

Introduction

This “Pathways to the Future – Living and Studying at Ritsumeikan University –” is a web-based booklet that introduces the basic philosophy and learning characteristics of Ritsumeikan University to those who will be newly enrolled in the 2021 academic year.

The theme of the first chapter is the “Ritsumeikan Charter”. The Ritsumeikan Charter is a document that sets forth the most fundamental principles of Ritsumeikan Academy as a whole, including its affiliated primary, junior and senior high schools and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Chapter 1 is a commentary on this charter, describing how Ritsumeikan University was formed, how its philosophy and organization have developed, and where Ritsumeikan University is heading now. We believe that it is important not only for the faculty and staff of Ritsumeikan University, but also for all of you who study here, to understand the founding spirit of “Freedom and Innovation” and the teaching philosophy of “Peace and Democracy”, including the historical background of these.

The theme of Chapter 2 is “The Ritsumeikan Model of Learning”. The Ritsumeikan Model of Learning consists of a variety of systems and frameworks that support each of you in establishing your own style of learning as an independent learner and in forming a “learning community” where you can learn from and support each other. At the beginning of the chapter, there is an illustration that shows the image of the Ritsumeikan model of learning, so please take a look at that first. On the pages following the illustration, you will find a brief explanation of each item and a link to the university website where you can find more detailed explanations. If you find the explanations interesting, we encourage you to check out the linked information as well.

Until last year, a paper version of “Pathways to the Future – Living and Studying at Ritsumeikan University-” was published as a booklet of over 170 pages. This year, in order to make it easier for new students to read, we have completely revised the content and switched from a paper publication to a web publication. At the same time, in consideration of the drastic reduction in the volume of the revised edition, we have left a link to the previous edition (AY 2020 edition) of “Pathways to the Future” so that you can continue to access it. There are many articles in the previous edition that are not in this year's edition, such as an introduction to learning by college and articles on self-development and understanding of others in adolescence, so please refer to them as well.

The spread of COVID-19 since the beginning of 2020 has had a significant impact on learning at the university; in the spring semester of the 2020 academic year, most classes were held online in response to the declaration of a nationwide state of emergency. While face-to-face classes partially resumed in the fall semester, off-campus learning, including study abroad, has become difficult in many respects. The effects of COVID-19 are expected to continue for quite a while longer. COVID-19 is bringing unprecedented changes in the way we teach and learn, especially in the active use of ICT. For more information on Ritsumeikan University's response and support in this regard, please refer to the start-up website.

Although this booklet was written based on the situation before COVID-19, establishing a proactive learning attitude and forming a “learning community” where students can learn and support each other have become even more important due to the COVID-19 situation. We hope that this booklet will help you to have your own vision of your future learning and growth at Ritsumeikan University, and to take the first step toward independent and peer learning.

Editorial Committee