

# Press Release

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## **KCUE Research Institute of Higher Education Examines Japan's International Student Policy and Case Studies to Suggest Implications for Korea's International Student Policy**

- The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) Research Institute of Higher Education has published the "*Analysis of Current Issues in Higher Education*," a source book that facilitates the examination of key issues in higher education, thereby helping universities find solutions and develop policy implications. The latest *Analysis of Current Issues in Higher Education* in 2024 covers four topics, including "The Current Status of Japan's International Student Policy and Implications."
  
- In the "Current Status of Japan's International Student Policy and Implications," the authors examined the evolution and current status of Japan's international student policy, which has been primarily driven by the government since the 1980s, and made suggestions for policy improvements based on their findings. Notable points from the article include: the need for cooperation among government ministries and agencies for the entire process of recruitment, enrollment, graduation, employment, and follow-up of international students; the development of programs to attract outstanding international candidates and help them find employment and settle in Korea; and the establishment of a dedicated institution that has the structure and expertise to manage international student-related tasks. Below is a summary of the article.

- Japan launched a comprehensive international student recruitment policy in the early 1980s with the "Plan to Attract 100,000 International Students". This was followed in 2008 by the "Plan to Attract 300,000 International Students," under which the government aimed to attract 300,000 international students by 2020. To this end, six government ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, worked together to establish a framework to manage the entire process from entrance examinations, admission, arrival, building a supportive environment for universities and society, employability, and career development after graduation. Through comprehensive and organized collaboration among relevant ministries, Japan achieved the goal ahead of the plan in 2019. In 2023, it launched the "Plan to Attract 400,000 International Students" by 2033. While the previous Plans to Attract 100,000 and 300,000 International Students, respectively, focused on the quantitative expansion of international students, the Plan to Attract 400,000 International Students emphasizes the qualitative aspects of international students and the attraction and settlement of outstanding international students who will contribute to the development of the Japanese economy.
- Japan's international student policy is characterized by structured and organized policy implementation through coordination and cooperation among key government ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Its international student policy has been driven by the government with a primary focus on gradual quantitative growth. More recently, the focus of the policy has shifted from quantitative expansion to encouraging the settlement of outstanding international students.

- In Japan, the number of international students declined to ~230,000 in 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19, before recovering and stabilizing at ~280,000 students in 2023. The Plan to Attract 400,000 International Students aims to achieve specific quantifiable goals by 2033, including 1) maintaining the upward trend in the number of international students in higher education institutions and Japanese language institutions, 2) achieving the OECD average level of international students at the undergraduate level, 3) attracting international students to doctoral programs, and 4) increasing the number of international students in high school by 2033 through policies to enhance the international competitiveness and acceptability of Japanese universities by policies to strengthen the international reputation and competitiveness of Japanese universities.
- As an employability policy for international students, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology launched the "International Student Employability Program" in 2017 with the aim of helping international students find employment in Japan. The main programs pursued under this policy include: the "Global Leadership Program" of Gunma University, the "SUCCESS-OSAKA" program of Kansai University, and the "EPY" program of Yamagata University.
- Japan's international student policy has many similarities with Korea's in that it aims to address social crises such as a decline in the school-age population due to an aging population and low birth rate, and a decline in the working-age population by attracting international students. In particular, their recent international student policies have emphasized their post-graduation settlement by providing employment support, from which the following implications can be drawn.
  - First, it is essential to develop programs and improve systems for the employment and settlement of outstanding international students in Korea.

According to a study conducted by KEDI in 2022, only 8% of international students in Korea found employment in Korea, 11% continued their studies in Korea, and 29% returned to their home countries. In contrast, 44.3% of international students in Japan found employment in Japan (JASSO, 2022). The reason for the poor employability of international students in Korea is the lack of programs and systems to help them find employment and settle in Korea, which is partly due to insufficient employment information and restrictions on activities allowed by their residence visa. Therefore, it is advisable to evaluate the employability programs for international students at Japanese universities discussed in the case studies in order to develop programs that connect international students with companies interested in hiring them.

- Second, a dedicated organization is needed to coordinate among various ministries, facilitate the recruitment of international students, and manage the entire process from recruitment and enrollment to graduation, employment, and follow-up management. In Japan, the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) takes on the role of overall management of international student-related tasks, such as international student scholarships, study abroad information, Japanese language education centers, and international student exchange programs. Although some of these services are provided by the National Institute for International Education in Korea, there is still a need for an organization responsible for coordinating among government ministries and agencies related to the recruitment and support of international students.
- Third, an integrated framework for attracting outstanding international students and helping them find employment and settle in Korea should be established to ensure that attracting international students works as a solution to the crisis of a declining working-age population due to Korea's low birth rate and aging population.

□ A KCUE official said, "Japan's efforts to overcome the crisis of a declining

school-age and working-age population by creating a supportive environment for the employment and settlement of outstanding international talents through policies to attract international students has many implications for Korea. We will continue to develop various materials to analyze current issues in higher education and develop plans for its development.