Message from the President

The aim of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE) is to improve the selection of candidates for admission to Japanese universities, and thereby to promote education at universities, high schools, and other educational institutions, through our work related to the National Center University Entrance Examination (hereafter, “The National Center Test”).

The National Center Test is given to individuals who wish to enroll at a national, public or private university in Japan. Universities cooperate with each other to give the Test, which is conducted countrywide on the same day using the same questions. On the other hand, when individual universities select students to admit, they apply their own criteria to the Test results and take a multifaceted approach to determining the ability and aptitude of each person, such as by conducting admission examinations based on their respective admission policies.

Reform of university entrance examinations is a key component of the Japanese government’s initiatives to strengthen the connections between high school and university education. As a measure of the reform, the introduction of a Common Test for University Admissions is being proposed. The NCUEE has been engaged in research and investigation that will contribute to improving the admissions process, and intends to make active efforts in the smooth introduction and administration of the Common Test for University Admissions in view of the achievements gained and issues identified from such research and investigation. We will also strengthen our efforts to improve the university admission selection process by continuing to host meetings of the National Research Council for University Admissions and other events.

We will continue to engage in broad exchanges of opinions with relevant organizations, and will strive to correctly analyze, assess, and proactively improve the current situation to implement even better examinations in the future.

Hiroki Yamamoto
President of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations

June 2017
Outline of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations

Aim of the NCUEE

The NCUEE aims to improve the university admission selection process and thus contribute to the advancement of university and high school education (including the latter courses of secondary schools and high school courses of special needs education schools) by working with universities to provide testing services for university applicants.

Plans for the Fourth Medium-Term Goal Period (FY 2016–FY 2020)*

❶ The National Center Test

The NCUEE will implement smooth and appropriate measures to ensure that test development, testing procedures, scoring, score notifications, and other operations that are considered appropriate to be processed collectively for the National Center Test, which are offered in collaboration with universities throughout the country to assess basic academic achievement at the high school level for university applicants, are performed and processed in a timely fashion.

❷ Research on the Improvement of University Applicant Selection Methods

As a major force in research on the improvement of university admission selection methods in Japan, the NCUEE will take the initiative to engage and cooperate with universities and high schools, as well as work with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) on relevant research projects.

• Research on the National Center Test
• Practical study that addresses issues pertaining to university admission selection
• Research on the Common Test for University Admissions

*The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology sets targets to be achieved by the NCUEE for the five-year period with regard to its operation (medium-term goals). In response, the NCUEE draws up a plan to achieve the medium-term goals (medium-term plan) and obtains approval from the Minister.

*Medium-term goals for the NCUEE are established every five years from fiscal 2001, and based on these goals, a medium-term plan is formulated. This term falls under the Fourth Medium-Term Goal Period.
The National Center Test is carried out by each university in conjunction with the National Center for University Entrance Exams. The National Center Test is the driving force behind the diversification of university admission selection methods.

The National Center Test primarily aims to measure basic academic achievement by applicants to universities upon concluding a high school level education. National, local public and private universities use the test scores by applying their own criteria and using a multifaceted approach to judge the ability, motivation and aptitude of the examinees to receive higher education.

University Admissions System Combined with the National Center Test

Administration of the National Center Test
The National Center Test is conducted at various sites throughout the country on the same days and using the same test items, by the NCUEE in cooperation with participating universities including national, local public and private universities.

Roles of NCUEE
- Test development, printing and delivery of test papers
- Preparation of an examination guidebook for applicants and a manual for administrators
- Receipt of applications, appointment of test sites, and issue of admission tickets for the examination
- Scoring and aggregation of the test results
- Provision of the test results to the universities
- Notification of individual test scores to the examinees

Roles of Participating Universities
- Announcing the subject areas and subjects to be adopted from the National Center Test, and the examinations prepared by the universities themselves
- Providing test sites and examiners on the test day
- Distributing the examination guidebook to applicants
- Implementation of the examination, management of the test processing (collecting and sending test booklets and mark cards), and requests for test scores
- Providing test developers
- Archiving and managing test questions

Test Fees
For 3 subjects or more: 18,000 yen
For 2 subjects or less: 12,000 yen
800 yen to receive Test Score Notification (Those who wish to receive notification of their examination results are required to pay an additional fee at the time of application.)

