

Autumn Entry into Japanese Universities: How a structural change enhanced global citizenship development opportunities for Japanese students

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Abstract:

When *Nikkei* reported in July 2011 that the University of Tokyo would begin admitting students in the autumn instead of in the spring, which has been customary at almost all Japanese educational institutions for over 90 years, the Japanese people, regardless of their age, sex or affiliation, began debating whether this was a desirable and feasible practice.

The transition to autumn admissions at Japanese universities attracted little attention abroad, but in Japan there are articles published about it almost every day, not only in *Nikkei* but also in other major media, such as *Asahi* and *NHK*, and most of the reporters have focused on issues like the “gap term” or “gap year.” This clearly shows that there is an information gap that must be filled.

In my presentation, I attempt to narrow the gap by pointing out why and how autumn entrance is important for both Japanese and foreign higher education institutions that nurture global citizens. I employ the keyword “articulation” that has been used for over a thousand times in articles discussing higher education worldwide but not in relation to this particular issue.

There are two reasons that articulation is a keyword when discussing the transition to autumn admissions at universities. First, in a domestic context, the gap term is an issue of articulation among higher education institutions and high schools in Japan, and the latter are not likely to abolish spring entrance. Second, in an international context, this practice will lead to the seamless connection of higher education institutions in Japan and those abroad, not only in their entrance timing but also in their curricula, including a course numbering system for a smooth credit transfer, and the languages they use for instruction.

Key Words:

autumn entrance, articulation, course numbering system, credit transfer, gap term