

Discover Kobe U

A global hub for multidisciplinary research and education



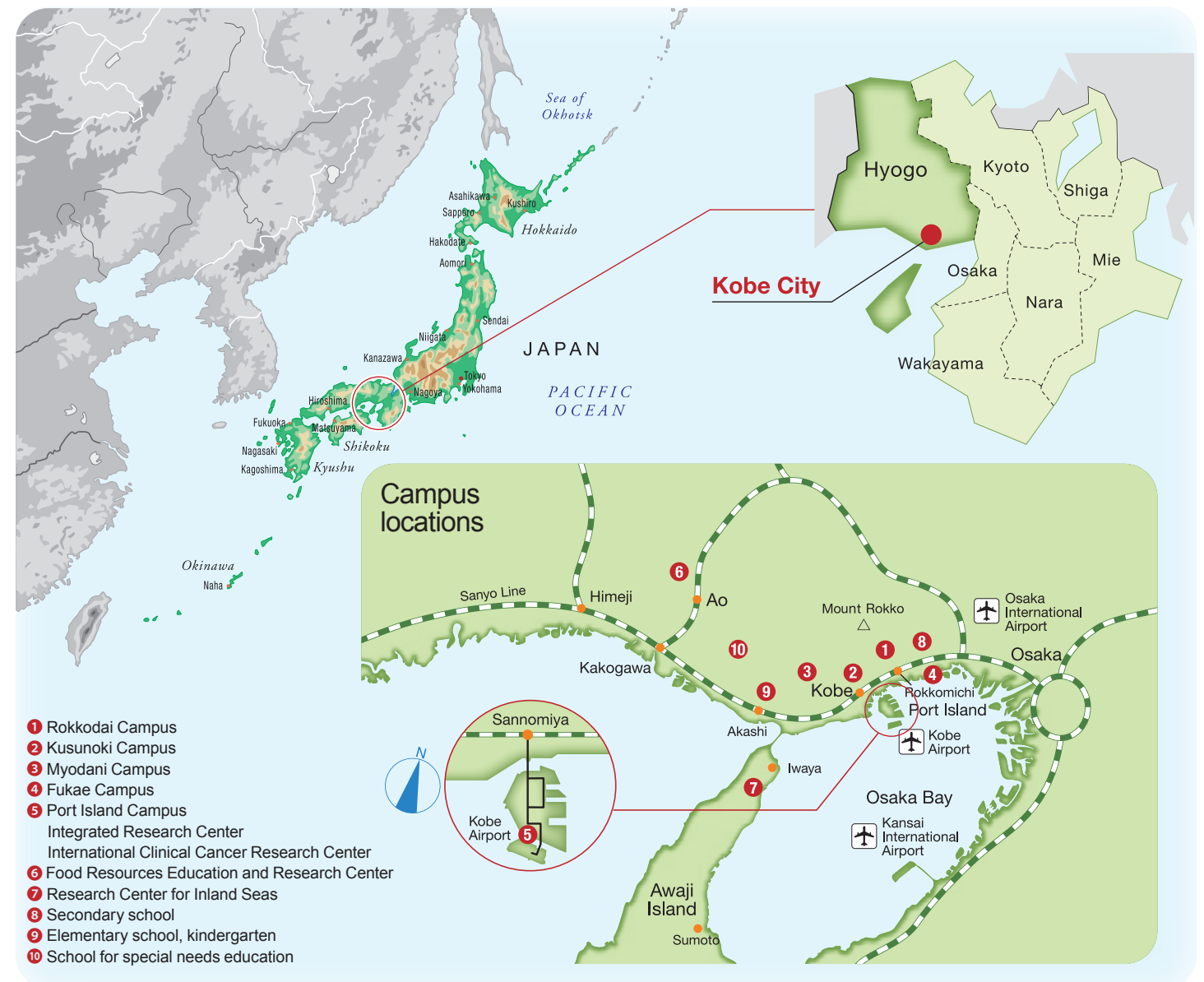


Kobe, Japan

Kobe, the capital of Hyogo Prefecture, is a **historic port city** opened to international trade in 1868. It takes **under 3 hours from Tokyo via Shinkansen to Shin-Kobe Station** and about **1 hour by plane to Kobe Airport**, which now also handles international flights. With a mild climate, diverse population and UNESCO City of Design status (2008), **Kobe seamlessly blends nature, culture and global living.**



