

# Faculty Development in Japan: Policies, Practices, and Perspectives

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# 1. Definition of FD in Japan

The legal definition under the **University Establishment Standards**—*"organized training and research for the purpose of improving the content and methods of classes at the university"*—has been widely accepted by university stakeholders.

## 2022 Amendment to University Establishment Standards

The amendment revised provisions related to Faculty Development (FD) with the following intent:

### Quality Assurance

Mandatory training was newly introduced for students and others designated by the university who assist in classes.

### Promotion of Staff-Faculty Collaboration

Provisions regarding Staff Development (SD) and FD, which were previously separated, were consolidated into unified policy.

### Extended Definition of FD

The revision suggests an expansion of the definition to encompass FD, SD, Academic Development, and Professional Development:

*"Training to provide faculty and administrative staff with the necessary knowledge and skills, and to improve their abilities and qualities, in order to ensure the appropriate and effective operation of the university's educational and research activities."*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Article 11 (Organized Training)</b> | Universities shall provide opportunities for training to improve the knowledge, skills, and qualities of <b>faculty and administrative staff</b> .      |
| <b>Article 11, Paragraph 2</b>         | Universities shall conduct organized training and research to improve the content and methods of classes (consistent with the former Art. 25, Para. 3). |
| <b>Article 11, Paragraph 3</b>         | Universities shall provide necessary training for <b>teaching assistants (excluding faculty)</b> (Newly established).                                   |

# 2. History of FD in Japan

Faculty Development in Japan has evolved through five distinct phases, shaped by social movements, government policy, and global disruptions.

## Phase 1: Emergence (1960s–1970s)

Triggered by student movements, many universities began education reforms. Japan's first center for higher education research was established at Hiroshima University in 1972.

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## Phase 2: Initiation (1980s–mid-1990s)

University education centers were established nationwide. Student course evaluation surveys began at several universities.

3

## Phase 3: Rapid Development through Competition (Late 1990s–mid-2000s)

FD became a "duty to endeavor" by law. Development accelerated through MEXT's competitive higher education policies.

4

## Phase 4: Sustainable Development through Collaboration (Late 2000s–2019)

FD implementation became mandatory by law. Regional and national FD networks were born through "collaborative" policies.

5

## Phase 5: Global Transformation (2020–Present)

COVID-19 led to a rapid expansion of ICT infrastructure and the largest-scale FD in history. The appearance of ChatGPT in 2023 further re-accelerated FD.

# 3. Current Status of FD in Japan (1/2)

## Implementation Status: 2023

Key FD activities have shifted significantly over four years, with some declining and others growing:



### Mutual Class Observations

Down from 57% in 2019



### Lecture & Symposium

Down from 66% in 2019



### Workshops for Education Improvement

Up from 47% in 2019



### Teaching Portfolios

Up from 25.9% in FY2019

## Mandatory FD Training Examples

### Ehime University

70 hours of training in education, research, and management within 3 years for new tenure-track faculty.

### Otemon Gakuin University

85 hours of training across four domains within 3 years for new associate professors and lecturers.

### Osaka University

30 hours of training in four domains within 3 years for new assistant professors and lecturers.

### Kanazawa Institute of Technology

Mandatory 5-day KIT-FD workshop for all faculty and staff in their first year of appointment since 1989.

# 3. Current Status of FD in Japan (2/2)

## Regional and National Networks

### National Resource Center for Teaching

14 locations nationwide (as of 2023), including Hokkaido University, Tohoku University, and Nagoya University.

### JAED

Japan Association for Educational Development in Higher Education — professional organization established in 2009 for FD specialists; member of ICED.

### HEIJ

Higher Education Innovation in Japan — established in 2016 for organizations certified as joint usage centers.

### Japan Private Universities FD Coalition Forum

Established in 2008 for medium-to-large private universities to share FD materials.

## Key Challenges

- FD remains one-way lectures and often fails to meet practical faculty needs.
- A "peer review" culture (mutual evaluations/observations) has not taken root.
- Insufficient incentives and performance evaluations for teaching.
- Lack of professional personnel and fragile implementation systems at centers.
- High reliance on part-time and practitioner faculty without sufficient professional development.

# 4. New Practices at The University of Tokyo

The University of Tokyo is pioneering innovative FD approaches that leverage digital technology and AI to support faculty and teaching assistants at scale.



## Online TA Training Program

A comprehensive online training program for Teaching Assistants featuring 12 videos with embedded tests, reaching approximately 2,000 Teaching Assistants across the university.



## Podcast Series for Academics

A podcast series for academics who want to improve course design and teaching at U of Tokyo — 12 episodes covering Active Learning, Diversity and Inclusion in classrooms, Lab management, and more.



## Smart Studio

A new multi-functional studio established to enable high-quality video production and interactive streaming, supporting the creation of professional educational content at scale.



## Gen-AI Individual Consultant

A Generative AI-powered individual consultant for academics, providing personalized guidance and support for teaching improvement and course development.

# 4. Future of FD in Japan: "FD 2030" Proposals

A forward-looking agenda to transform Faculty Development across Japanese higher education by 2030, addressing systemic gaps and building a sustainable, professional ecosystem.

1

## Mandate Qualifications

Mandate the acquisition of educational qualifications for university faculty.

2

## Clarify Educational Abilities

Clarify the "educational abilities" suitable for teaching at the university level.

3

## Guarantee Development Opportunities

Guarantee opportunities for faculty professional development across all institutions.

4

## Establish HR Systems

Establish human resource management systems for faculty that recognize teaching excellence.

5

## Promote Broader FD Definition

Promote understanding of the new, broader definition of FD encompassing SD and Academic Development.

6

## Evaluate Education Research

Properly evaluate research related to education on par with other scholarly output.

7


## Assign Faculty Developers

Assign dedicated Faculty Developers at institutions to provide professional, sustained support.

8

## TA/SA Training & Pre-FD

Provide TA/SA training and "Pre-FD" programs for graduate students as future faculty.

 These eight proposals collectively envision a Japan where faculty development is professionalized, incentivized, and embedded into the culture of every university — from graduate school through senior faculty.