Report on the Results of the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment
(Advanced Type) for FY2018–2023
Gender Quality Office, Kobe University (FY2018–2021)
Gender Equality Office, Inclusive Campus & Health Care Center (FY2022–2023)

1. Project Goals and Action Plan

By advancing this project, Kobe University aims to 1) achieve a hiring rate of 30% or more for women researchers, 2) improve the rate of women holding higher-ranking positions, 3) increase the base of next-generation young researchers, and 4) enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university. Table 1 below shows the relationship between these goals and the specific initiatives (A) through (F) undertaken to meet them.

Table 1: Relationship between goals and initiatives (##： Initiative meets the goal, #: Initiative partially meets the goal, / : N/A)

Initiatives \ Goals	1) Achieve and maintain a hiring rate of 30% or more for women researchers	2) Improve the rate of women holding higher-ranking positions	3) Increase the base of next-generation young researchers	4) Enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university
(A) Build a new human resources governance system	##	#		
(B) Implement the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research		##		
(C) Implement the International Human Resource Exchange Program			##	
(D) Implement the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program			##	
(E) Establish the Diversity Promotion Council*	/	/	/	/
(F) Establish the Diversity Fund and build the Diversity Co-creation Network	#	#	#	##

*Regarding the initiative "(E) Establish the Diversity Promotion Council," the council was reorganized effective April 1, 2022 to form the Inclusive Campus & Health Care Center in the below figure to promote collaboration among the existing university organizations (i.e., Gender Equality Office, Medical Center for Student Health, and Campus Life Support Center) that have carried out support activities independently from one another in the past, and to ensure they provide coordinated support under a single supervisory organization. The Gender Equality Office (the office in charge of this program) is involved in promoting gender equality at the University, supporting the work-life balance

of its members, and consultations in areas such as LGBTQI+.
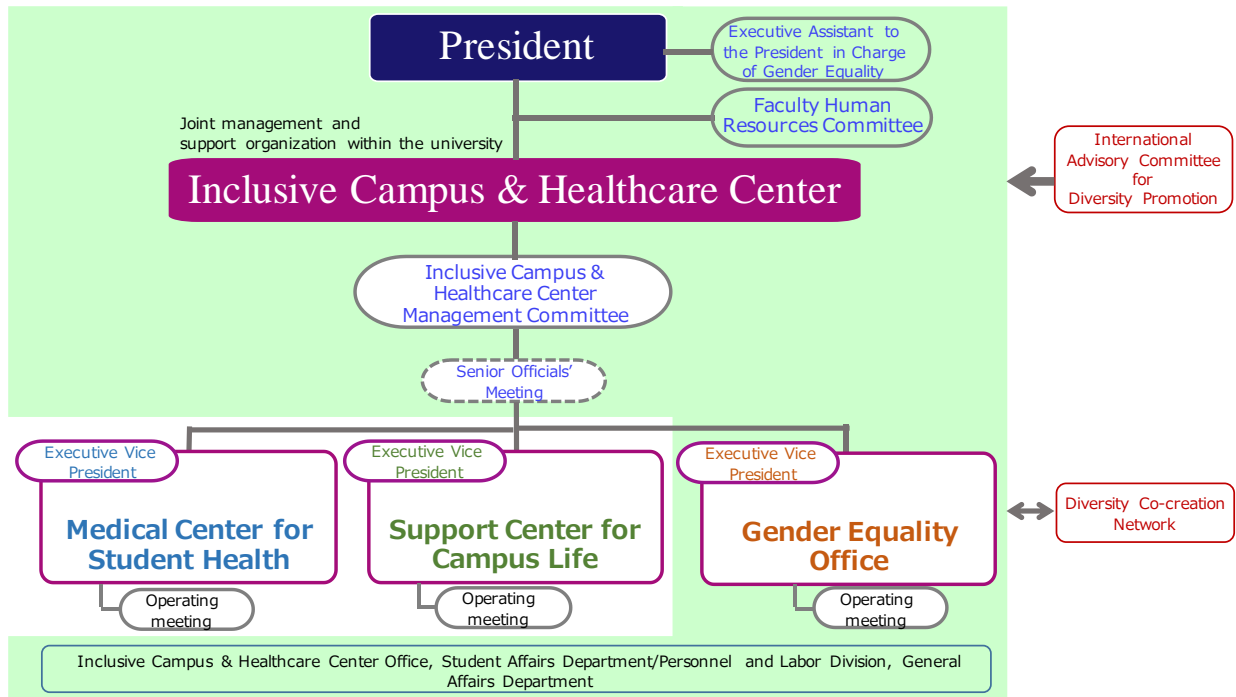
2.   Achievement Levels of Project Goals