Campuses



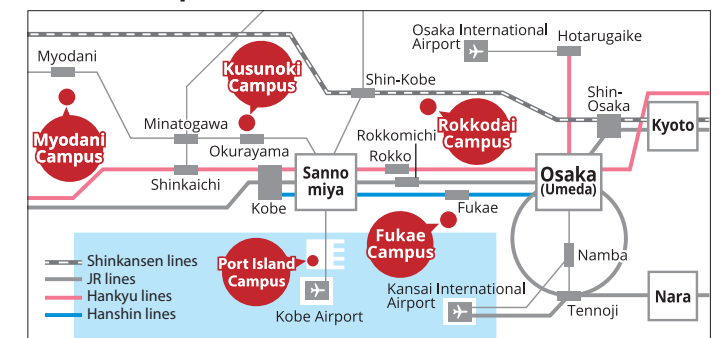
Kobe University

Kobe University is a **national university** with roots dating back to the Kobe Higher Commercial School founded in **1902**. It is now one of Japan's leading comprehensive research universities. **Combining the social and natural sciences** to cultivate leaders with an interdisciplinary perspective, Kobe University **creates knowledge and fosters innovation** to address society's challenges.

Access from Tokyo



Our campuses



1 Rokkodai



2 Kusunoki



3 Myodani



4 Fukae



5 Port Island

Mission

Kobe University, working in a spirit of **integrity, freedom and cooperation** in keeping with its open and cosmopolitan culture and environs, aims to contribute to the global community through the creation of knowledge founded on universal values and the fostering of rich understanding and strong leadership skills.

Vision

Towards a global hub for the multidisciplinary co-creation of research and education that cultivates profound knowledge and outstanding innovators

Kobe University upholds the founding principle of “harmony between theory and practice.” Building on its strengths across diverse fields, it continues to **grow as a global hub for interdisciplinary education and research**, creating knowledge and nurturing talent to address the challenges of today’s and future society.

President's message



Kobe University president
FUJISAWA Masato

Kobe University is a **national university with roots dating back to 1902** with the founding of Kobe Higher Commercial School. Now comprising **11 faculties, 15 graduate schools and one research institute** following the establishment of the Faculty of System Informatics in April 2025, Kobe University operates under the philosophy of “**harmony between theory and practice**” with its vision of becoming an **outstanding research university that excels in cutting-edge and interdisciplinary research**. With approximately **11,500 undergraduate students, 4,600 graduate students and over 1,700 full-time faculty members**, the university strives to create knowledge and foster innovation to address society’s challenges.

We at Kobe University are dedicated to **cultivating internationally leading minds** for a digital society to resolve global issues with **innovative solutions at the interface of the humanities and the social, natural and life sciences**. We foster in our students the ideal of **harmony between theory and practice** and strive to strengthen social implementation while making every effort to achieve sustainable growth and development.

Humankind is currently facing a variety of global issues, including problems related to the environment, poverty, human rights, peace, health and welfare. Universities must strive to create comprehensive knowledge and strengthen their social implementation abilities in order to resolve these issues. To maintain our global standing, we will cultivate new outstanding knowledge and people to establish **Kobe University as a global center for multidisciplinary research and education**, while making every effort to achieve sustainable growth and development.

I hope that this brochure will give readers an insight into Kobe University’s vision and activities, bringing about new connections to realize a better world for all.

History

A comprehensive national university with over 120 years of tradition

1902 Kobe Higher Commercial School

Kobe University has a long history spanning over 120 years. Its roots can be traced back to the Kobe Higher Commercial School that was established in 1902.



1949 Kobe University

It became known as Kobe University in 1949 when seven institutions were combined into one university with six faculties.

- 1964 School of Medicine
- 1966 Faculty of Agriculture
- 1967 University Hospital
- 1992 Faculty of Intercultural Studies
- 1994 Faculty of Health Sciences in the School of Medicine
- 1995 Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies
- 2003 Faculty of Maritime Sciences
- 2010 Graduate School of System Informatics
- 2016 Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation



2022 120th anniversary

Kobe University now has 11 faculties and 15 graduate schools covering a diverse range of academic fields.

- 2025 Faculty of System Informatics



Organization

Undergraduate faculties

- Faculty of Letters
- Faculty of Global Human Sciences
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Economics
- School of Business Administration
- Faculty of Science
- School of Medicine
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of System Informatics
- Faculty of Agriculture
- Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology

Graduate schools

- Graduate School of Humanities
- Graduate School of Intercultural Studies
- Graduate School of Human Development and Environment
- Graduate School of Law
- Graduate School of Economics
- Graduate School of Business Administration
- Graduate School of Science
- Graduate School of Medicine*
- Graduate School of Health Sciences*
- Graduate School of Engineering
- Graduate School of System Informatics
- Graduate School of Agricultural Science
- Graduate School of Maritime Sciences
- Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies
- Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation

Research institute

- Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration

*The Graduate School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Health Sciences will merge to form a new Graduate School of Medicine in April 2026.