Application Procedures
- Students expecting to graduate from high school can apply through their schools.
- Applicants who have graduated from high school will send their application forms directly to the NCUEE.

Examination Sites
- Students expecting to graduate from high school will take the exam at the appointed site within the area where their school is located.
- Applicants who have graduated from high school will take the exam at the appointed site within their residential area.
Roles of the National Center Test

The National Center Test has been conducted for admissions to national, public and private universities since the 1990 school year, replacing the Joint First-Stage Achievement Test, which was implemented from the school years 1979 to 1989.

From 2011 and onwards, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)’s implementation guidance on university admissions, a notification by the MEXT Higher Education Bureau Director-General, clearly specifies that the use of the National Center Test scores are recommended as one of the application requirements and/or admission criteria when conducting admissions office entrance examinations.

1. Ensure the high quality of tests by excluding too difficult and ambiguous items

Prior to the 1978 school year, some difficult and ambiguous items beyond the scope of high school education were included in some university entrance examinations. Since the introduction of the Joint First-Stage Achievement Test and the National Center Test, which have been highly evaluated by those involved in higher education, the high quality of the test items has been maintained.

2. Promote individuality and diversification of the admissions systems by universities, through integration of the National Center Test and respective university examinations

An increasing number of universities are conducting essay writing tests and interviews, and have special admissions procedures when admitting students who have been recommended by their high school, students who have received higher education outside Japan, and adults. The National Center Test contributes to the diversification and individuality of universities in their applicant selection methods.

3. Promote admission systems reform for all types of universities (public, private, two-year and four-year colleges)

The number of two-year and four-year private and local public universities using the Test amounted to 766 for the 2017 school year. The Test has been highly evaluated by these universities.

4. Appropriate usage at each university by an “a la carte” method

Since the establishment of the National Center Test, an “a la carte” optional method has been employed, which allows universities to specify the subject areas and subjects to be used for their admissions procedures.

Merits of Using the National Center Test

Adoption of the National Center Test offers numerous merits including allowing participating universities to attract new types of students, promote themselves on a national scale, and focus more on interviews.

- Use of the National Center Test enables all-round type students with average achievements in all subjects to be admitted, thus helping to expand the range of students.
- Adoption of the National Center Test allows university personnel to use short essays and interviews for the second-stage examinations.
- Allows for a wider geographic distribution and greater number of applicants.
- Facilitates promotion of the university’s name and improves its image.
- Allows for a wider assessment of the applicants’ qualifications than if only the university’s own examination is used.
- Being given another opportunity to be tested for the same university/department is highly evaluated by examinees.

Examples of University Use of the National Center Test

- The Test is adopted in all subject areas and subjects to assess the general basic academic ability of the applicant.
- The designated subject areas and subjects covered by the Test are selected for some applicants taking the general entrance examination.
- Examinees are allowed to select their preferred subjects from among a wider range of subjects.
- The high school reports and National Center Test results of the applicants are used as the primary selection criteria. The university then conducts interviews with those applicants who have passed.
- The mathematics and foreign language sections of the National Center Test are used for applicants to the faculty of science.
- The mathematics and foreign language sections of the National Center Test are used for applicants to the faculty of engineering. The university gives a test only in the subject of science.
- The National Center Test results, or the university’s examination results, whichever is higher, are used when making decisions for some of the university applicants.
- Only the Japanese and foreign language sections of the National Center Test are used for applicants of admission upon recommendation. The interview test is conducted by the university.
- After clearly stipulating the required score for the National Center Test, an examination conducted by the university is given to candidates who have met that required score. The decision for admission is based only on the results of the examination conducted by the university, excluding the results of the National Center Test.
- The results of the previous year’s National Center Test may be used by the university, upon the discretion of the university, to select applicants.
### Outline of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations

#### Drawing up and Adjustment of Specific Plans
- Development, inspection, printing and evaluation of test questions
- Securing, setting, and preparing the examination site/room

