development of “all-round achievers” – individuals with the ability to act globally with a clear vision for the future – and

has been energetically carrying out interdisciplinary educational and research activities leveraging its advantages as a comprehensive university. To be specific, the entire university has been working on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015, building on the achievements of the Education for Sustainable

Development (ESD) initiatives the university has been promoting globally in cooperation with Okayama City and its vicinity.

In AY2019, the university announced the Okayama University Long-term Vision 2030, which declares that “As a research university that pursues sustainability and well-being, we

will train human resources and foster innovations for society to create new value for the local region and wider world.” With this declaration, the university started SDG university management. By making SDG initiatives an integral part of its management, the university aims to reform its educational, research, and university-industry engagement

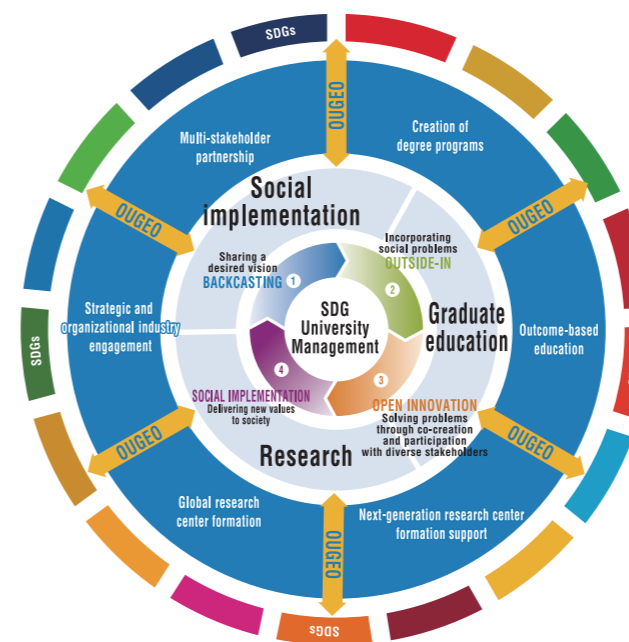


Diagram of Global Engagement Strategy

activities in an integrated manner, and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders in various sectors, thereby ensuring the autonomy of university management.

In November 2019, the 40th UNESCO General Conference adopted the new global framework on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) and its ethical framework, the Earth Charter. Following this, President Makino of Okayama University visited the United Nations-mandated University for Peace (UPEACE) and Earth Charter International (ECI) in December 2019. In January 2020, Okayama University became the world’s first university to sign a comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MoU) to foster human resources for the framework of “Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals” (STI for SDGs) with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In June 2020, the university signed another MoU with ECI and the Vice President for Global Engagement Strategy was elected as a member of the Earth Charter

International Council. In this way, Okayama University has effectively incorporated the ESD/SDGs initiatives in its management in an integrated manner and deepened the relationships with international agencies through its global engagement strategy, thus accelerating its effort to nurture “all-round achievers” with the ability to act globally to contribute to the creation of a sustainable society.



Okayama University signs an MoU with Earth Charter International

### Developing a community-based international hub for learning about the SDGs studies

Okayama University offers a diverse range of subjects relating to the SDGs. For example, all first-year students study the subject “How to walk the path to the SDGs” to deepen their understanding of the SDGs, which are common global goals,

and raise their awareness of how individual actions can contribute to achieving these goals. In subjects offered in the global-oriented social cooperative education, students, both Japanese and international, are grouped into inter-faculty teams to study the problems that face local communities and the world in a practical way.

The university also launched the Okayama University SDGs Ambassador program and appointed about 180 students to be SDGs Ambassadors. They have since been conducting voluntary activities for the SDGs with the support of the university.

Since AY2015, Okayama University has sent two students every year to One Young World (OYW), one of the world’s largest youth summits in which next-generation young leaders from more than 190 countries meet together annually. Okayama University is the first Japanese national university to become an official OYW partner. In OYW 2019 held in London, a student of Okayama University was selected as one of the representatives of the world youth, and discussed interfaith dialogue with incumbent leaders on the stage. This is particularly noteworthy, as he is the third Japanese to play this prestigious role in the OYW’s history.

In its effort to attract international students, Okayama University, in cooperation with Leiden University in the Netherlands, launched the Okayama University

Integrated Japanese Language and Culture Program for Leiden University in AY2018, which is designed to accept students of Leiden University at Okayama University to study the Japanese language and deepen understanding of Japanese culture, while fostering friendships with Japanese students. In AY2019, Okayama University became the first Japanese national university to be chosen as a host university for the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, a short-term study abroad program sponsored by the United States Department of State. In the first year of this program, Okayama University accepted 26 top-class American graduate and undergraduate students selected from among about 500 applicants from all over the U.S. for a two-month course to study the language and culture of Japan. The university arranged opportunities for these students to participate in extracurricular activities, stay with Japanese families and deepen understanding of local SDG initiatives with the support of 25 governmental bodies and businesses in Okayama Prefecture.