At a glance

Kobe University

Students

16,214

Undergraduate

11,543

Non-degree

469

Graduate

4,671

Master's

2,884

Doctoral

1,787

International students

1,012

Undergraduate

90

Non-degree

328

Graduate

922

Master's

536

Doctoral

386

Faculty & staff members

4,429

Faculty members

1,711

Staff members

2,718

1:10

Faculty-to-student ratio

Faculties

11

Graduate schools*

15

Research centers

1

*There will be 14 graduate schools at Kobe University from April 2026.

Main campuses

5

Academic calendar

2 semesters

4 quarters

Ranked 4th

on national university admissions criteria

QS world university rankings 2026

13th in Japan, 482nd in the world

THE Japan university rankings 2025

15th

THE impact rankings 2025

6th in Japan, 201-300th in the world

Papers stored on Web of Science (2020-2024)

10,508

University start-ups

139

Joint research projects (2020-2024)

4,319

Commissioned research projects (2020-2024)

2,636

Books in libraries

3,753,235

Ordinary expenses

89 billion JPY

Kobe City

Mercer's quality of living city ranking

3rd in Japan, 68th in the world

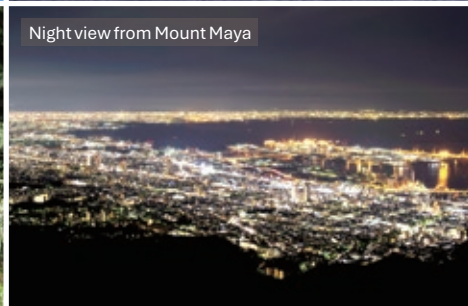
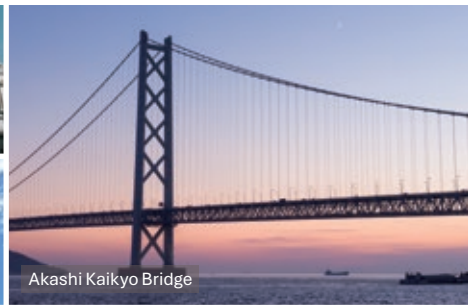
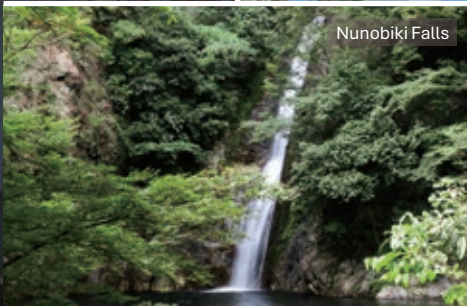
Japan's 8th largest city