#### Examination Operations
- Examination Operations Preparation
- Examination Operations Committee
- Notification of Estimated Number of Applicants
- Notification of Operation Procedures
- Preparation of Admission Guide
- Briefing Session for High Schools
- Request to Set & Prepare Examination Site / Room
- Meeting of the Representatives of the Council (First Meeting)
- Receipt of Applications
- Registration of Applicants
- Sending of Confirmation Postcards
- Finalize Examination Site & Number of Examinees
- Sending of Examination Entrance Ticket
- Announcement of Correct Answers, etc.
- Midterm Announcement of Average Scores, etc.
- Submission of Data on Applicants who Passed

#### Operations Procedures and Schedule (NCUEE and Universities using the National Center Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>NCUEE</th>
<th>Participating Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Drawing up Adjustment of Specific Plans</td>
<td>Discussion at the Committee Meeting regarding Location Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Notification of Estimated Number of Applicants</td>
<td>Announcement of Selection Criteria, incl. Individual Achievement Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Notification of Operation Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Preparation of Admission Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Briefing Session for High Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Request to Set &amp; Prepare Examination Site / Room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Meeting of the Representatives of the Council (First Meeting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Receipt of Applications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Registration of Applicants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sending Test-related Materials (first time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sending of Confirmation Postcards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Finalize Examination Site &amp; Number of Examinees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Setting of Examination Site / Room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meeting of the Representatives of the Council (Second Meeting)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Test Run of Communications Systems for Implementing the National Center Test</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National Center Test (Main Test)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Announcement of Correct Answers, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Midterm Announcement of Average Scores, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Announcement of Score Adjustment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>National Center Test (Supplementary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Provision of Test Scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final Announcement of Average Scores, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Receipt of Admissions Applications for National, Local Public and Private Universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acceptance/Registration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sending of Test Score Notifications to the examinees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Request for Test Scores</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Implementation of Individual Achievement for National, Local Public and Private Universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Announcement of Applicants who Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Submission of Data on Applicants who Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Midterm Announcement of Average Scores, etc.
- Provision of Test Scores
- Final Announcement of Average Scores, etc.

#### Acceptance/Registration
- Sending of Test Score Notifications to the examinees

#### Setting of Examination Site / Room
- Receipt of Materials
- Setting of Examination Site / Room

#### Development, inspection, printing, and evaluation of test questions
- Receipt of Admissions Applications for National, Local Public and Private Universities
- Implementation of Individual Achievement for National, Local Public and Private Universities
- Announcement of Applicants who Passed
- Submission of Data on Applicants who Passed

#### Distribution of Admission Guide
- Announcement of Admissions Requirements, such as individual achievement tests

#### Discussion at the Committee Meeting regarding Location Assignment
- Setting of Examination Site / Room

#### Examination Operations Preparation
- Examination Operations Committee
- Notification of Estimated Number of Applicants
- Notification of Operation Procedures
- Preparation of Admission Guide
- Briefing Session for High Schools
- Request to Set & Prepare Examination Site / Room
- Meeting of the Representatives of the Council (First Meeting)
- Receipt of Applications
- Registration of Applicants
- Sending of Confirmation Postcards
- Finalize Examination Site & Number of Examinees
- Setting of Examination Site / Room
- Test Run of Communications Systems for Implementing the National Center Test
- National Center Test (Main Test)
- Announcement of Correct Answers, etc.
- Midterm Announcement of Average Scores, etc.
- Announcement of Score Adjustment
- National Center Test (Supplementary)

#### Examination Operations Committee
- Notification of Estimated Number of Applicants
- Notification of Operation Procedures
- Preparation of Admission Guide
- Briefing Session for High Schools
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#### Examination Operations Preparation
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- National Center Test (Main Test)
- Announcement of Correct Answers, etc.
- Midterm Announcement of Average Scores, etc.
- Submission of Data on Applicants who Passed

