Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education in Japan

Akiyoshi Yonezawa (Nagoya University)
Takuya Akiyama (MEXT)
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1. INTRODUCTION
Historical Background of Japanese Education System

• Tradition to put importance of academic credentials in East Asia (originated from China: ‘Post Confucian State’ by Marginson)

• Achievement of EFA in the early stage: compulsory education extended from 4 years to 6 years in 1907, to 9 years after WWII, more than 90% enrolled in 12 year education by mid-1970s

• Secondary education graduates (in both academic and vocational tracks) are automatically eligible to apply for tertiary education (i.e. no national exam in the end of secondary education like Baccalauréat or Abitur)

• The government has tried to limit the enrolment in to public higher education sector from the beginning of the modern education in order to maintain the quality of education and training within its highly limited public resources
GERs of Tertiary Education (1975)
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Heavily relied on the private sector
Public Subsidy to Private Universities and Colleges

1961-1969

1970-1975

1976-1980 (1st HE Plan)

1981-1986 (2nd HEP)

1986-1992 (3rd HEP)

1992- (4th & 5th HEP)

1992-

Control of Student Enrolment including Private Universities
18 year old population

First baby boomers

Second baby boomers

MEXT DATA

MIC DATA
Enrollment of new students in HE
Enrollment ratio against 18 year old population
2. UNIVERSITY ADMISSION AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
2-1. Current system

- Respect of autonomous decision of prospective universities
- Legal requirements related to admission towards higher education
  - Graduation of secondary education or equivalent academic ability (School Education Law 90)
  - Authorization by the university president after the approval at the professoriate (Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law 144)
  - Official announcement of the admission policy (Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law 172-2)
  - Admission through the fair and viable screening methods under the proper system and procedure (Standards for Establishment of Universities 2-2)
- MEXT publish the *Guideline for the Implementation of University Admission* annually.
Guideline for the Implementation of University Admission 2014

1. Basic policy
2. Admission policy
3. Screening methods
4. Schedule of entrance examinations and screening
5. Academic record of secondary schools
6. Examination of academic ability
7. Decision and announcement of the subjects of entrance examination and the screening methods
8. Number of students to be recruited
9. Eligibility for application
10. Guideline for application
11. Admission to national universities
12. Admission to local public universities
13. Others

http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/06/11/1281953_01.pdf
Admission Policy
School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University

Under Waseda University's educational philosophy of Academic Independence and an Enterprising Spirit, SILS welcomes domestic and international students with strong basic academic skills and intellectual curiosity.

1. The school is committed to recruiting students who are strongly motivated to study in English.
2. with the linguistic ability or potential to communicate effectively in at least English/Japanese.
3. with the all-round academic ability or potential to approach problems from more than one disciplinary perspective.
4. with the critical ability or potential to analyze issues from an independent perspective.
5. with the rhetorical ability or potential to express themselves with clarity and precision when presenting or discussing ideas and information.
6. who bring a wide range of cultural and educational experience both at the local and the global level to the SILS community.
7. who have the adaptability and flexibility to respond to the social and psychological challenges of living and studying in an unfamiliar environment.
8. who have the readiness and willingness to consider intellectual and moral questions from an international and comparative perspective.

Each single admission route into SILS is intended to embody several of these principles, while the overall admissions system endeavors to reflect them all.
2-2. Historical development

• By the end of WWII
  – Universities: subject tests or recommendation from high schools or through preparatory program for university education
  – High schools (gymnasium, a party of higher education): subject test and (later) school records

• Scholastic Aptitude Test: 1947-1954
• Common First Stage Examination 1979-1989
• National Center Test for University Admission 1991-
• Paradigm Shift: From selection to mutual choice (2000-) more policy focus to the articulation and transition
3-1. Challenges: Requirement for human resource development in the ageing society

• Shortage of academic readiness and learning engagement
  – Universal access to HE
  – Screening function at university admission became weaker
  – Diversification of admission processes: recommendation, Admission Office, etc.

• Articulation between SE and HE
  – Qualitative transformation of undergraduate education

• Equity and financial support
  – Safety net for learning for realizing universal access to HE
3-2. Policy Responses

- Revision of curriculum guideline of secondary education
  - Enhancing “zest for living”
  - Acquisition of knowledge and skills
  - Development of thinking ability, decision making ability, and expression ability.
  - Critical thinking, writing skills, problem solving, internship and volunteers
  - Redefinition of core competencies
  - Introduction of achievement test (under discussion)
• University education
  – Clarification of achievement goals of undergraduate education both at the national and university levels
  – Enhancement of management capacity in education and learning
  – Quality assurance in response to the globalization
  – Provision of university information database

• Articulation
  – Knowledge intensive screening to the enhancement of learning ability
  – Introduction of common achievement test (under discussion)
    • Two types: (1) basic knowledge and ability, (2) readiness for university education
    • More than one times in a year
• Internationalization
  – Increasing the learning opportunities in International Baccalaureate
  – University education in English language
  – Invitation of 300,000 international students by 2020
  – Sending Japanese youth to study abroad
  – Facilitation of student exchange through credit transfer and double/joint degrees
  → Global human resources
Identification of ‘global human resources’ as industrial policies (METI 2010)

Communication ability in foreign language (particularly in English, which is widely used in the world)

Ability to understand and take advantage of different cultures

Fundamental Competencies for Working Persons

- Ability to step forward (action)
  - Ability to take a step forward and try patiently even after failure
  - Ability to work on others

- Ability to think well (thinking)
  - Ability to ask questions and think well
    - Ability to find problems
    - Ability to plan
    - Ability to create

- Ability to work in a team (teamwork)
  - Ability to cooperate with diversified people in achieving a goal
    - Ability to provide information
    - Flexibility
    - Submission to discipline
    - Ability to listen carefully
    - Ability to understand situations
    - Ability to control stress

* “Fundamental Competencies for Working Persons” = This is a concept proposed by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), that means basic skills required for a person to work with various people in the workplace or local society.
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE VISION
Enhancement of individuals’ learning ability at the ageing society

• Consistent support for individuals’ learning by the stakeholders (universities, governments, industry, etc.)
• Wider range of support for articulation from SE to HE, and to the labor market
• Achievement or outcome based learning assessment
• Enhancement of learning engagement
• Internationalization of education and enhancement of student mobility
RECENT DISCUSSION AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
• Address on Higher education Policy of the current cabinet.
  “The Power of University is The Power of Nation” (by the Prime Minister Abe)

• Creation of the Education Rebuilding Implementation Council (Since Jan 2013)
• The Council’s Agenda: the future of connections among high schools and universities (Since June 2013)

• Challenges:
  – ensuring students’ acquisition of basic academic ability
  – the excessive energy spent toward university entrance examinations
• Challenges
  – ensuring students’ acquisition of basic academic ability

• Reform direction (Under discussion)
  – the introduction of new common achievement test
  – Major issues under discussion
    • How many times can students take the test?
    • Test schedule
    • Whether the test should be compulsory or not
    • Subjects and levels (two types?)
• Challenges:
  – the excessive energy spent toward university entrance examinations

• Reform direction (Under discussion)
  – shift the screening process toward evaluating and judging the abilities and motivation of students in a multifaceted and comprehensive manner through interview, essay and so forth
• The better linkage between secondary and higher education
  – enhancing high schools career guidance,
  – more chances to try lessons at higher education level,
  – promoting universities information disclosure
  – promoting remedial education or developmental education at university
Thank you!