

New Examination for International Students in Japan

- To enable international students to secure admission to Japanese educational institutions before coming to Japan (summary)

Committee for "New Examination for International Students in Japan"

1. Development of the "New Examination for International Students in Japan"

(1) The procedures and processes that international students wishing to study in Japan must go through to secure admission to an educational institution in Japan are substantially more complex and difficult than the equivalent procedures in Europe and the U.S.A. The difficulty and daunting nature of this system has been a major factor in the reluctance of many overseas students to come and study here in Japan.

To attract more outstanding international students from all over the world to Japan, it is essential that we enable students to go through admission procedures without having to come to Japan. After considering this problem in depth, the council has formulated a new system for assessing applications from overseas students wishing to study in Japan. This system is the New Examination for International Students in Japan.

(2) The new examination assesses the Japanese-language ability and basic academic ability of international students wishing to enroll and study at a Japanese university (undergraduate) or other higher education institution. The formal name of the exam will be the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students(EJU)" (hereinafter referred to by this name).

(3) The current "General Examination for Foreign Students" will be administered up to the year before the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students" is introduced. Once the new examination system is implemented, Japanese-language ability will be assessed by a Japanese-language test in the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students" rather than by the results in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (Level 1 to Level 4) as is done at present.

(4) The "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students" will not be used for assessing applications for graduate schools (post-graduate study programs). This is because academic requirements and other conditions vary greatly from one graduate school to another and also because graduate schools often run their own hosting programs with other universities, for example, to exchange research and teaching staff. Individual graduate schools will carry out their own selection procedures.

2. A Basic Outline of the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students"

(1) Exam subjects

Exam subjects and their duration are given below. The questions in each exam are set according to a syllabus for each subject.

Liberal arts: Japanese as a Foreign Language (120 min.), general knowledge ("Japan and the World") (80 min.), mathematics (80 min.)

Natural sciences: Japanese as a Foreign Language (120 min.), science (choice of two from physics, chemistry and biology: 80 min.), mathematics (80 min.)

Note that the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students" will not include an English-language test. English ability will be assessed using TOEFL scores or other measures according to the standards of individual universities.

(2) Exam language

The exam questions are available in both Japanese and English. (The Japanese-language test is only available in Japanese.)

In all Japanese versions of exams, the names of foreigners, technical terms and the like will be given in English as well as Japanese.

(3) Answering style

Japanese as a Foreign Language: Multiple choice (using a "mark sheet") and written answers

Basic academic ability: Multiple choice (using a "mark sheet")

(4) Assessment and results

Since the exam will be held several times a year, scores will be equated for the year. Also, instead of giving students unadjusted raw scores, results will be standardized to adjust for variations in the difficulty of tests from year to year. This way students will get a fairer evaluation of their exam performance.

At this point it has not been decided whether exam results will remain valid for several years after students sit for the exam. We are making further investigations into this question.

(5) Exam times

Examinations will be held twice a year, in June and in November, beginning in 2002.

(6) Exam sites

In Japan: One venue in each of the following regions: Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Kyushu and Okinawa

Overseas: To begin with, approx. 10 cities, mainly in Asia

(7) Selection of exam subjects by universities

Universities and other higher education institutions that use the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students" for their selection of overseas students can

ask applicants to take only certain specified subjects from the subjects tested in the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students."

(8) Administering organizations

In Japan, the Association of International Education, Japan (AIEJ) will administer the new examination in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports & Culture, universities and related organizations, and specialists in the fields of study tested in the exam. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will administer the examination in overseas locations with the cooperation of the Japan Foundation and related organizations in the countries where exams are held.

(9) Trial examination

A trial examination will be held in November 2001, both in Japan and overseas locations, for students wishing to study in Japan.

3. Support Measures for the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students"

(1) To enable more and more overseas students to secure places at Japanese higher education institutions before coming to Japan, it is important to work towards setting up a system that allows students to acquire scholarships in their home countries. One obvious way of doing this would be to offer scholarships to students who obtain high scores in "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students."

(2) AIEJ intends to make comprehensive use of Information Technology (IT) to actively collect and distribute information relating to the "Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students."

(3) Along with making it easier for overseas students to gain admission to Japanese universities without coming to Japan, it is essential to provide supplementary Japanese-language education to strengthen the Japanese ability of students after they have entered their universities. To do this, we need to immediately consider various measures, such as making use of foreign student centers at universities and working together with Japanese-language schools outside of universities.

(4) To host more and more international students in Japan in the future, we need to promote more Japanese-language education overseas that is tailored for students wishing to study in Japan.