#### Setting of Examination Site / Room
- Receipt of Materials
- Setting of Examination Site / Room
The National Center Test consists mainly of objective items in a multiple choice answer format. Examinees mark their answers on an answer sheet in pencil. Research and experience accumulated over the years have facilitated improvements in the style and content of the items, in order to better evaluate the ability of the examinees to think logically and make judgments instead of just providing memorized information. Participating universities may specify the subject areas and subjects from within the National Center Test to be administered to the applicants. Applicants confirm the subject areas and subjects that require testing as per the application guidebook published by the respective universities, and submit their applications accordingly. The Test in the 2018 school year will cover 30 subjects in 6 subject areas. Examinees who select “English” as their foreign language on the National Center Test will, as a general rule, receive both a written test and a listening test. For the listening test, examinees will operate an IC audio player that has been distributed to each person, listen to the Test audio and then mark their answers.
**Special Points of Consideration**

The NCUEE provides special consideration to applicants who request it at the National Center Test due to illness or injury, subject to a review of their application. Upon conducting the Test, the NCUEE provides consideration at a level that is appropriate to the type and degree of the disability involved, and strives to respond flexibly according to the degree of difficulty for each applicant.

(The NCUEE will continue to provide appropriate consideration in view of the purport of the “Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities,” that was enforced on April 1, 2016.)

**Major points of consideration**

Questions and answers in Braille, questions in enlarged font*1, answers in text or checks*2 rather than a multiple choice answer format, answers written by a deputy person, extension of test time, seat designation in the front row, use of a magnifying aid, use of a wheelchair, use of a hearing aid or cochlea implant, providing a sign language interpreter, provision of a care giver, exemption from listening tests, designation of a specified test room, etc.

The guide to special points of consideration and the number of persons subject to special consideration at the National Center Test are posted on our website.

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*1 Booklet of questions in enlarged font (from left: regular booklet, 14-point font booklet, 22-point font booklet)

(B5 size)  
(B4 size)  
(B4 size)

*2 Text answer sheet (left photo), check answer sheet (right photo)

The size of the text and check answer sheet is a variation of A4 size (222 mm long, 279 mm wide)
Research on the Improvement of University Applicant Selection Methods

Research Division and Academic Activities

The NCUEE Research Division conducts a broad range of research designed to improve the National Center Test and the admission methods used by individual universities. The National Center Test has been conducted for more than 30 years, during which it has undergone various revisions and improvements. The Research Division promotes these efforts by carrying out research in test development, analysis and evaluation of tests/items properties, and storing these research findings into a database. Through these efforts, the Research Division contributes to the implementation and improvement of the National Center Test. Although the main aim of the Test is to measure basic academic achievement at the high school level, there are also calls for its use as a valuable resource for selecting applicants at individual universities. The Research Division thus concentrates on research and development in areas that play vital roles in improving admission selection methods, such as non-curriculum-based testing, test score adjustment methods, applications of test theory, and articulation between high school and universities. Today, in an era of increasingly “non-selective admissions,” this research is anticipated to contribute to the establishment of more appropriate admissions.

Research Departments, Fields of Research, and Research Topics

The Research Division comprises of the Department of Test Design and Development, and the Department of Test Analysis and Evaluation. The research activities in the Division are supervised by the Director of the Research Division and a Chief Researcher from each Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department and members</th>
<th>Fields of research</th>
<th>Research Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Test Design and Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Study on the National Center Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Shigeru YAMAMURA 2)</td>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>- Designated test-takers survey to examine the degree of equivalence between the Main Test and the Supplementary Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Kumiko SHIIINA</td>
<td>Cognitive Science</td>
<td>- Analysis of the level of difficulty of the National Center Test and study on score adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Kei ITO</td>
<td>Educational Technology</td>
<td>- Other studies on the improvement of the National Center Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Hirohito SAKURAI</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Kazunori MINATANI</td>
<td>Research on Visual disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor Sayaka ARAI</td>
<td>Psychometrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Test Analysis and Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical study that addresses issues pertaining to university admission selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Tatsuo OTSU 1)</td>
<td>Psychometrics</td>
<td>- Study to assist university admission selection through multifaceted and comprehensive evaluation when individual universities select students for admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Tsunenori ISHIOKA 2)</td>
<td>Information Science</td>
<td>- Study on university admission systems that provide due consideration to applicants with disabilities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Teruhisa UCHIDA</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Kojiro SHOJIMA</td>
<td>Psychometrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Tomoya OKUBO</td>
<td>Statistical Sciences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Director 2) Chief Researcher

As of August 2017

Form of Research

The study and research conducted by the staff of the Research Division in the 2017 fiscal year include the following:

- **Study on the National Center Test**
  
  Studies measures to improve the National Center Test and reflects the results appropriately in the test items and selection method. In particular, conducts systematic studies of research topics stated above, and reflects those results that can be reflected.

