



PRESS RELEASE

Osaka Global Student Support Association
TODA BUILDING Shinsaibashi 5F
Chuo Ward Minamisenba
4 Chome-4-21
Osaka
Japan
542-0081

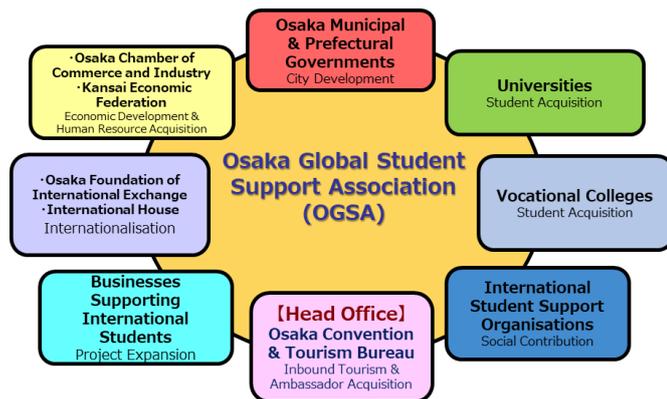
8 March 2021

Osaka Targets No.1 International Student Destination in Asia

The Osaka Global Student Support Association (OGSA) has announced their strategy for Osaka to become the No.1 International Student Destination in Asia. During their fourth general meeting of the 2020 fiscal year (18 Feb. 2021), OGSA received unanimous approval for 16 plans of action that cover four core areas regarding international students (International student: promotion, support, engagement, career development). With these initiatives being given the all-clear, Osaka begins to take concrete action.

About the Osaka Global Student Support Association

The Osaka Global Student Support Association was founded in April of 2020 on the belief that Osaka requires a united, city-wide approach to support Osaka's international students and promote the region as a first-rate international study destination. With approximately 26,000 international students currently



(Figure 1)

studying in Osaka, there were already a variety of private companies, public organisations, and educational institutions providing services to support them. However, with each body working independently of each other, it became apparent that a more streamlined approach that would bring those passionate about international students together under one banner, would not only be more efficient, but propel Osaka onto the world stage as a destination that puts the satisfaction of the students first.

With the Osaka Convention & Tourism Bureau spearheading the initiative, Osaka's prefectural and municipal governments, educational institutions, and both public and private organisations joined forces to launch the Osaka Global Student Support Association in Spring of 2020 (Figure 1).

With the central concept of making Osaka a place that international students love to ‘live’, ‘study’, ‘work’, and ‘visit’, OGSA aims to achieve the highest international student satisfaction rate of any city in Asia by 2030 and strives to be a model case for the rest of Japan to follow.



‘It is vital that we unite Osaka’s key players in our efforts to make Osaka the No.1 international student destination in Asia’ asserted director of policy, Yoshikazu Tanaka following the approval of the action plans on 18 Feb. 2021.

Osaka Convention & Tourism Bureau’s reason for involvement

International students play a vital role in Osaka’s tourism policy and direction. International students differ to regular tourists. Having lived in Osaka, they come to understand what truly makes Osaka an attractive destination. Therefore, they make the perfect ambassadors for the region. They speak highly of it to their friends and family back home and through social media, they inspire future generations to ‘visit’, ‘work’, and ‘study’ in Osaka. Furthermore, they significantly contribute to developing and guiding future students. With today’s international students being the workforce of the future, they have the power to encourage and support those that follow in their footsteps and create an international network with roots deeply connected to Osaka.

Additionally, creating an environment that permits international students to live stress-free and encourages them to become active members of society contributes tremendously to Osaka’s image goals. These include the image of Osaka as a sustainable and diverse city, full of equality and opportunities and where anyone feels comfortable and welcome.

Osaka International Student Survey 2021: Learning from the voices of 1,000 students

In order to develop a strategy that is in line with the needs of international students, OGSA conducted an international student survey between December 2020 and January 2021 (p.5). Taking advantage of OGSA's network of universities, vocational colleges, and Japanese language schools, they gathered 1132 responses (of which 992 were deemed useful) from 90 different educational institutions.

Thanks to this information, OGSA was able to gain valuable data on areas such as 'what types of social networking services international students use both when in Japan and when in their home country', 'what types of support international students want to receive', and 'what aspects of Osaka should be promoted in order to gain more interest from abroad'. OGSA will conduct further annual surveys to ensure it consistently meets the needs of international students in Osaka.



