Current Practices of Providing Reasonable Accommodation for Disabled Students in Japanese Higher Education, with a focus on Ritsumeikan University(RU)

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RITSUMEIKAN

Enforcement of the Disability Discrimination Act and support for disabled students in higher education institutions

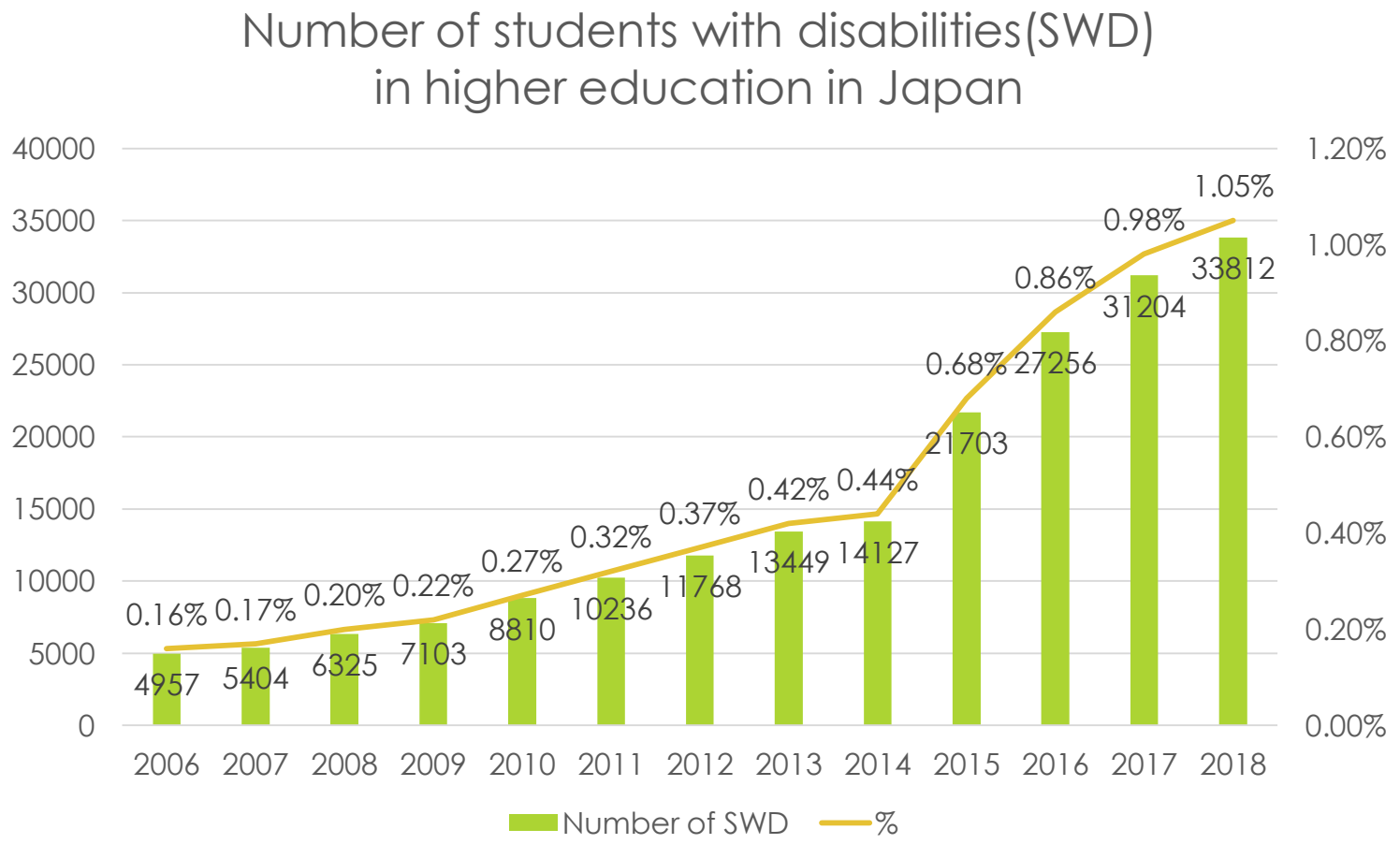
- The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 2016.
- Under the act, Discrimination against persons with disabilities is prohibited at both public and private universities. Providing reasonable accommodation is a must for national universities, and private universities have a duty to make efforts towards it. However, private universities need reasonable accommodation in the same way as national universities.

⇒Securing learning opportunities in higher education under the Disability Discrimination Act has changed from "good will" to "following the law."

Changes in the number of students with disabilities (SWDs) in Japanese higher education (2006-2018)

- The number of SWD in 2018 is 33,812 (1.05%)
- The number of SWD has been on the rise since the survey started in 2006.