By fostering cooperative ties with partners, both Japanese and foreign, Okayama University hopes to make Okayama an international hub for community-based learning about the SDGs studies.

### Creating a world-class process of curriculum development and administration

Aiming to establish an international hub for learning about the SDGs

Okayama University

1-1-1 Tsushima-naka, Kita-ku, Okayama 700-8530, Japan  
 URL : <https://www.sgu.ccsv.okayama-u.ac.jp/en/>



Okayama University official website of the Top Global University Project



CLS Program participants learn Japanese culture hands-on.

studies, Okayama University is enhancing its organizational structure, and as part of this effort, opened the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) in the Institute for Education and Student Services in 2020.

As of AY2016, Okayama University completed the introduction of the numbering code system and creation of English syllabuses to increase the international compatibility of education. The university also introduced 60-minute classes and the quarter system university-wide, which helped raise the level of teaching but also shed light on areas that need to be improved.

The university therefore commenced efforts to develop an environment conducive to improving the quality of learner-centered education, including changing class length, and to build a world-class process of curriculum development and administration for the internal quality assurance for education. It is against this backdrop that the CTE was established. The main objective of the CTE is to offer organizational support to faculty members to enhance their pedagogical skills and improve the efficiency of educational practice, while deepening

cooperative relationships among faculty members and students.

The CTE is also actively developing new educational methods, such as EdTech. Currently, a project to develop EdTech teaching materials is being carried out under the leadership of the CTE, focusing on creating new contents and enhancing teaching methods and subjects. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, universities are under pressure to improve their online learning experience for students. In this light, the CTE is tasked with the important mission of assuring the quality of education provided online.

**Anticipating future needs to carry out graduate school reforms through a needs-driven approach**

As described above, Okayama University has established a community-based international-level educational system based on its ESD/SDGs initiatives. As a next step, the university is set to embark on the internationalization of its graduate education. To be specific, the university will accelerate graduate-school reforms under its global engagement strategy in line with the Long-term Vision 2030.

This new endeavor will focus on the SDGs, the common language of the world. Okayama University aims to promote the development of world-class “knowledge professionals” through university-industry-community collaboration for open innovation

(co-education and co-creation), by anticipating the future needs of the community and the world and leveraging the advantages of being a comprehensive university with a wealth of interdisciplinary academic resources. By taking a needs-driven approach for graduate school reforms and implementing new programs to meet the demands of society, the university hopes to develop human resources and knowledge with considerable influence on society. The university’s graduate education reforms are carried out under the leadership of the newly established CTE, which will reorganize all the graduate schools under a degree program system, introduce an internationally-compatible outcome-based education program, and establish process of curriculum development and administration that allows the entire process of graduate education—from curriculum design, implementation and assessment to improvement—to be implemented in an integrated manner.

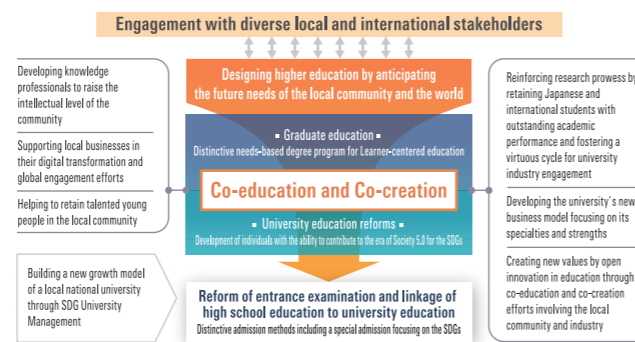
Enhancement of graduate education is inseparably linked with the reinforcement of

research prowess. With this recognition, Okayama University, as a Research University for the Advancement of SDGs and Well-being, is reinforcing its research prowess by program to support the formation of next-generation research initiative and building an international research hub, while promoting university-industry engagement activities efforts strategically and systematically. In so doing, the university aims to foster competent human resources and bring innovations to society, thereby continuing to create new values for the world and communities.



A project to develop EdTech teaching materials is under way.

By reinforcing the educational, research and university-industry engagement activities efforts based on an understanding of the challenges and demands of society, the university believes that it can increase its presence as a nexus of knowledge creation. Okayama University, a locally-based comprehensive



Expected effects of graduate school reforms through a needs-driven approach

university, is expected to contribute to solving global challenges with its educational and research resources combined with local resources under its global engagement strategy, and to serve as a gateway to the world for the local community.

**Advancing to a new stage of internationalization with co-education and co-creation efforts**

With the end of the Top Global University Project drawing near, universities are exploring how they can continue to enhance their internationalization efforts under their own initiatives.