1) Achieve a hiring rate of 30% or more for women researchers

The following initiatives were undertaken in the project period (FY2018–2023) to attain this goal.

i. Implement the Revised Faculty Human Resources Committee system

The Revised Faculty Human Resources Committee system has been implemented since FY2020. To help increase the hiring and promotion of women teachers, the Executive Assistant to the President in charge of diversity has attended the Faculty Human Resources Committee to check women's hiring and promotion rates provided on paper and consistently advocated for improvement in these rates. In addition to these initiatives, in FY2022, rules were established for the disclosure of information related to retention, hiring, and promotion to ensure the dissemination of information related to advancing the hiring and promotion of women faculty. This information is published twice a year.

ii. Build a new human resources governance system

The project has fully incorporated the PDCA cycle below into the human resources governance system, which previously only carried out "Do" and "Check," thereby introducing a highly transparent new human resources governance system for advancing the hiring and promotion of women faculty.

Plan: Each department submits a hiring/promotion plan for women researchers to the Personnel Committee.

Do: Each department submits data on the hiring, promotion, and retention rates of women researchers to the Personnel Committee, and gains approval each time a personnel matter occurs.

Check: The Executive Vice President and the Director of the Gender Equality Office hold a meeting with each department to review the hiring/promotion results for the previous year and the hiring/promotion plan for the current year.

Action: In the hearing with the university administration, each department submits its hiring/promotion results and hiring/promotion plan, revises its plan if it has not been met, and gains approval from the university administration.

In addition, since its inception, the project has requested departments with low hiring rates to hire women researchers and has carried out faculty development activities aimed at overcoming unconscious bias. In FY2020, a rule that gives priority to women in cases where the evaluation results of achievements, qualifications, and other factors are equal was added to the faculty recruitment guidelines. When the organizational change was carried out in FY2022, instructions were given for the revision of recruitment restricted to women and consideration of a new overall women support package, and discussions took place regarding the distribution of incentives for departments which had an increase in women faculty, as well as a system for hiring young women researchers. As a result, the previous incentive spending allocation system that applied to departments that carried out recruitment restricted to women was revised. With a base date of May 1, 2022, it was decided to compare the number of women faculty on May 1 of each year, starting in FY2023, in the fourth mid-term target period and allocate incentive spending for departments according to the increased number of women faculty. Accordingly, 10 departments received an allocation of incentive spending in FY2023. In addition, in FY2022, it was also decided to support the active employment of women faculty by establishing a new quota for women in the current Young Faculty Employment Support System.

iii. Visualize the hiring, promotion, and retention rates of women faculty (publishing of actual results)
To promote the visualization of the employment and promotion of women faculty, the Gender Equality Office publishes the hiring, promotion, and retention rates of women by academic area on the University website.
The hiring and retention rates of women researchers from FY2018 to FY2023 are shown in Figs. 1 and 2. As shown in Fig. 1, the FY2018 actual hiring rate exceeded the target rate, but the actual rate stayed almost flat from FY2019 to FY2023, falling short of the target rate. As shown in Fig. 2, even though the retention rate increased by 2.1 points from 17.1% in FY2018 to 19.2% in FY2023, the actual rate fell short of the target rate in all fiscal years.
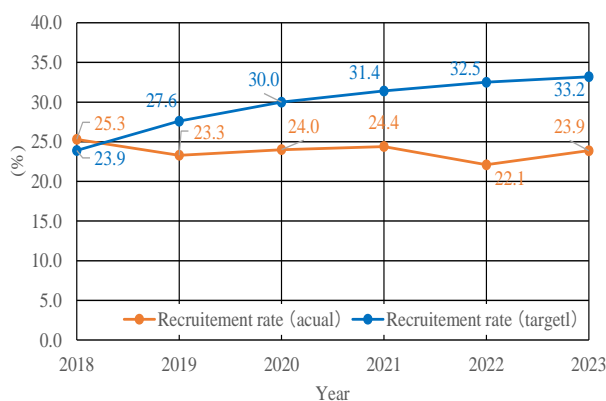