Ranking of Japanese municipalities by foreign resident population

5th

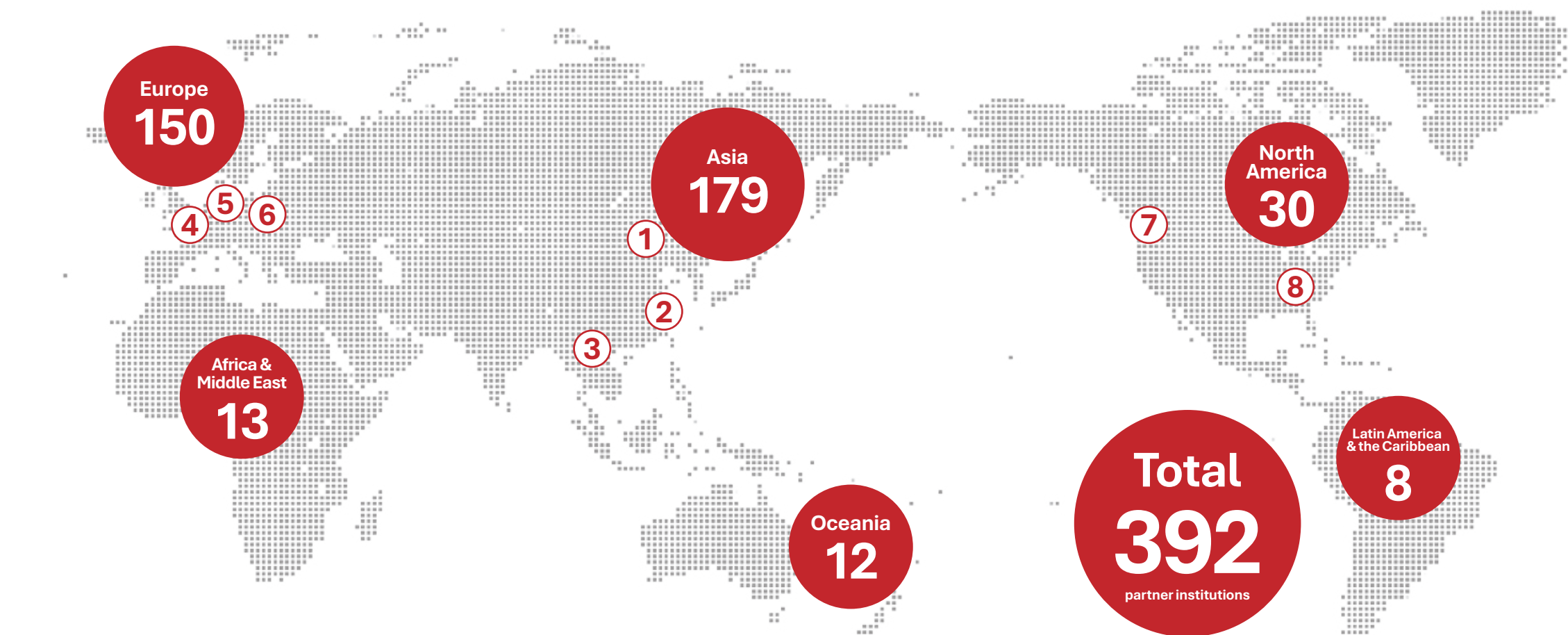
2024 best cities for dual-income families

1st in Japan



International exchange

Kobe University, rooted in the **international port city of Kobe**, values diversity and global perspectives. With **partnerships in 65 countries and regions** and **eight overseas offices** in key regions such as Brussels, Beijing and Seattle, we promote international collaboration in research and education. Our goal is to foster globally minded individuals through high-quality education and strong alumni networks worldwide.



- ① Beijing Office in China (KUBOC)
- ② KU and Shanghai Jiao Tong University Interdisciplinary Research Base
- ③ Hanoi Liaison Base
- ④ Brussels European Centre (KUBEC)
- ⑤ Liaison Office in Kraków
- ⑥ KU and Babes-Bolyai University International Collaboration Centre
- ⑦ Liaison Office in Seattle (KULOS)
- ⑧ Tennessee Office



Notable academic partners

Incoming

- Paris Cité University
- Technical University of Munich
- University of Western Australia
- University of Ottawa
- National Taiwan University

Outgoing

- KU Leuven
- University of Graz
- UNSW Sydney
- University of Washington
- Seoul National University

KOJSP

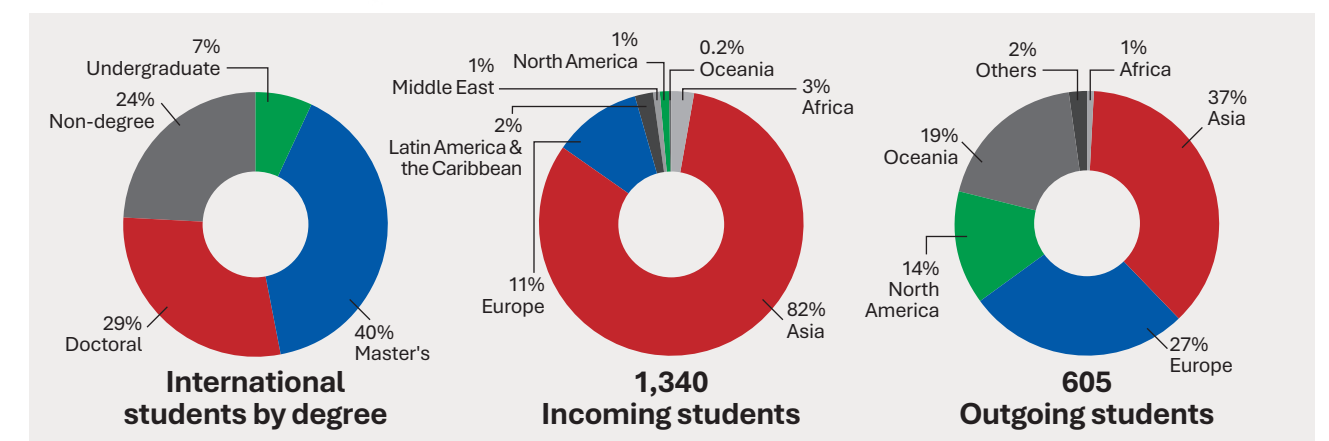
(Kobe-Oxford Japanese studies program)

Kobe University's Faculty of Letters partners with Oxford's Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies to host all second-year Japanese studies students for one year, offering language and Japan studies courses — an integral part of Oxford's four-year curriculum.