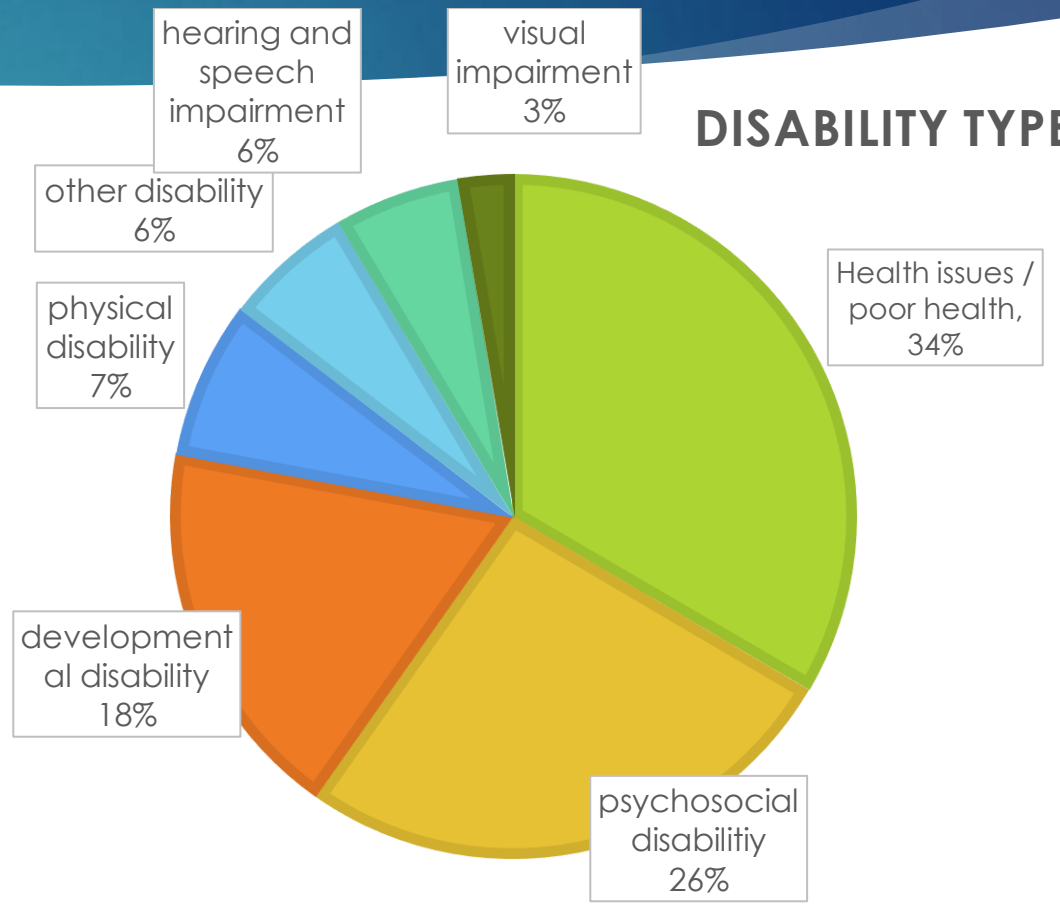
【2019,JASSO】



Disability Type of SWD (33,812) enrolled at Japanese universities in 2018

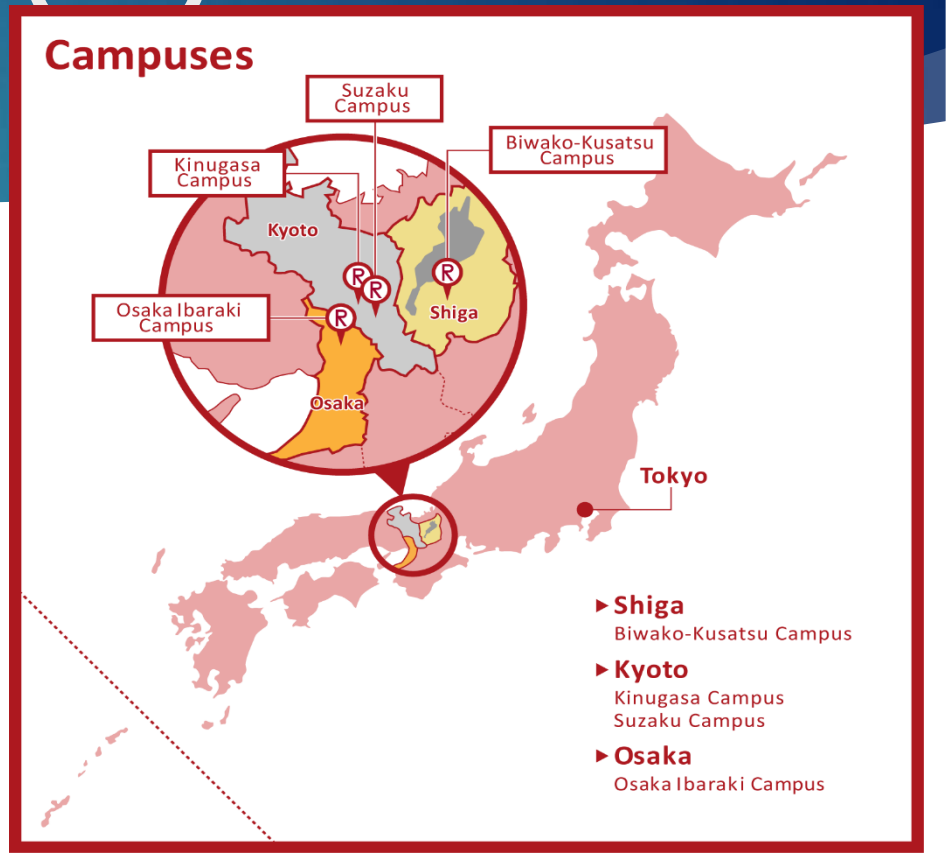
As a share by disability type, 11,151 people (34%) have a large number of health issues / poor health, followed by 8,770 psychosocial disabilities (26%). And, in order of developmental disabilities: physical disabilities, hearing and speech impairment, and visual impairment.