- **Practical study that addresses issues pertaining to university admission selection**
  
  Establishes a research team that addresses the research topics stated above and promotes systematic studies in order to contribute to the improvement of university admission selection methods.

Other studies and research based on research expenses have been provided with specific plans in accordance with the medium-term plan, and are conducted in cooperation with external researchers as needed.
Website
The achievements of studies by the staff of the Research Division are available in academic journals such as the Japan Association for Research on Testing and the Behaviormetric Society of Japan, the Research Bulletin of the NCUEE, and the Journal of University Entrance Examination Research, which includes research output publications at the National Research Council for University Admissions.

Selections from the Research Bulletin and the Journal of University Entrance Examination Research are available on the NCUEE website. (Available only in Japanese)

Main Research Activities Using External Funds
Studies and research of the NCUEE include those that have been granted external funds such as the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research and those that are conducted in cooperation with researchers of other research institutions of higher education.

Major studies conducted in the 2017 fiscal year include the following:

- **Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research**
  - Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) “Study on the resolution analysis and the database development of the National Center Test”(2015-2019)
  - Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research) “Development of advanced testing technology based on statistical theory, computer, and natural language processing.”(From 2017)
  - Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) “Development of a System to Assist the Grading of Short Answers Using Artificial Intelligence”(2017-2019)
  - Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) “Development of an Examination Question System that Provides Reasonable Consideration to Applicants with Various Disabilities”(2017-2019)

Other five research projects

Research office on Admission Selection Studies
Various discussions are being held on the reform of university entrance examinations, as the topic garners much attention in society. Since university entrance examinations involve numerous issues, such discussions are required to base themselves on insight gained from research on such examinations. The NCUEE has a Research Division where studies on the university admission selection process are constantly being carried out. However, there are needs for a system that can respond swiftly and flexibly to pressing social issues such as reform of university entrance examinations. The Research Office was established in the 2014 fiscal year to address such urgent issues.

Symposiums
The NCUEE hosts symposiums each year to communicate to society the results of research on university entrance exams. In the 2016 fiscal year, our Research office on Admission Selection Studies held the following symposium as described below.

**Title** : Latest Trend in Assessment in High School and University Articulation
**Date** : September 10 (Sat), 2016
**Venue** : Tokyo Institute of Technology
**Participants** : 221

**Objective** : This symposium was held to acknowledge the latest trend in assessment and discuss the ideal form of high school and university articulation, with a focus on the ability to think, judge and express, following a proposal in the Final Report of the Council for the Reform of the High School and University Articulation System, which was published at the end of March 2016, for improvement of a university admission selection process that assesses the “three elements of academic performance” multilaterally and comprehensively.

Please see our website for details : http://www.dnc.ac.jp/news/20160927-05.html (Available only in Japanese)
National Research Council for University Admissions

1 Purpose
The purpose of the National Research Council for University Admissions is to contribute to the further promotion of research exchange regarding investigation and research related to the improvement of university admissions methods.

2 Activities
1 Hosting of annual conference of the National Research Council for University Admissions to facilitate research discussions between universities
2 Joint research on university admissions
3 Editing of reports, etc., related to the activities indicated above
   - The Journal of University Admissions Research
   - Trends in University Admissions Research

3 Overview of the 2017 Conference of the National Research Council for University Admissions
May 24–26, 2017  Jointly hosted with Toyama Prefectural University (Otemachi Forum, Toyama International Conference Center)
1 NCUEE seminar
   Title: Admission Policies and University Entrance Examinations
2 Admission office and other related parties’ liaison meeting
3 Symposium on the Common Test for University Admissions
4 Exposition for reform of the university admission selection process
5 Study sessions: 1st–8th Sessions

