

【Name of project】(Adopted FY 2022)

International Collaboration between Japanese, British, and American Universities to Create Resilient Societies

【Summary of Inter-University Exchange Projects】



【Summary of Exchange program】

This program is conducted by Tohoku University, which is a leader in sustainable society creation efforts, and like-minded counterpart universities abroad, to create a foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion that will be the basis for realizing resilient societies while implementing international exchange and education for undergraduate students in Japan, the UK, and the US that fosters a mindset of "global resilience," in addition to cultivating leaders who will realize the creation and international growth of "global resilient societies" based on cutting-edge graduate-level educational research. It will contribute to the cultivation of leaders who will act as bridges between Japan and other countries by allowing students to learn together on-location in places affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake—a prominent site of resilient society implementation.

【Global Human Resource on the project】

The program will foster global leaders who will contribute to the solving of environmental/social issues such as climate change, and the creation and international growth of future societies that are resilient to natural disasters and pandemics, and in which people can lead fulfilling lives. Specifically, it will 1) broadly foster leaders who are conscious of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); understand green technologies, SDGs, and disaster prevention/mitigation from an international perspective; and have a "global resilience mindset." At the graduate level, in addition to the above, it will 2) foster highly specialized leaders who will contribute to implementing resilient societies through cutting-edge joint research/advising in collaboration with prominent overseas universities.

【Features of the project】

In 2021, as the culmination of its 10 years of effort since the Great East Japan Earthquake, Tohoku University moved forward with its university-wide "Green Goals Initiative," which is composed of three pillars: ① restoration & resilience, ② green technology, and ③ social innovation & inclusion.

We will implement an international exchange/education program that cultivates multi-tiered global resilience, and we additionally aim to create a joint diploma program together with partner universities in UK and the US with which we have built strategic relationships (University College London, University of York, University of East Anglia, University of Washington) under a university-wide system of accountability and cooperation based on this project's mid/long-term vision.

【Exchange number】

		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Out bound	Students studying abroad	3	10	15	20	22
	Students taking online international education and exchange programs in their home countries	5	10	10	10	10
	Students fulfilling both of the above requirements	0	0	5	10	15
In bound	Students studying abroad	0	10	20	25	30
	Students taking online international education and exchange programs in their home countries	5	5	5	5	5
	Students fulfilling both of the above requirements	5	5	10	15	15

1. FY 2022 Progress

【Tohoku University】

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■ Exchange Programs



〈 Implementation Status of Online Short Program 〉

✓ Began mid/long-term exchange study abroad (outbound/inbound) from fall of the 2022 academic year.

✓ Implemented 4-week short-term outbound program abroad and online short program for students from collaborating UK universities.

✓ Held a student-led workshop for opinion exchange led by students from collaborating UK universities at the World BOSAI Forum (hereafter, WBF) in March.

Student-Mobility

○ Outbound Japanese students

In addition to sending exchange students abroad, in collaboration with the University of York (our longtime partner) we sent 20 students overseas on a short-term program held especially for Tohoku University students.

○ Inbound international students

We also received 5 mid/long-term inbound exchange students from University of York and University of East Anglia. The opportunity for student-led presentations was provided by the participation of 6 students (combined) from University College London and University of Washington in WBF. As part of development for a short-term program for students from partner universities, we held an experiential online program for students from 3 collaborating UK universities. With opportunities for interaction and opinion exchange with TU students in every session, it was a valuable cultural and educational experience for students on both sides.

	2022	
	Planned	Actual
Outbound Students	8	21
Inbound Students	10	16

■ Forming the University Network with Quality Assurance

In AY 2022 steering and implementation committees were founded; each held 1 meeting. The coordinators also had frequent opportunities for discussions to share information and opinions, build consensus, and share objectives.

We are also solidifying ideas for the Joint Graduate Program with a collaborating university, proceeding with discussions on starting new student exchange programs, new internship program, and new joint research cooperation, and expanding existing programs and encouraging participation by students from UK partner schools.



〈 Status of Discussions with University College London 〉

■ Promotion of Student-Mobility Environment

With the resumption of overseas travel, the university aims to provide even better support for outbound/inbound students, who may have little overseas experience. Specifically, for outbound students we are providing predeparture training and risk management through insurance enrollment, etc. to mitigate unforeseen problems/accidents. For inbound international students, we provide pre-arrival information on immigration procedures as well as post-arrival orientations, and inbound reporting and mentoring systems through the new International Support Center and International Student Help Desk.