Okayama University has been striving to deepen relationships with the local community and the

world through its commitment to the SDGs, the common language of the world, and foster partnerships with businesses, governmental agencies, academic institutions, financial institutions and the press. Such inter-organizational collaboration has given the university a stronger footing for implementing various meaningful programs.

Moreover, Okayama University places importance on investing in ESG investment: the university aims to increase joint research and other co-creation opportunities with businesses in an open innovation setting by offering solutions to match the needs of industry while focusing on sustainability.

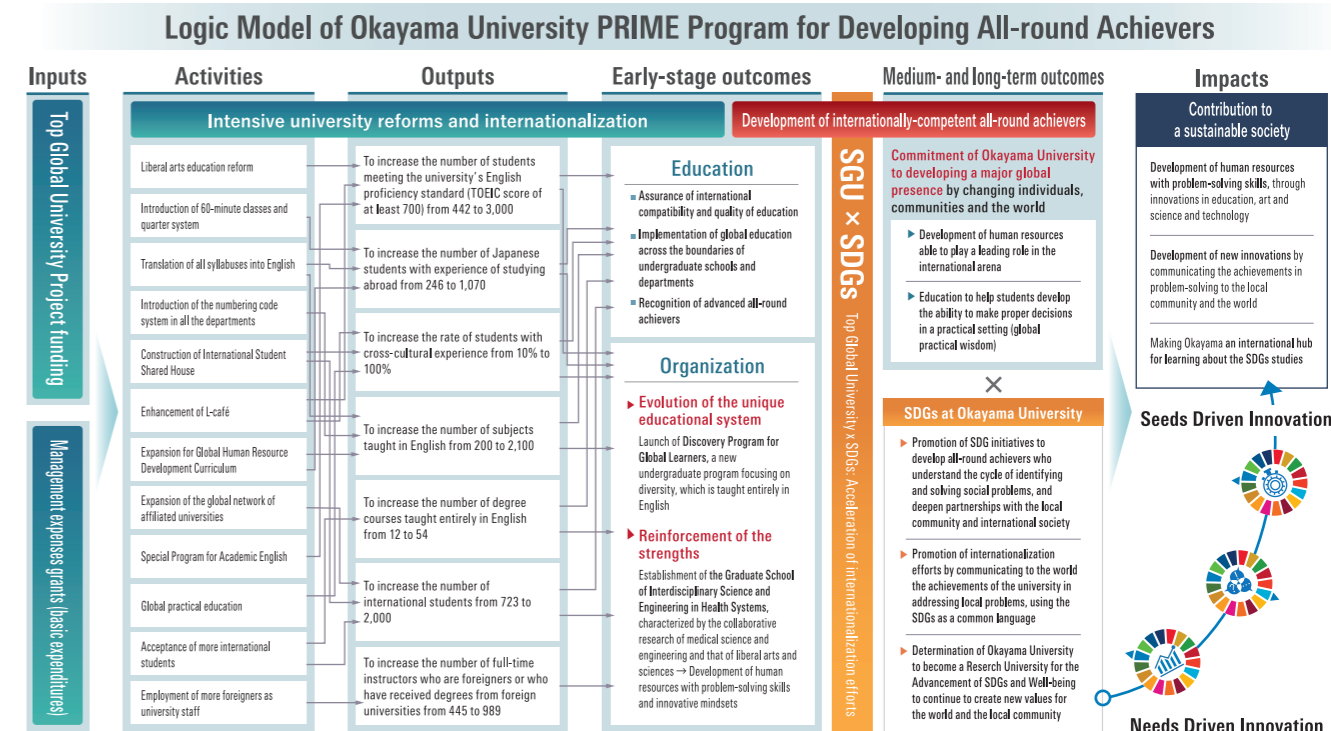
Okayama University has also

enhanced its internal organizational structure by establishing Okayama University Global Engagement Office (OUGEO) and International Strategy Council, as well as the CTE mentioned above, with a view to promoting inter-departmental collaboration to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its education.

Having enhanced its internal organizational structure in parallel with reinforcing cooperation with the local community and the world through the ESD/SDGs initiatives, Okayama University has proven its ability to provide global education that meets the needs of future society. The university’s efforts have yielded concrete results, as evidenced by the fact that 832 students had received the Advanced All-round

Achievement Award by AY2019. This award recognizes students with outstanding achievements by visualizing students’ performance using common rubrics.

Okayama University will continue to burnish its international presence by promoting the ESD/SDGs initiatives in an integrated manner to enhance its research prowess and reinforce the university-industry co-creation efforts. The current Covid-19 situation has forced us to reconsider the conventional ways of international collaboration and regional development. In this light, the endeavors of Okayama University to promote global education in partnership with stakeholders in a diverse range of sectors deserve special attention.



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