Global
International Joint Degree Program to connect with the world

An Unprecedented Approach towards Globalization of Medical Research

At Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine, founded on a seamless philosophy in undergraduate through graduate level education, we established the first joint PhD degree program in Japan to promote globalization. We asked some of the faculty members at the center of this initiative to speak about the program — future vistas and exciting content — and how it will lead to the nurture and development of both our students and Nagoya University itself.

KASUYA, Hideki

EL. KARBANI, Ossama Ahmed Lotfi

ALEKSIC, Branko

A First in Japan, Leaders in World-Class Medical Education
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A Joint Degree Program with a foreign university realized in Japan for the very first time

KASUYA | Our goal is to educate our students to become internationally active, both as clinicians and researchers, and to focus on instilling global awareness and English communication skills from the undergraduate medical school all the way through the graduate program. Students begin learning medical English from their freshman year, culminating in overseas clinical training in their final Year 6. Many of the students who receive overseas clinical training also go on to show interest in the Joint Degree Program (JDP). More and more outstanding high school students are attracted to our rich program, and they aim to enter our highly-competitive undergraduate program, while about 100 foreign students are currently enrolled in our graduate school.

ALEKSIC | It’s my job to support these foreign students. I’m also a psychiatrist, so I can provide psychological support as well, listening to their opinions and creating a friendly environment for them to study in. I’m also actively involved in thoroughly supporting Japanese medical students to hone their English skills so that they will not fall off on the same footing as the foreign students when they enter graduate school.

KASUYA | Our graduate school has concluded an agreement with the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide in Australia to offer a JDP. This was established in 2015 at the International Collaborative Program in Comprehensive Medical Science between Nagoya University and the University of Adelaide.” Students will spend at least 1 year of their 4-year doctoral program abroad at the partner university, conducting research and ultimately be awarded a joint PhD degree from both universities. Students are already enrolled in this program at both universities and are currently studying in preparation for their time abroad. In April 2017, Nagoya University also concluded another agreement with Lund University in Sweden and will begin accepting students into this program. We are also currently in talks to set up an additional JDP with the University of Freiburg in Germany.

EL-KABBANI | I have come to this graduate school to shoulder the responsibility of administering the JDP. As this program begins, I have introduced the students and researchers at Nagoya University to information about our partner university, and am currently involved in creating a syllabus. As we move forward with this program, we will have to compromise, and overcome many hurdles. However, when we encounter differences in our approach to the syllabus, for example, we will listen to each other’s opinions and work together to bring things to a good outcome. Every year, we hold an international joint symposium with Nagoya University, University of Adelaide, and University of Freiburg in Germany and have been doing so for some years now to facilitate student networking and to provide students with opportunities to present their research. I believe that it was through our continued efforts in activities such as these that we have provided the foundation for the current program.

Education and Research connected to the world as the University Evolves

KASUYA | The greatest appeal of JDP from a student’s perspective, is that they will acquire invaluable experience conducting research abroad, early in their career. The ability to understand another person’s perspective while in another culture and adapt accordingly, is an essential trait that any good researcher should acquire. Our program would provide young researchers with an opportunity to do just that. It also has the advantage of allowing students to connect with the potential networks they will need to conduct research on an international scale in the future. Although Nagoya University is not a widely-recognized abroad as it deserves, Lund University and the University of Adelaide are both among the leading 100 universities in the world, and quite renowned in Europe and the US. Holding a joint degree from either of these 2 universities would be proof that our graduates have received the finest graduate-level education, ensuring students’ futures and allowing them to receive international recognition in international academic societies.

ALEKSIC | I see you are absolutely right. Giving young researchers an opportunity to experience and work in research environments abroad is vital to expanding their international awareness as well. Collaborative research among laboratories is essential to continued progress, and JDP will no doubt become the first step towards global cooperative research. Participation in global research collections on university rankings, and we become involved in more of these studies, it will provide Nagoya University with a huge advantage.

KASUYA | I also believe JDP will prove an initiative that introduces many students may feel that each other’s curriculum will provide an opportunity to adapt those methods to our own curriculum, and better understanding of the research conducted at individual laboratories will provide opportunities for more collaborative research among laboratories. This is essential to continued progress, and this JDP will certainly become the first step towards global cooperative research. Participation in global research collections on university rankings, and we become involved in more of these studies, it will provide Nagoya University with a huge advantage.

By being familiar with the healthcare system in Japan and having knowledge of people in different countries, we can contribute to the development of the country and bring new ideas to the Japanese healthcare system.

KASUYA | We have a long tradition of accepting foreign students into our programs, and many students from abroad, including tap universities in the US and Europe, apply to our undergraduate clinical practice programs. We are only able to accept about 35 students every year, but we have been able to welcome about 80 students each year, so there is no reason to think that this help will not be provided to all the students.

Education and Research connected to the world as the University Evolves

EL-KABBANI | The quality of education at Nagoya University is very high, and the rapid and advanced globalization of our program explains its popularity. We are involved in many major joint research projects, and this is also an advantage. Compared with the Japanese healthcare system in Japan which is quite different from those in other countries, so you can learn a lot from the healthcare system in Japan. As a result, we would like to be the first to keep these differences in mind and adjust accordingly.

KASUYA | We have a two-year history of accepting foreign students into our programs, and many students from abroad, including tap universities in the US and Europe, apply to our undergraduate clinical practice programs. We are only able to accept about 35 students every year, but we have been able to welcome about 80 students each year, so there is no reason to think that this help will not be provided to all the students.

KASUYA | We plan to spread the JDP even further. In addition to the University of Adelaide and Lund University, we intend to sign an agreement with University of Freiburg within the next few years. Currently, the program is still limited in its numbers as we start, but we hope to continue increasing the number of applicants both from within and outside our university.

EL-KABBANI | Currently, we offer a joint degree between 2 universities, but as the number of our joint universities expands, the possibility may arise for joint degrees with 5 universities, another first in Japan. It is an ambitious goal, but since our graduate school of medicine has already succeeded in creating a first in Japan, we hope to continue increasing challenges as we expand our research activities.

ALEKSIC | In several years, I look forward to seeing some of the first graduates from our JDP return to Nagoya University. They will have had experience in collaborative research with the partner university, and be able to conduct on-going research while guiding our students as educators who possess an international perspective. By utilizing their overseas experience in education, they will help to accelerate the globalization of our graduate school for further expansion of JDP.

KASUYA | Exactly. Our graduate school aims to build an integrated cycle. Students who have studied an organized curriculum during undergraduate training will undergo clinical training after graduating, and then return to Nagoya University to earn a JDP. We will continue developing our system to improve our programs so that the JDP will lead to the creation of world-class medical researchers. Currently, we are already in the lead among medical schools in Japan promoting globalization of our program, and hope to advance our position as we move ever forward towards the future.