In addition, we provide an enriching environment through its co-educational international housing and various exchange events organized by student staff.

■ Internationalization of the University, Information Disclosure and Publication of Outcome

A website was created to publicize the project, its initiatives, and events; we are currently planning to expand the content it offers. At the March WBF we ran a student-led workshop for opinion exchange with University College London and University of Washington and hosted sessions to present joint research results, which in addition to communicating our vision of resilient society creation to the world also promoted international cooperation/exchange in research and education conducted by the International Research Institute of Disaster Science.



〈 World BOSAI Forum Initiatives 〉

■ Good Practices

We implemented fieldwork in the zone affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake with collaborating UK/US universities and international students/researchers involved in disaster science. Participants visited the devastated and rebuilt areas, heard the experiences of firsthand witnesses, and learned much about not only the earthquake but also Tohoku's culture, history, topography, disaster tourism, and reconstruction status.

2. FY2023 Progress

【Name of project】 (Year Adopted: FY2022)

International Collaboration between Japanese, British, and American Universities to Create Resilient Societies

■ Exchange Programs



- ✓ 4 students from University College London (UCL) were accepted as IRIDeS interns in August 2023.
- ✓ 47 students went to University of York for short (3- or 4-week) study abroad programs during the long summer and spring vacations.
- ✓ Discussions on the establishment of the Joint Graduate Program in Resilient Society Building (tentative title) are steadily progressing.

〈 Science and engineering fundamentals seminar (for TSSP) 〉

Student-Mobility

○ Outbound

In summer 2023 and spring 2024 we implemented the Study Abroad Program York, sending 47 of our students on short overseas studies at University of York, which is one of our partner schools. Program content focused on DEI and employability, both of which are essential to improving societal resilience. We also sent 3 students for medium-length and individual short-term study abroad, which contributed to greatly exceeding our planned numbers.

○ Inbound

With COVID-19 movement restrictions loosening, we resumed regular inbound international student operations. Our existing in-person short-term programs, such as our Japanese language and culture program (TUJP), science summer program (TSSP) and engineering program (TESP) resumed, accepting 21 participants from partner universities. All of these programs include fieldwork in disaster-affected areas providing learning about resilient societies, and Intercultural Collaborative Learning focusing on the crucial element of DEI.

Also, 4 students from the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction performed a 4-week internship at our International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS) in August 2023. The students who participated conducted interview surveys with local residents and businesses in areas affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, experienced the regional culture, and gained valuable knowledge.

	2023	
	Plan	Results
Outbound	20	53
Inbound	20	35

■ Forming the University Network with Quality Assurance

Because this program spans multiple university departments, a steering committee meeting, attended by deans from the relevant graduate schools, and executive committee meeting, attended by administrative staff, were held. Additionally, the relevant personnel periodically hold meetings to ensure tight communication and cooperation within the university. Self-evaluation of our progress is conducted by an external evaluation committee comprising disaster science researchers, instructors with deep experience in international student exchange, and experts from the Sendai International Association.



〈 Student-led workshop 〉

■ Promotion of Student-Mobility Environment

We are conducting pre-departure learning, insurance enrollment, and risk management, and discussing ways to prevent accidents/issues. We are providing solid support for incoming international students by offering them assistance before and after they come to Japan through the International Support Center, International Student Help Desk, and a system that provides counseling through mentors. We have also developed an online welcome program consisting of introductory Japanese language and fieldwork preparation classes for students from partner schools who are considering studying abroad. This provides then an environment in which they can interact with Tohoku University students while preparing to come to Japan.

■ Internationalization of the University, Information Disclosure and Publication of Outcome

We publicize this program, our various initiatives, and events through a dedicated Japanese/English website and post media and event reports on JV-Campus. In January 2024, we held a symposium on our results titled "Global Resilience and the Role of University Education." UCL's David Alexander, one of the foremost experts on disaster studies, gave a talk on how to build human societies that can withstand disasters, Tohoku University presented a report on initiatives for fostering global leaders, and there were presentations on the achievements of students participating in various programs. Over 100 people participated, enabling us to broadly communicate our initiatives to the community.

