

Introduction

Congratulations on your acceptance to Ritsumeikan University! All of the faculty and staff at Ritsumeikan sincerely welcome our new students with their hopes for the future and their unlimited potential.

This resource, “Pathways to the Future: Living and Studying at Ritsumeikan University,” was created to teach new RU students in the 2024 academic year about the University’s important philosophy and learning characteristics.

The theme of the first chapter is the “Ritsumeikan Charter.” The Ritsumeikan Charter was established to share and communicate the fundamental philosophy and mission of the Ritsumeikan Academy, which includes Ritsumeikan University, as well as its affiliated schools and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. The first chapter explains the content of the charter and describes how Ritsumeikan University was formed, how the organization has developed based on the University’s philosophy, and where Ritsumeikan is heading now. We believe it is important that not only our faculty and staff but also all who study here understand the historical background of our founding spirit of “Freedom and Innovation” and teaching philosophy of “Peace and Democracy”.

The theme of the second chapter is “The Ritsumeikan Model of Learning,” based on the keywords “Leading-edge research university” and “next-generation inquiry-based academy” in the R2030 Challenge Design, the mid-term plan of the University. “The Ritsumeikan Model of Learning” refers to a variety of systems and frameworks that help each of you establish your own style of learning as independent learners, learn together, support each other, and form a “learning community” and has played an important role in the mid-term plan until 2020. At the meeting of the Plenary Council of the University held in October 2022, while confirming these achievements to date, it was also affirmed that we will strive to deepen your inquisitive abilities and cultivate your research skills not only in regular courses but also in other non-credit courses and extracurricular activities such as the “Mirai Seminar.” At the beginning of this chapter, there is an illustration that shows the Ritsumeikan Model of Learning, so please take a look at that first. On the pages following the illustration, you will find a brief description of each item and a link to the University website where you can find a more detailed explanation. If you are interested in or have questions about the descriptions, we encourage you to review the information provided through the links.

Until AY 2020, “Pathways to the Future: Living and Studying at Ritsumeikan University” was published in paper format with over 170 pages. In order to make it more accessible to new students, in AY 2021 we completely revised the content and switched from paper format to an online booklet. At the same time, in consideration of the significant reduction in volume of the revised edition, we have provided a link to the previous edition (2020 edition) of “Pathways to the Future” so that students may continue to have access to it. There are many articles in the previous edition that are not in this academic year’s edition, such as those introducing learning in each college and articles on self-formation/ understanding others during adolescence. We encourage you to refer to them as well.

The spread of COVID-19 since early 2020 has had a significant impact on learning at the University. This impact continued to be felt in AY 2021 and into AY 2022, with restrictions finally being lifted in AY 2023. The response to the pandemic has brought about unprecedented changes in the way we teach and learn, especially in terms of the active use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). For more information on Ritsumeikan University’s pandemic response, provided support, and DX (“digital transformation”) efforts, please take a look at the “Startup Guide for New Students” website.

In terms of the importance that Ritsumeikan University has placed on “establishing an attitude of independent learning” and “forming a ‘learning community’ where students can learn and support each other,” the significance of these have been reassessed in the face of uncertainty due to COVID-19. The meaning of routinely “commuting to campus every day” also continues to be reexamined. We hope that this booklet will help you excel in your university studies, develop your own vision, learn independently, and take the first step toward personal growth through peer learning.

Editorial Committee