Fig. 1: Comparison of target and actual hiring rates
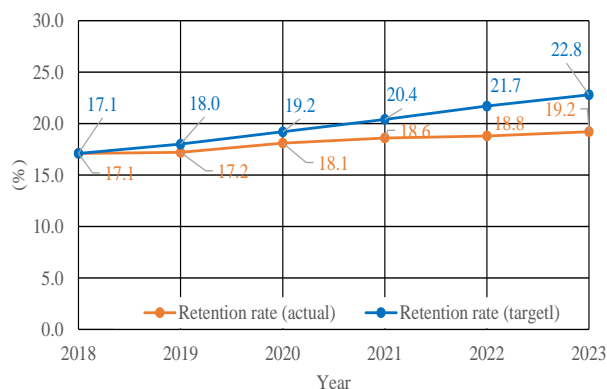(FY2023 data is as of October 1, 2023.)

Fig. 2. Comparison of target and actual retention rates
(FY2023 data is as of October 1, 2023.)

2) Improve the rate of women holding higher-ranking positions (promotion rate)
The following goals were set for this item.
i. Dispatch women faculty members who are associate professors or lower in rank to

overseasinstitutions under the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research.
ii. Build an organization for overseas support.
iii. Aiming to increase the promotion rate of women researchers, achieve a promotion rate of 20% by the final fiscal year (FY2023).

i. Implement the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research
This program for women faculty members was implemented with the aim of helping women researchers get promoted to higher positions. When the program was launched, participants were to be dispatched to overseas research institutions for a period of six months or longer in principle. However, since overseas travel became difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was held online from FY2020 to FY2022. On a related note, a member of the International Advisory Committee for Diversity Promotion noted that given women's life events, the age limit of 45 or younger set for the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program described below was too low and should be raised. Therefore, starting in FY2023, the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research and International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program were combined into a single program and implemented as the International Collaborative Researcher Training Program.

Table 2: Results of the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research (2018–2022) and International Collaborative Researcher Training Program (2023) (Continued on page)
(The job classifications are those at the time of receiving support.)

Affiliation	Job Classification	Dispatch Period	Destination Country	Dispatch Year
PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research (dispatch)				
Research Center for Inland Seas	Associate Professor	12 months	Thailand	2018
Graduate School of System Informatics	Associate Professor	12 months	Australia	2018
Graduate School of Intercultural Studies	Associate Professor	6 months	Germany	2018
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Assistant Professor	12 months	United States	2019
PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research (online)				
Biosignal Research Center	Assistant Professor	Online	United States	2020
Graduate School of Science	Associate Professor	Online	Germany	2021
Graduate School of Medicine	Project Associate Professor	Online	United States	2021
Interdisciplinary Education Center, Institute for Promoting International Partnerships	Project Associate Professor	Online	Italy	2021
Graduate School of Science	Associate Professor	Online (13 days)	Taiwan	2022–23

International Collaborative Researcher Training Program (dispatch)				
Graduate School of Agricultural Science	Assistant Professor	Ongoing	United Kingdom	2023–
Graduate School of Maritime Sciences	Associate Professor	Ongoing	Australia	2023–
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Assistant Professor	Ongoing	Sweden	2023–

In FY2018, the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research – Preliminary Survey Program was implemented. This short-term program involved dispatching faculty members for a period of one week to a month as preparation for long-term overseas dispatch. Support was provided to eight recipients (four dispatched, four online) as shown in Table 3. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this program was only held in FY2018. One individual who conducted a preliminary survey under the program was chosen as a recipient of the International Collaborative Researcher Training Program in FY2023. The achievements of the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research and the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research – Preliminary Survey Program were published on the project website (https://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/diversity/index.html) at the time of research completion.

Table 3: Results of the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research – Pre-Survey Program (The job classifications are those at the time of receiving support.)