KU-Alumni

Ahead of its 120th anniversary in 2022, Kobe University launched "KU-Alumni," a community to unite graduates, students, faculty, staff and families. Under the "One Kobe Family" concept, we aim to build a global, cross-generational network through support for alum associations and exchange among members in Japan and abroad.



Education

Kobe University offers a variety of programs, including **English-taught degrees, short-term language programs and Japanese cultural studies programs**. In addition to **Japanese language education**, we provide **support to help international students** get the most out of their studies and research, including advice on student life, job placement support and local community activities.

Programs in English

The graduate schools listed below **offer programs conducted entirely in English**, enabling students to **acquire a full master's or doctoral qualification in Japan without the need for advanced Japanese language abilities**.

- Law (master)
- Economics (master)
- Business Administration (master)
- Science (master)
- Medicine (doctorate)
- Health Sciences (master/doctorate)
- Engineering (doctorate)
- Agricultural Science (master/doctorate)
- International Cooperation Studies (master/doctorate)



Double-degree programs

Double-degree programs are for students of select partner universities. For a full list of currently available programs, please scan this QR code.



Exchange programs

Kobe University **conducts intensive exchanges for education and research with partner universities and institutions overseas**, which enrich the academic environment on campus. Kobe University currently has 392 partner institutions in 65 countries and regions across the globe.



Short-term programs

Kobe University **offers short-term programs for students of select partner universities**, organized by our graduate schools and the Global Education Center, to open new perspectives to participants.



Japanese classes

Kobe University offers Japanese language and Japanese studies courses for international students to **suit various levels of language ability and study aims**. Students can choose **classes that meet their needs** from the three types of classes listed below.

- Integrated Japanese language classes (elementary to superior)
- Japanese language and Japanese studies classes (advanced)
- Intensive Japanese language courses (elementary to intermediate)



Accommodation

Kobe University has **seven accommodation facilities for international students and researchers in Kobe** (approx. 380 rooms in total). The university also provides other housing options in cooperation with private real estate companies.



International student advising

The Global Education Center, along with the university's departments, **offers advising for international students facing academic, personal or daily life issues in Japan**.



Clubs and circles

Clubs and circles at Kobe University are student-run and voluntary. Joining one is a great way to explore Japanese culture, build teamwork and have fun. **We fully support student participation in these enriching activities**.



Research

Kobe University actively **accepts international researchers** and offers a variety of programs and systems aimed at **promoting international collaborative research and academic exchange**.

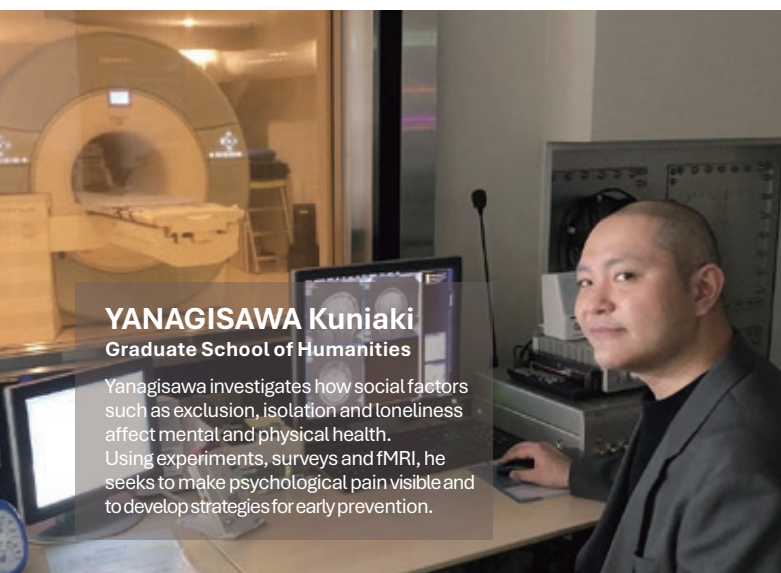
Hosting international researchers

Kobe University supports international researchers in their daily life in Japan by providing guidance on visa procedures, accommodation, medical services and more. To help researchers smoothly adapt to life at the university, these essential practical matters are compiled in a comprehensive handbook.