The meeting concluded with the approval of all 16 plans of action aimed at supporting international students.

The 16 Action Plans

International Education Promotion Strategy
<p>International Student Portal Site: www.studyinosaka.com</p> <p>Inspire prospective students and provide trustworthy information to current students</p>
<p>International Promotion / Offshore Base Utilisation</p> <p>Collaborate with the offshore offices of educational institutions in Osaka to host promotional events</p>
<p>University Reform Project</p> <p>Work with universities to improve their international student offer through internationalisation</p>
<p>International Student Ambassador Programme</p> <p>Utilise the voices of international students to promote Osaka to the rest of the world</p>
International Student Support Strategy
<p>'Osaka Living' Project</p> <p>Improve student satisfaction by facilitating a variety of processes essential to studying in Osaka</p>
<p>International Student Support Centre and Services Development</p> <p>Develop international exchange centres and streamline administrative and medical support services</p>
<p>'International Student EXPO' (Aug.) and 'International Student Week' (Nov.)</p> <p>Host an 'International Student EXPO' in August and an 'International Student Week' situated around International Student Day (17 Nov.)</p>
<p>Osaka International Student Scholarship Programme</p> <p>Establish a unique scholarship programme for international students in Osaka</p>
International Student Engagement Strategy
<p>Welcome to Osaka Campaign!</p> <p>Launch an SNS Campaign promoting Osaka through the eyes of international students</p>
<p>International Student Osaka B&S Programme (Brothers & Sisters Programme)</p> <p>International students play host to children on educational tours and introduce key areas of Osaka</p>
<p>International Student 'Volunteer Challenge'</p> <p>Increase involvement of international students in volunteer and community work</p>
<p>Osaka Festivals & Event Participation</p> <p>Involve international students in festivals and other cultural events occurring in Osaka</p>
International Student Career Development and Employment Strategy
<p>Career Development/Job Hunting Support</p> <p>Introduce part-time work and internship opportunities and support job-hunting activities</p>
<p>'Skill Up Project!'</p> <p>Provide skills training to improve the employability of international students in Japan</p>
<p>International Student Entrepreneurship Support Project</p> <p>Support international students that desire to start their own companies in Japan</p>
<p>International Student Follow-Up System</p> <p>Establish a database of international students and their journey post-graduation</p>

Osaka International Student Survey 2021

Survey period : 18 Dec. 2020 – 31 Jan. 2021

Valid Responders : 992 people

Target Audience : International students studying at universities, post-graduate schools, vocational colleges, and Japanese language schools in Osaka.

No. of Questions: 26. (Both multiple-choice and open questions included.)

<u>Question Content (E.g.)</u>	<u>Findings</u>
International student satisfaction	77.8% of international students are currently satisfied
Influential factors when choosing an international study destination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Safety (37.3%) 2. There are plentiful amounts of places to work after graduating (26.3%) 3. There are advanced technologies (22.3%)
Reasons for choosing Osaka	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I heard that it is easy to live in/convenient (14%) 2. The people's characteristic (13%) 3. The cost of living is inexpensive (12%)
Problems affecting international students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID-19 – mentioned by 39% of responses 2. Cannot do part-time work – mentioned by 30% of responses
Support that international students desire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fiscal Support / Economic relief (Undefined) (26%) 2. Advice about job-hunting / networking events with companies (21%) 3. More scholarship opportunities (16%) 4. International exchange with Japanese people (11%)
Problems when searching for accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Guarantor System (42%) 2. Cost of Rent (42%) 3. Cost of Contract Fees (35%) 4. The lack of rooms that foreigners can move into (32%)
International study patterns to Osaka	<p>Abroad → Japanese language schools in Japan → Vocational colleges or universities in Japan</p> <p>JASSO : 80% of graduates from Japanese language schools advance to vocational colleges or universities in Japan</p>

For further information and analysis of the results of the international student survey please visit our official webpage (<https://studyinosaka.com/>) (Japanese only).

For further information, please contact:

Osaka Global Student Support Association Head Office: PR Officer James Hills

TEL: (+81) 6-6282-5914 E-mail: james.hills@octb.jp

Osaka Global Student Support Association Homepage: <https://studyinosaka.com/>