Affiliation	Job Classification	Dispatch Period	Destination Country	Dispatch Year
Advanced Integrated Research Group	Assistant Professor	1 week	United Kingdom	2018
Graduate School of Economics	Instructor	2 weeks	Poland	2018
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Associate Professor	1 week	Sweden	2018
Graduate School of Maritime Science	Associate Professor	1 week	Sweden	2018
Graduate School of Human Development and Environment	Associate Professor	1 week	United States	2018
Biosignal Research Center	Assistant Professor	1 month	United States	2018
Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences	Assistant Professor	1 week	United States	2018
Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences	Assistant Professor	1 week	United States	2018

ii. Build an organization for overseas support
Regarding building an organization for overseas support, collaboration was established with Kobe University's overseas offices located in San Fransisco and New York in the United States and Brussels, Dusseldorf, and London in Europe in FY2018, and in Singapore, Bangkok, and Hanoi in FY2019. However, this could not be leveraged in FY2020 onwards due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

iii. Achieve a promotion rate of 20% for women researchers
Fig. 3 shows the rates of women researchers promoted to higher ranks in FY2018 to FY2023. The

target promotion rate of 20.0% or higher was achieved in FY2018, FY2019, and FY2023 but not in FY2020, FY2021, and FY2022. The promotion rate varied greatly by year, ranging from a lowest of 7.32% to a highest of 33.3%. As of October 1, 2023, the total number of women researchers promoted to higher ranks was 43, and the average rate over the project period was 16.2%.

Regarding women researchers in senior management roles, there were three (target: two) in FY2018, four in FY2019, five in FY2020, five in FY2021, four in FY2022, and six in FY2023 as of October 1, 2023; the target set for the final year of the project (FY2023), which is four, has been met since FY2020.
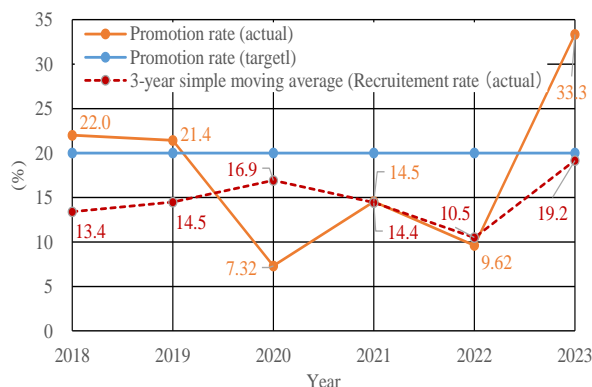

Fig. 3: Comparison of target and actual promotion rates
(The chart uses a three-year moving average with data from FY2016 onwards; FY2023 data is as of October 1, 2023.)

3) Increase the base of next-generation young researchers

The following initiatives were undertaken in the project period to achieve this goal.

i. Implement the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program

This program was implemented with the aim of increasing the base of talented young women researchers who can succeed internationally. When the program was launched, young women researchers (aged 45 or younger) were to be dispatched to overseas research institutions for a period of six months or longer in principle. However, similarly to the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research, overseas travel became difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the program was held online from FY2020 to FY2022. In addition, as noted earlier, the program has been implemented as the International Collaborative Researcher Training Program since FY2023. Table 4 shows the results of the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program for FY2018 to FY2022. In total, eight individuals received support in this period; there were no applicants in FY2021. The achievements of the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program were published on the project website (https://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/diversity/index.html) at the time of research completion.

Table 4: Results of the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program (2018–2022) (The job classifications are those at the time of receiving support.) (Continued on page)

Affiliation	Job Classification	Dispatch Period	Destination Country	Dispatch Year
Graduate School of Intercultural Studies	Research Fellow	2 months	Mexico	2018

Biosignal Research Center	Research Fellow	2 months	United States	2018
Graduate School of System Informatics	Assistant Professor	12 months	United Kingdom	2018
Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies	Assistant Professor	3 months	United States	2018
Global Education Center	Instructor	6 months	South Korea / United States	2018
Graduate School of Engineering	Associate Professor	10 months	Canada / United States	2019
Graduate School of System Informatics	Assistant Professor	5 months	France	2020
Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration	Assistant Professor	Online	Sweden	2022–2023

