

To all the IKUSEI-JOKYO (Assistant Professors under Training) of Hiroshima University regardless of Union members or not

Hidemichi Kawanishi

President, Hiroshima University Union

Hiroshima University Union is examining every condition of the staffs and officers of the university and has found the conditions of the IKUSEI JOKYO or Assistant Professor in Training (hereinafter referred to as IJ) one of the most urgent issues. In order to find ways out of the serious problems faced by all IJs in Hiroshima University, we would like to propose all of you, IJs, to get together and discuss those problems.

As the first batch of IJs are completing their terms in office at the end of this academic year, the Specialized Commission of the Union examined their current status and conditions and found serious problems in the process of recruitment as well as the working conditions of IJs, despite the fact that the total number of IJs has reached nearly 10 % of all the faculty members of the university. We feel a lot of concerns about their future prospects, if the present situations are left unchanged.

Some of those serious problems regarding their working conditions include:

1. Because the hidden but primary purpose of recruiting IJs was to elevate the position of Hiroshima University in the evaluation assessment by the MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) through lowering the average age of the faculty members, the official and more IJ-relevant aim of recruiting IJs, i.e., “to contribute to the development of academic communities by fostering the ability (of IJs)” as documented by the University, was disregarded, and thereby, many IJs are treated as “teaching laborers with limited terms” in some departments or faculties. (Reference: The revised version of the IJ recruitment document for 2019 academic year clearly states that the IJ recruitment is being made against the background of the fact that Hiroshima University was ranked as the 13th among 16 national universities contested, which disappears in the IJ recruitment documents thereafter).

2. While the University Headquarter directs the applying departments and faculties for IJs to prepare “clear training plans,” the former does not include the training plan as the one of the documents to be submitted by the latter. Consequently, IJs have never had any opportunities to see training plans for them even after their settlement at the university, which prevents the IJs from drawing their future prospects during and after their terms in office.
3. Following demands should be included in the urgent appeals to the University Authority:

(1) to quickly prepare the training plans together with the IJs concerned and extend their terms in office by two years so that the training plans can be implemented

(2) to prepare the academic positions to accommodate the IJs, regardless of their years of arrival in the University, so that they can continue their academic activities in this university (for example, certain number of posts of tenure-track assistant professors and other academic positions which IJs can apply for)

These are just the examples raised in the discussion of the Specialized Commission of the Union. We hope the problems of IJs to be examined and the demands prepared by IJs in the Union as well as those not yet inside. Therefore, we propose all of you to get together and discuss the problems faced by many of you.

The consequent and urgent appeal to you is to have a meeting of IJs with executive members of the Union in addition to the Specialized Commission as follows.

Date and time: July 8 (Thursday), 12:10-12:50

Mode: a hybrid meeting (face-to-face mode at the Union office and a zoom meeting mode)

We are inviting the IJs not yet joining the Union as well. Bring your fellow IJs to this meeting. All of you are most welcome.