■ Good Practices

In October 2023, the president of UCL renewed the MOU with Tohoku University on academic exchange and agreed to further enhance cooperation between our schools. This affirmed both universities' commitment to focus even more on fostering collaborative academic research and young researchers, take initiative in solving global problems, contribute to the community, and strengthen cooperation between the universities while not losing sight their shared principle of standing with society. This has led to steady progress in discussions on establishing a Joint Graduate Program in disaster sciences, in addition to new collaborative research on the promotion of DEI in research environments, the hosting of related events, and increased and active exchange of research HR.

3. FY 2024 Progress Report

[Name of project](Year adopted: FY2022)

International Collaboration between Japanese, British, and American Universities to Create Resilient Societies

(1) Exchange Programs



(Short-term outbound program in the UEA)

✓ In May **we conducted a pre-arrival online Japanese language course** to prepare international students for daily life, fieldwork, and natural disasters so they could smoothly adapt to life in Japan. The course included ICL/exchange learning opportunities with Tohoku University students.

✓ **The International Research Institute of Disaster Science accepted 4 interns** from University College London 's Department of Risk and Disaster Reduction (RDR). They engaged in learning and fieldwork encompassing social innovations derived from disaster recovery.

✓ In August **we conducted a new, hybrid, faculty-led (FL) outbound program** with the University of East Anglia. It incorporated human rights, DEI, and preparatory online ICL with students in the UK.

✓ In March **we held multiple short programs** (Study Abroad Program, International Engineering Training Program) at the University of York, **sending 46 students.**

Student-Mobility

Outbound

◆ **Medium/Long-term (abroad)** University of York: 1 undergraduate student from 2024/9/1 for 1 year; 1 undergraduate student from 2025/2/1 for half a year / UEA: 1 undergraduate student from 2023/8/1 for 1 year; 1 undergraduate student from 2025/1/1 for half a year; one master student from 2025/1/1 for 1 year

◆ **Short-term (abroad)** University of York: 34 undergraduate students, 1 master's and 1 doctoral student from 2025/3/3 for 4 weeks; 10 undergraduate students from 2025/3/19 for 2 weeks / UEA: 5 undergraduate students from 2024/8/8 for 2 weeks / UCL: 3 undergraduate students from 2024/8/5 for 3 weeks; 1 doctoral student from 2024/9/9 for 2.5 months

Inbound

◆ **Medium/Long-term (abroad)** University of York: 2 master's students from 2023/10/1 for 1 year / UEA: 1 undergraduate student from 2023/10/1 for 1 year / University of Washington: 1 undergraduate student from 2024/10/1 for 1 year

◆ **Short-term (abroad)** 4 Universities in this Project: 23 undergraduate students from 2024/6/17 for 4 weeks, 2 undergraduate students from 2024/7/12 for 4 weeks, 1 undergraduate student from 2024/7/19 for 2 weeks, 4 undergraduate students from 2024/6/8 for 4 weeks; **Short-term (online)** University of York, UEA, UCL: from 2024/5/20 for 1 week, from 2024/6/24 for 1 month

	2024	
	Plan	Result
Outbound	30	60
Inbound	35	43

(2) Forming a University Network with Quality Assurance

Thorough Deliberations on Joint Graduate Program with UCL:

We held thorough discussions towards establishing a Joint Graduate Program on disaster science with UCL, focusing on admissions screening, joint advising, method of degree conferral, and cooperative frameworks for mutual quality assurance.

Surfacing Academic Achievements via the ICL Rubric:

We deployed the ICL Rubric, developed by an internal team, when conducting screening for ICL subjects in the regular curriculum and short-term programs, contributing to both surfacing student learning and growth and quality assurance.

Preparations to Issue Open Badges:

We are preparing to incorporate ICL into short-term inbound programs and issue Open Badges certified by Tohoku University to those who complete the program to make their international validity and learning achievements visible.



(Discussion on joint graduate school)



(WBF2025 Panel Discussion)

(3) Internationalization of the university, Publication of outcome

Report of Achievements at the 2025 World BOSAI Forum:

At the 2025 World BOSAI Forum in March, we held a symposium on this project's achievements and exchanged opinions on expectations for the Joint Graduate Program that will be started with UCL hereafter together with students and people involved from both universities and the Asia-Pacific region.

Publicizing Efforts/Achievements via the Project Website and JV-Campus:

Besides continuing to publicize our efforts and achievements via the project website, we created an English pamphlet on the Practical Disaster-Prevention Course offered through JV-Campus and promoted it at various international conferences etc. with the aim of expanding it to the Indo-Pacific region.