【2019,JASSO】



About Ritsumeikan University (RU)

- Established in 1892. Private university.
- Four Campuses (Suzaku and Kinugasa in Kyoto, BKC in Shiga, OIC in Osaka)
- A total of 35,120 students in 16 colleges and 20 graduate schools.



History of establishment
-Disability Resource Center at RU -

Formed a "Committee to consider the support system of Ritsumeikan University SWD" in 2001, triggered by the voice of SWD.

Enrollment of students requisitioning support in 2004. Formation of the group "Support.net" to support this student by students. And, the volunteer center started coordinating support for SWD.

At the 2005 university-wide conference, it is decided to established a Disability Resource Center (DRC).

The DRC was established in the Division of Academic Affairs in June 2006.

The process of reforming the DRC at RU

2009 – 2010 Constructing a "Comprehensive Student Support System" became one of pillar goals of the RU Academy Vision R2020.

As the first stage of "Constructing a Comprehensive Student Support System", the Special Needs Student Support Room (SNS) was established inside of the Office of Student Affairs in 2011, aiming to provide support for students with various needs including developmental disabilities.

Along with the enactment of the Japanese Law for the Elimination of Disability Discrimination in 2016, the DRC was transferred from the Academic Affairs Division to the Student Affairs Division and integrated with the SNS.

A new (Reformed) Disability Resource Center (DRC) was established in 2016, following the mission of the 2nd stage of "Constructing a Comprehensive Student Support System"

Ritsumeikan University Policy on Support for Student with Disabilities

Our Core Values

Ritsumeikan University is committed to creating an inclusive environment that supports students with disabilities through the following three policies:

- **Provide students with disabilities the support needed to ensure an equal opportunity to receive quality education.**
- **Contribute to the learning and development of all students through the provision of support for with disabilities.**
- **Aim to enhance the university's educational competency by bringing an awareness to faculty and staff regarding support for students with disabilities.**

