



Kobe Gakuin University conducts a unique form of exchange based on subcultures. Lively events for exchange between Japanese and Russian students were held in Moscow in 2015, and in Kobe in 2016.

Encouraging Exchange between Young People for a Better Future

The current generation of university students will build the future, and student exchange between Japan and Russia is increasing. During bilateral talks with President Putin on the occasion of Prime Minister Abe's visit to Moscow in 2013, the two heads of state discussed improving exchange between young people from their countries and vowed to further expand opportunities for such exchange. Exchange between Japanese and Russian students has increased in response, with Japan currently hosting 684 students from Russia (as of May 1, 2016) and having sent 573 to Russia in 2015. The number of exchange agreements between universities in both countries has already reached 381 (as of 2014).

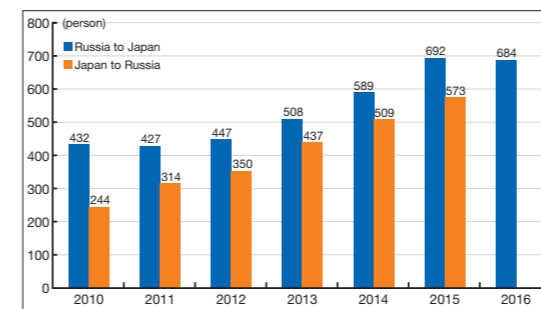
At their meeting in Nagato City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, in December 2016, the two nations' leaders also agreed upon further expanding exchange between universities, among youths, and in sports, along with stimulating regional exchange and using such cooperation to continue to improve relations between Japan and Russia. Prime Minister Abe used the opportunity to propose a "radical expansion of interpersonal exchange" as part of



the eight-point cooperation plan. An exchange project planned for September between the cities of Kobe and Yekaterinburg is part of this effort.

Kobe is an international harbor city located in the Kansai region. Mayor Kizo Hisamoto explains with regard to the current project, "The port town of Kobe has been open to the rest of the world for a long time, actively strengthening international exchange, including exchange of an economic nature. As part of the government's plan to bolster interpersonal exchange between Japan

Changes in the number of exchange students between Russia and Japan



Numbers of exchange students to Japan include those registered at institutions for Japanese language education.

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)

*The number of Japanese exchange students to Russia in 2016 is yet to be totaled.



Four college students involved in the exchange project between Kobe and Yekaterinburg. From left to right: Sakina Naoshima, Yoshizumi Teranishi, Kurumi Sakamoto, and Takuya Ueda. Sakamoto, who will play the traditional Japanese *shamisen*, says that it is his first visit to Russia and that he is looking forward to learning more about the country.



Kobe mayor Kizo Hisamoto states that "Through this exchange, I expect that we can further develop the relations that Kobe and Japan as a whole have with Russia."

and Russia, the city has contacted three universities particularly interested in deepening exchange with Russia, and this September we will visit Yekaterinburg with students and university officials, and discuss student exchanges, universities' intake of foreign students, and cooperation between our universities." The participating Japanese universities all have connections to Russia, like Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, which has had a department dedicated to Russian language research since its founding and two years ago signed an exchange agreement with Yekaterinburg's Ural Federal University. Kobe University, too, has partnerships with three Russian universities and one academy. Students at Kobe Gakuin University on the other hand organized cultural exchange events with Russian students both last year and the year before, which were big successes.

In Yekaterinburg, roundtables will be held between students from both countries and presentations regarding Kobe and other universities will be made by Japanese students. In addition, events introducing and displaying Japanese cultural forms such as flower arrangement, tea ceremony and *kyogen* (traditional Japanese comic theater) will be held, as well as exchange events using youth culture to bring students from both countries together. Takuya Ueda, one of the participating students, has studied abroad at Ural Federal University and will use his experience with cultural and linguistic barriers to facilitate exchange between the two student groups. "When I was staying over there, the locals were very welcoming. At the time, there were few Japanese in Yekaterinburg, but many Russians were interested in Japan. Unfortunately I'll only be there for a short stay this time, but hopefully we will be able to leave behind some positive results," says Ueda.

Mayor Hisamoto looks forward to the visit. "I would like to use this opportunity to strengthen academic and student exchange, as well as collaboration between our universities. As a representative of Kobe, a medical industry city and home to approximately 330 related businesses, I also hope to extend our cooperation to economic exchanges in the medical field and other areas."

Other state-sponsored exchange programs which have already been implemented

From 2014		From 2017	
University	Program	University	Program
Hokkaido University	Fostering experts who can be a driving force in promoting a sustainable environment, culture and development of the Far East and the Arctic Circle	Chiba University	Fostering personnel who can cross domains to contribute to the future agriculture of the Russian Far East
Tohoku University	Fostering human resources capable of creating new value	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	Fostering Japan and Russia business personnel to contribute to the rapid expansion of personnel exchange
University of Tsukuba	Fostering of multilingual personnel who can play an active role in industries for Russian speaking countries	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Fostering engineering personnel who can lead the health/medical and nuclear power/energy industries
The University of Tokyo	Student exchanges based on the collaboration of natural science and social infrastructure studies	Kanazawa University	Fostering future co-creation leaders
Niigata University	Construction of a global medical personnel training framework for contributing to the economic and industrial development of Japan and Russia	Nagasaki University/Fukushima Medical University	Fostering leaders in the medical science field for disaster/radiation exposure
		Tokai University	Fostering bridge personnel in the field of life care
		Kindai University	Fostering core personnel for manufacturing

Since 2014, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has been supporting an academic cooperation program for fostering the development of experts who are able to function as a bridge between countries, particularly for carrying out efforts such as university-industry research collaboration fixed on the future of Japan-Russia and Japan-India relations. For 2017, the Ministry will be expanding the program for structuring an education cooperation program focused on practical science. As a total of 12 consortiums pushed forward with exchanges, plans are in the works for the promotion of exchanges between Japanese and Russian universities based on the selected platform secretariat. This effort will be undertaken by Hokkaido University and Niigata University.