As shown in Table 5, the International Human Resource Exchange Program dispatched four individuals in FY2018 and five individuals in FY2019. However, the program was not implemented in FY2020 onwards due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The achievements have been published on the project website (https://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/diversity/index.html).

ii. Implement role model networking sessions

As part of increasing the base of young women researchers, including doctoral students, a "role model networking session to chat with women researchers—How to build your career as a researcher who speaks their mind" was held for natural sciences researchers in FY2022 (41 participants). A session for social sciences researchers is scheduled to be held in FY2023.

Considering it important to continuously reach out to STEM-aspiring female junior and senior high school students in order to increase the number of women researchers in science and engineering-related faculties in which women are underrepresented, the following two initiatives below are being implemented.

(i) Open days for STEM-aspiring female junior and senior school students

　http://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/sp_topic/rikejo/opencampus/index.html

(Japanese only)

(ii) Kansai Kagakujuku for female junior and senior high school students

　http://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/sp_topic/rikejo/kagaku/index.html (Japanese only)

Table 5: Results of the International Human Resource Exchange Program (The job classifications are those at the time of dispatch.) (Continued on page)

Affiliation	Job Classification	Dispatch Period	Destination Country	Dispatch Year
Graduate School of Human Development and Environment	Assistant Professor	1 month	Indonesia	2018
Graduate School of Engineering	Specially Appointed Assistant Professor	1 month	United States	2018

Graduate School of Human Development and Environment	Professor	2 months	United Kingdom	2018
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Professor	1 month	United Kingdom / Sweden	2018
Graduate School of Economics	Professor	1 month	France	2019
Graduate School of Human Development and Environment	Professor	1 month	Ireland	2019
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Associate Professor	1 month	Germany	2019
International Education Center	Project Associate Professor	1 month	United Kingdom	2019
Graduate School of Health Sciences	Associate Professor	1 month	United Kingdom	2019

4) Enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university
The following goals were set for this item.
i. Adopt the Kobe University Diversity Statement and establish a structure for cooperation with external parties.
ii. Ensure project continuity by establishing the Diversity Fund.
iii. Develop the Diversity Education Program.

i. Adopt the Kobe University Diversity Statement
Kobe University adopted the Kobe University Diversity Statement in 2018. Furthermore, Kobe University's Basic Principles and Guidelines for Diverse Sexualities and Genders were established in 2022.

ii. Operate the Diversity Fund (donations)
The Diversity Fund was established last fiscal year to secure the university's independent revenue source required to continuously and constantly implement the initiatives designed to support women researchers in getting promoted to higher positions through overseas dispatch and other programs. The Fund has been promoted through the university newsletter and website advertisements, and solicitations of company donations are being carried out. The Fund has received donations amounting to 7.01 million yen from FY2018 to date. In FY2023, the Diversity Fund was used for the International Collaborative Researcher Training Program. As the project will end this fiscal year, there are plans to carry out discussions in FY2023 regarding the use of the Diversity Fund from next year onwards.

iii. Develop the Diversity Education Program
The project established a co-creation network involving Kobe University and six companies, and held discussions regarding the intended participants and contents of the Diversity Education Program. As a result, in FY2020, the alpha version of the Diversity Education Program developed in FY2019, which included training to overcome unconscious bias, was reviewed and upgraded to the final beta version based on survey feedback. In FY2021, the following on and off-campus events were held for online viewing to help achieve an inclusive society by promoting and spreading diversity.
    i) June 2, 2021: Cooperative faculty meeting (20 participants)

ii) July 15, 2021: Training for managers

iii) July 29, 2021: Diversity Co-creation Network meeting (4 companies)

iv) August 3, 2021: Diversity Co-creation Network meeting (1 company)

v) January 19, 2022: Graduate School of Health Sciences FD Training (67 participants)

The Diversity Co-creation Network meeting serves as a venue to discuss the themes and lecturers for the Kobe University Diversity Forum held each fiscal year. The project organized Diversity Forums centered around the following themes.