International collaborative research

As part of **initiatives to strengthen international collaborative research**, Kobe University supports projects that invite overseas researchers and promote academic research.



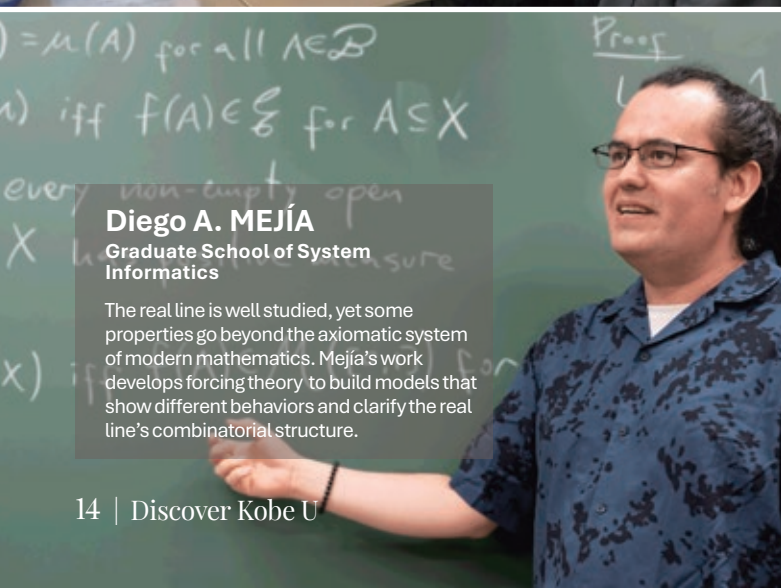
YANAGISAWA Kuniaki
Graduate School of Humanities

Yanagisawa investigates how social factors such as exclusion, isolation and loneliness affect mental and physical health. Using experiments, surveys and fMRI, he seeks to make psychological pain visible and to develop strategies for early prevention.



Agata WIERZBOWSKA
Graduate School of Economics

Wierzbowska studies European economy-related issues, focusing on the banking sector and monetary policy. She analyzes banks' role in the economy, determinants of banks' profitability and efficiency and monetary policy transmission.



Diego A. MEJÍA
Graduate School of System Informatics

The real line is well studied, yet some properties go beyond the axiomatic system of modern mathematics. Mejía's work develops forcing theory to build models that show different behaviors and clarify the real line's combinatorial structure.



TSUDA Akihiko
Graduate School of Science

Tsuda develops a pioneering "photo-on-demand" synthesis method that converts methane and halocarbons into useful chemicals using light. His approach advances organic chemistry while contributing to Japan's green transformation through decarbonization and innovation.

Outstanding achievement



NISHIZUKA Yasutomi

Kyoto Prize 1992
Lasker Award 1989
Order of Culture 1988

SAGAWA Masato

European Inventor Award 2024
Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering 2022
Japan Prize 2012
Distinguished honorary professor of Kobe University

WAKITA Haruko

Order of Culture 2010

YAMANAKA Shinya

Nobel Prize 2012
Order of Culture 2012
Kyoto Prize 2010
Lasker Award 2009
Distinguished honorary professor of Kobe University

Distinguished honorary professors

IMURA Hiroo

Professor emeritus at the School of Medicine
Member of the Japan Academy

NISHIMURA Kazuo

Research professor at the Center for Computational Social Science
Member of the Japan Academy
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

KAIBUCHI Kozo

Graduate of School of Medicine
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

OKAMURA Hitoshi

Professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Medicine
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

KANAI Toshihiro

Professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Business Administration
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

OTSUKA Keiji

Professor emeritus at the Center for Social Systems Innovation
Member of the Japan Academy

KASUGA Masato

Professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Medicine
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

TAKAI Yoshimi

Professor emeritus and project professor at the Graduate School of Medicine
The Medal with Purple Ribbon

NEGISHI Akira

Professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Law
Member of the Japan Academy

TODA Tatsushi

Professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Medicine
Member of the Japan Academy

Making history in national leadership

Alum TAKAICHI Sanae became Japan's first female prime minister, marking a milestone in the nation's political history.