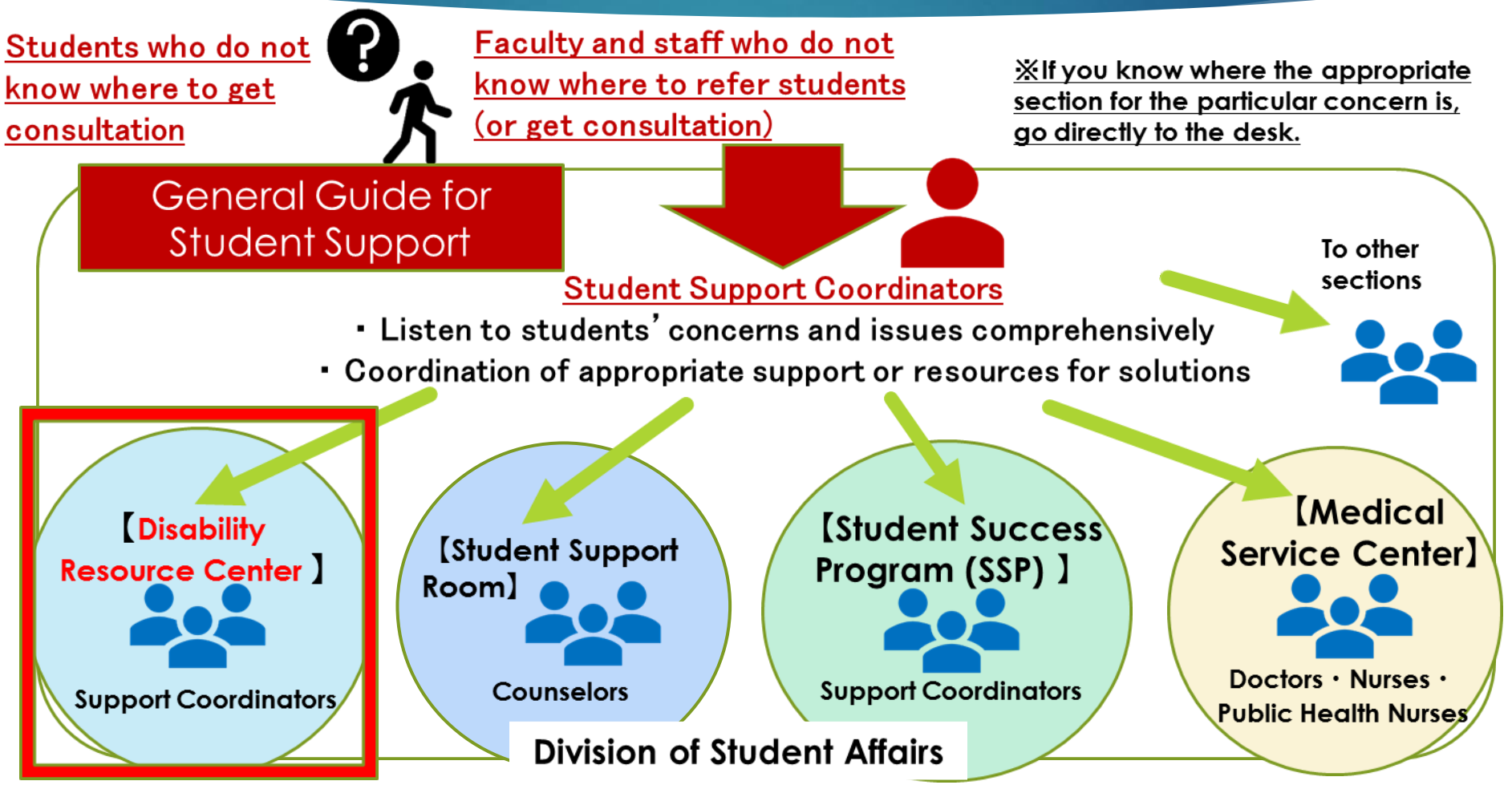
Ritsumeikan University Policy on Support for Student with Disabilities

Our Objectives

We aim for all students to develop the following three skills through our support:

- **Self-Awareness:**
  We will foster students' self-awareness of what they can, what they are good at, and what they can achieve with a little ingenuity and support.
- **Self-Advocacy**
  We will foster students' ability to verbalize their own goals, hopes, weaknesses and needs, to consult and request support, and to select resources and support for them.
- **Self-Management**
  We will foster students' ability to design their own support plan and network, utilizing various on and off campus resources in order to solve problems and achieve goals.

Current role and function of the DRC within the Comprehensive Student Support System



Provision of reasonable accommodation after the enforcement of the Elimination of Disability Discrimination Act

To be eligible for academic accommodation, students are requested to submit an application form with written consent and evidenced documents (e.g., a copy of a disability certificate or a medical certificate).

The decisions of reasonable accommodation are made based on dialogue and forming consensus between SWD and the university through adjusting the needs of the students and the academic policies. Examples of academic accommodations;

- Providing an academic accommodation letter to the faculty
- Training for student support staff (part time employment) and providing services of student support staff to SWD.
  - Information accessibility services in classes (e.g., PC note-taking)
  - Physical accessibility services between buildings (e.g., wheelchair user)
  - Services for converting paper-based materials into digital test data
- Services for renting support equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, magnifier tools for reading, PCs with voice reading software)
  ※The accommodations for final exams are provided by individual colleges/departments

Other DRC supports and services

Following support and services are provided for an inclusive learning environment:

- Regular consultation.
- Collaborative support with staff and faculty of a college/department/section.
- Transitional support (e.g., consultation before admission, collaborative support with affiliated high schools, individual consultation during open campus events.)
- Making referrals for off-campus resources related to support (e.g., disability equipment services, disability-related events).
- Career support (e.g., making referrals to or collaborative support with employment support organizations).
- Surveying and taking requests regarding barrier-free promotion on campus
- Promoting countermeasures for disaster for SWD.
- Providing training and seminars on and off campus in order to enhance the inclusive environment for SWD.

Future issues and initiatives

- Providing services in advanced academic fields such as graduate schools and developing support staff.
- Providing follow-up services for the students who use pubic services for daily-living assistants.
- Collecting various accessibility equipment and technology information and promoting the usage of such tools.
- Providing support for international students with disabilities and for SWDs who want to study abroad.