Enhancement of University-wide Internationalization Systems:

The university-wide expansion of the "ICL Campus" and planning is functioning synergistically with the increased development of enhancements to our "comprehensive internationalization" system under the Universities of International Research Excellence program. With the appointment of a Chief Global Officer to promote unified internationalization policy in April 2025 and the establishment of the Global Strategy Office, enhancements to our university-wide system have proceeded and our ties to UK/US universities have strengthened.



(JV-Campus pamphlet)

(4) Good Practices



(Disaster drill at Fujisaki Department Store)



(Presentations at the UCL-Japan Youth Challenge)

■ We are conducting various efforts in cooperation with local actors to return our disaster science expertise to the community and contribute to the creation of a disaster-resistant urban environment in Sendai. Since FY 2024, the Sendai-based Fujisaki department store, which has branches throughout the Tohoku region, has held disaster training, incorporating lectures and discussion, for international students. In the summer of 2025, **we sent four intern students from UCL 's RDR department to receive evacuation training and discuss disaster prevention for diverse groups of people.** This event was held with cooperation from Sendai City and **helped promote diversity within a disaster-resistant urban environment.**

■ **A new, hybrid, FL program was conducted with UEA.** In FY 2024, the program incorporated human rights, DEI, and preparatory online ICL with students in the UK. In FY 2025, **we added some work experience sessions at social work organizations to provide internship opportunities.**

■ **We opened talks for a mutual tuition waiver agreement with UCL, signing an agreement in July 2025** after a little over a year of discussions/revisions. This is a large milestone for the project.

■ We are conducting grassroots collaborations, such as **appointing a UCL student formerly enrolled at Tohoku University as an ambassador,** promoting our short-term programs, and providing student support. **We arranged an opportunity to promote our university at the UCL-Japan Youth Challenge** held at UCL on July 31, 2025. Our Vice President for Education Reform and Global Engagement and a student ambassador **explained the merits of our university to Japanese and UK high school students as part of our recruitment efforts.**

(5) Major Achievements and Outcomes

■ **Expanding cooperation with other UK universities:**

In addition to the existing UK partner schools, we are set to expand as we are in discussions on university-level agreements with University of London (SOAS) and Durham University, and on an MOU for a double degree program with University of Manchester. We expect to activate further Japan-UK student exchange in the future.

■ **Increased student mobility and diversity:**

Outbound/inbound student numbers greatly exceeded our initial exchange plan (200% increase in outbound, 123% increase in inbound) with improved mobility and diversity focused on the UK.

■ **Building fundamentals to foster/educate global leaders with a "global resilience" mindset:**

We are nurturing highly specialized individuals who will contribute to resilient societies while building the educational fundamentals needed to foster global leaders by nurturing an understanding and awareness of the importance of resilient societies and DEI.

■ **Fostering highly specialized individuals who will contribute to the realization of resilient societies:**

We are making progress in the development of reciprocal, multitiered cooperation and the fostering of highly specialized individuals, focused on joint research/guidance at the graduate school level covering themes such as recovery, resilience, green technology, social innovation, and DEI. In particular, we are focusing further effort on interdisciplinary joint research and fostering young researchers with our partner schools while leveraging education and research exchange. In addition to jointly holding a yearly roundtable with UCL, where graduate students present research on resilience, we are increasing and leveraging research exchange in areas such as new joint research on promoting DEI in research environments.

■ **Strengthening strategic international partnerships with eminent overseas universities such as UCL:**

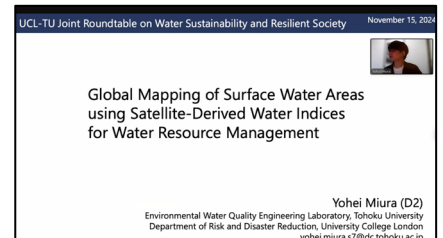
We are making steady progress towards "increasing our international presence" and "building a joint international knowledge base for synergy between educational reform and research capacity enhancement" by leveraging strengthened cooperative agreements between both universities' leaders, discussing implementation of joint international education, leveraging competitive, high-quality student exchange programs, and utilizing educational/research exchange between instructors.



(Visit to earthquake memorial site/Ishinomaki Kadonowaki Elementary School)



(Student-led resilience workshop)



(Research roundtable with UCL)



Contributing to the realization of resilient societies and expanding Japan-UK student exchange beyond current project partners