Provided by the office of TAKAICHI Sanae

Focus

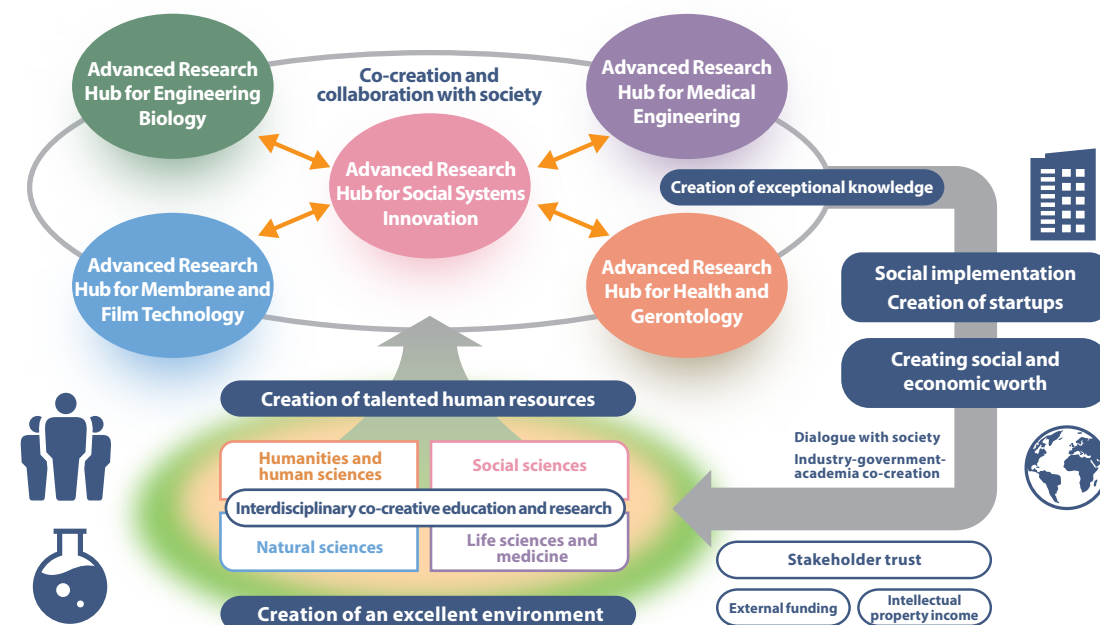
Striving to become a global innovation campus

Kobe University continues to evolve and develop as a global hub for multidisciplinary co-creation of research and education that fosters knowledge and people as it strives to become a world-class global innovation campus that contributes to both the local region and the entire world. At the core of its efforts, **research hubs in five of the university's key research areas**, namely engineering biology, medical engineering, membrane and film technology, health and gerontology and social systems innovation, have come together to form the **Institute for Digital Bio Life Science Research Park (DBLR)**, a cluster that assembles the wisdom of the university while **promoting interdisciplinary co-creative research through collaboration between the realms of industry, government and academia**.

By producing innovation through the creation of exceptional knowledge as well as co-creation and collaboration with society, **DBLR aims to solve social issues by promoting social implementation** while also expanding this scheme across the entire university as it endeavors to **transform Kobe University into a global innovation campus**.

The Kobe University project entitled “A global innovation campus that consistently generates world-leading innovations through a combination of exceptional basic research in biotechnology and social implementation” **was selected to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's J-PEAKS program**. The university carries out this project with DBLR's Advanced Research Hub for Engineering Biology at its core, and by **promoting science and technology and reinvigorating the economy of the region to solve social issues**, the program further accelerates reforms as it strives to achieve its vision.

Driving innovation in an interdisciplinary co-creation cluster of industry, government and academia with knowledge from across the university



Advanced Research Hub for Engineering Biology

Promoting the development of engineering biology to achieve SDGs

This hub promotes engineering biology technology that utilizes sustainable resources, guiding research results in next generation biomedicine and biofuels to social implementation through industry-university collaboration.



Advanced Research Hub for Medical Engineering

Promoting research and development of innovative medical devices and systems

Located in the MedTech Innovation Center (est. 2024), this hub contributes to the creation of interdisciplinary knowledge for medical devices development as well as to the revitalization of the industry by developing medical equipment that responds to the needs of those in both medical and business settings and providing a place for practical human resource development.



Advanced Research Hub for Membrane and Film Technology

A Japan-first, one-of-a-kind hub for comprehensive membrane engineering research

This hub endeavors to solve global issues, such as those regarding energy and the environment, through membrane technology. Located in the Research Center for Membrane and Film Technology and the Kobe University Biomedical Membrane Research and Open Innovation Center Building (est. 2024), the hub provides a one-stop approach to research, development and social implementation, even promoting the creation of new jobs.



