

CONTEXT FOR THE NATIONAL DATA: JAPAN

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Japanese higher education achieved mass higher education by the mid-1970s with a highly diversified structure including a huge private sector. No other developed country comes close to Japan's 78% private higher education enrolments.

Japan now (2002) has 686 4-year Universities (512 private), 542 Junior Colleges (475 private) with two-year education programs, 62 Colleges of Technology (3 private) and 3458 Specialized Training Colleges (3145 private). The 4-year universities offer bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. The junior colleges and colleges of technology issue associate degrees. The specialized training colleges offer diplomas called *Senmon-shi*.

Financially, there is a clear distinction between private and public institutions. On average, private 4-year universities get about 10% of their revenues from public subsidies, while public universities are mainly supported by the public funds. Regarding governance, public institutions are divided into the national universities operated by national government and local public institutions operated by local authorities. In 2004, national and most local public institutions will introduce corporate style management, as a part of new public management policies, and a sort of partial "privatization" of public institutions.

Private institutions are operated by School Corporations, nonprofit organizations for school activities. Most of the private institutions are demand-absorbing, mainly for mass higher education at low public expense. A limited number of prestigious elite institutions function in big cities such as Tokyo or Kansai (and Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe). Even the elite private institutions rely heavily on tuition fees. In general, parents paying tuition fees support the study life of undergraduate students.

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It is the national (public) institutions that provide the majority of post-graduate programs and the main research. Although private higher education researchers can access public funds, the total amount of research revenue in the private sector is much smaller than that in the public sector.

Enrollment trends have been volatile across Japan's differentiated private-public system. On the one hand, the national higher education plan fixes the number of students in 4-year universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology, even for private institutions. On the other hand, such regulation becomes meaningless as the number of high school graduates will continue decreasing until around 2010, as it has since 1991. Most junior colleges currently admit almost all applicants. Even in 4-year universities, 30 percent of private institutions face difficulties in attracting enough students. In the last 15 to 20 years, many junior colleges have been restructured into 4-year universities based on increased female student preference for co-education in 4-year institutions. Meanwhile, the number of adult students increases dramatically, though there is no official enrolment data by age, and no clear category of part-time students.