FY2019: Kobe University Diversity Forum Kick-off Symposium (100 participants)

FY2020: "Promotion of Women to Higher Positions and Work Style Reform—Aiming to Create a Workplace where Everyone Can Work with Enthusiasm" (105 participants)

FY2021: "Work-Life Balance as Seen from Men's Childcare Leave" (105 participants)

FY2022: "Creating a Society that Respects Gender, Sex and Sexuality—Our Challenges and Visions" (96 participants)

FY2023: Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced Type) Project Recap Symposium (planned)

In addition, audiovisual material for training and education activities on Kobe University's Basic Principles and Guidelines for Diverse Sexualities and Genders was created.

iv. Build the Diversity Co-creation Network and collaborate with companies

In FY2022, the content of the diversity lecture program to be implemented that year was discussed with participating companies.

5) Verify the outcomes and evaluations of the overseas support programs for women researchers

Table 6 presents a comparison of annual averages of the research achievements (academic papers, international conference presentations, acquisition of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) (principal investigators and co-investigators treated separately), and acquisition of external funding other than KAKENHI acquired in the capacity of principal investigator) of eight recipients of the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research, seven recipients of the International Human Resource Exchange Program (excluding two who have resigned), and four recipients of the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program (excluding three who have resigned) before and after they received program support. (The programs were carried out up to FY2022.) The underlined items in Table 6 indicate that the figures increased after receiving program support. Notably, the figures for acquisition of KAKENHI and external funding increased after receiving program support.

Table 6: Comparison of research achievements before and after receiving support by program (annual average per person) (Continued on page)

	PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research (8 recipients)		International Human Resource Exchange Program (7 recipients, excluding 2 who have resigned)		International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program (4 recipients, excluding 3 who have resigned)	
	2 years before support	After support until FY2022	2 years before support	After support until FY2022	2 years before support	After support until FY2022

Academic paper	2.06	2.13	2.29	1.90	2.13	1.90
International conference presentation	1.56	1.11	4.57	0.53	1.25	1.36
KAKENHI (principal investigator)	0.69	0.70	0.43	0.46	0.88	0.83
KAKENHI (co-investigator)	0.88	1.20	0.43	0.51	1.00	0.53
External funding (principal investigator)	0.13	0.72	0.21	0.54	0	0.71

Table 7 shows a comparison of the number of academic papers published and international conference presentations delivered by young faculty members (associate professors and assistant professors) who received program support and by regular women faculty members. The figures are higher for the young faculty members who received program support than for regular women researchers, and they are expected to make further research achievements going forward.

Table 7: Comparison of research achievements of regular women faculty members and program recipients from FY2018 to FY2022 by job classification (annual average per person)
(The job classifications are those at the time of receiving support.)

	Regular woman associate professor	Dispatched woman associate professor	Regular woman assistant professor	Dispatched woman assistant professor
	2018–2022	2018–2022	2018–2022	2018–2022
Academic paper	1.95	2.13	1.73	2.12
International conference presentation	0.48	0.72	0.09	1.13

Under this project, a total of 24 recipients completed their international collaborative research by FY2022 (PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research: 8, International Human Resource Exchange Program: 9, International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program: 7). Of these recipients, three from the International Human Resource Exchange Program and four from the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program have resigned as of October 1, 2023. Two out of the four individuals who resigned after receiving support under the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training transferred to another university and got promoted.

Table 8 shows seven out of the 24 program recipients, who were promoted between 2018 and October 1, 2023. Five have been promoted within Kobe University, with one recipient of the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program being promoted from associate professor to professor internally. The promotion rate is 29.2% (7 out of 24), suggesting that the overseas support programs for women researchers are effective in promoting women researchers.

Table 8: Program recipient faculty members promoted between 2018 and October 1, 2023

Program	Job Classification Before/After Promotion	
PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research	Internal	Project Assistant Professor -> Specially Appointed Associate Professor
	Internal	Assistant Professor -> Associate Professor
International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program	External	Assistant Professor -> Associate Professor
	External	Assistant Professor -> Instructor
	Internal	Associate Professor -> Professor
International Human Resource Exchange Program	Internal	Specially Appointed Associate Professor -> Associate Professor
	Internal	Project Assistant Professor -> Specially Appointed Associate Professor