Advanced Research Hub for Health and Gerontology

A world-class hub for research on healthy aging and well-being and its social implementation

This hub aims to achieve healthy aging and well-being through interdisciplinary research endeavors that encompass people of all ages. In collaboration with local municipalities, the hub implements various research results into society, such as dementia prevention research and “CogniCARE,” citizen services based on its findings, and the formation of communities to reduce social isolation among older adults living in urban areas.



Advanced Research Hub for Social Systems Innovation

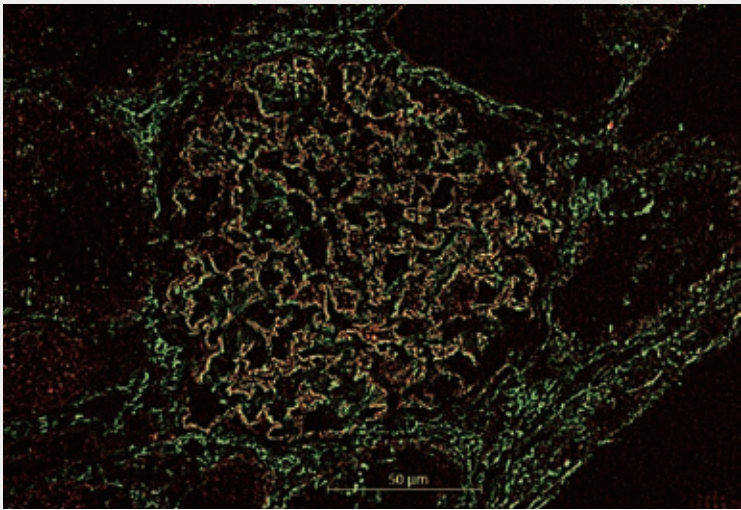
A central hub to tie the four other hubs together

This hub serves as a central hub to tie the other four hubs together within the DBLR concept, fusing arts and sciences and promoting interdisciplinary co-creation research to solve social issues and implement research results in society. Through both its contributions to society and its academic advancements, the hub engages in world-class comprehensive research.



Driving innovation at Kobe University

Kobe University is driving innovation through research that tackles global challenges. In this section, we highlight four leading researchers in key focus areas — natural sciences, social sciences, health and engineering — who are shaping the future in their fields.



Focusing on pediatric kidney diseases

Horinouchi's research broadly centers on molecular genetics, ranging from hereditary kidney disorders to childhood nephrotic syndrome, one of the most common pediatric kidney diseases.

HORINOUCHI Tomoko, associate professor
Graduate School of Medicine



Advancing silicon nano-antenna research

Sugimoto's work explores optically resonant silicon nanoparticles, developed through international collaboration. He aims to apply them in fields like solar cells, cosmetics and structural color ink with industrial and global potential.

SUGIMOTO Hiroshi, associate professor
Graduate School of Engineering

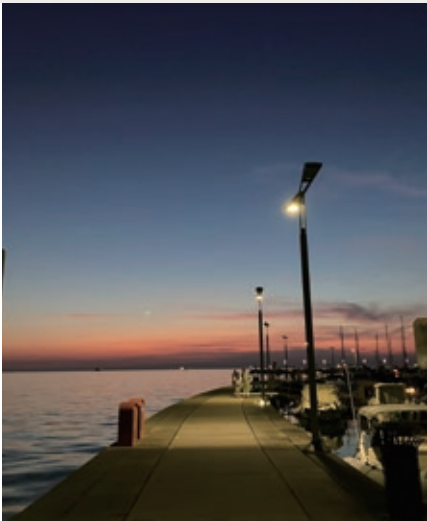


Pioneering atmospheric studies

Starting from his research on Goethe, Hisayama is trying to launch “atmospheric studies” as a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary field and foster international collaboration at KOIAS (Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies).



HISAYAMA Yuho, associate professor
Graduate School of Humanities



Market formation and effectuation

Yoshida investigates how businesses shape new product-market boundaries through marketing actions and customer interactions, with a focus on effectuation — a mindset based on non-predictive control — and the impact of category-expanding strategies.



YOSHIDA Mari, associate professor
Graduate School of Business Administration



Parasitism–mutualism continuum in plants

Suetsugu studies plant–fungus–insect interactions and evolution, focusing on orchids and mycoheterotrophic plants to reveal shifts between cooperation and parasitism.



SUETSUGU Kenji, professor
Graduate School of Science





1-1, Rokkodai-cho, Nada-ku, Kobe, 657-8501, JAPAN

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