4 Symposia of the Past Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Main discussion topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2012 fiscal year | Okayama Convention Center                      | -Considering autumn admission  
-Introduction of new Courses of Study: Response of universities, and issues           |
| 2013 fiscal year | National Olympics Memorial Youth Center        | -Reform of university entrance examinations and education that do not only promote studies to prepare for such examinations  
-Examining the diversification of assessment measures in university entrance examinations |
| 2014 fiscal year | Iwate Prefecture Citizen’s Cultural Exchange Center—Aina | -The current status of university study in the region, and improvement measures  
-Reconsideration of the relationship between high school education, university entrance examinations and university education |
| 2015 fiscal year | Tokyo Senju Campus, Tokyo Denki University       | -On the ideal form of the university admission selection process—considering the introduction of a new test for assessment  
-Fostering of English proficiency and university entrance examinations in the era of globalization |
| 2016 fiscal year | Osaka Ibaraki Campus, Ritsumeikan University    | -New direction of university admission selection—reform of high school and university articulation, ideal form of the new assessment, and the future form of Japan’s university entrance examination structure  
-University entrance examination studies and entrance examination reform |
Common Test for University Admissions

1 Background
The introduction of the Common Test for University Admissions (hereinafter referred to as the “New Test”) was proposed in “On Integrated Reforms in High School and University Education and the University Entrance Examination Aimed at Realizing a High School and University Articulation System Appropriate for a New Era (Report)” by the Central Council for Education (December 2014) and a specific plan proposed in the Final Report of the Council for the Reform of the High School and University Articulation System (March 2016).

The Final Report describes the main purpose of the New Test as acknowledging the necessary abilities to receive a future university education, and indicates that the New Test will focus on assessing the ability to think, judge and express, while also evaluating whether the applicant possesses sufficient knowledge and skills. In order to address the above, the report proposed improvement in multiple-choice questions as well as the introduction of description-type tests and questions that assess English proficiency.

2 Announcement of the Administration Policy of the Common Test for University Admissions
MEXT announced the Administration Policy of the Common Test for University Admissions in July 2017.

Key Points of the Administration Policy

1. Name:
Common Test for University Admissions

2. Purpose:
To assess university applicants’ basic academic achievements at the high school stage and to measure the skills necessary to receive a university education.

3. Responsible Organization
The NCUEE will be in charge of test development, scoring and other operations that are considered appropriate to be processed collectively, on the presumption that the New Test will be conducted jointly by universities that use it.

4. Commencement year
2020 fiscal year (Selection for admission for the 2021 school year)

5. Subject areas and subjects
The same as for the current National Center Test. For Japanese, Mathematics I, and Mathematics I and A, however, description-style answer questions will be included, in addition to multiple-choice questions.

6. Administration method, etc. of the description-style tests
(1) Japanese Language
   ① Coverage for the test
   “Comprehensive Japanese” (excluding classical literature and Chinese classical literature)
   ② Skills to be evaluated, question type, etc.
   Evaluates the ability to think, judge and express in order to integrate and organize multiple pieces of information based on various sentences and charts to summarize one’s thoughts, and to make statements based on an argument so that a counterparty can correctly understand the process and results of such thoughts.
   ③ Method of testing and scoring
   • The NCUEE will carry out the development of the test and scoring of description-type tests.
   • In order to correctly score the answers of a large number of applicants in a short period of time, make effective use of private operators who have the necessary ability.
   (The above also applies to Mathematics.)

(2) Mathematics
   ① Coverage for the test
   Subjects will be “Mathematics I” and “Mathematics I and A.” The coverage for the test will be “Mathematics I.”
   ② Skills to be evaluated, question type, etc.
   Evaluates the ability to express one’s thoughts in formula using charts and sentences, and to correctly express problem-solving strategies, etc.
Evaluation of the four skills in English

- Utilize eligibility and certification tests in order to appropriately evaluate the four skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing.
- Regarding the eligibility and certification tests, those whose test content and administration structure satisfy the level and requirements necessary for the test to be utilized for university admissions selection will be certified by the NCUEE.
- The NCUEE sends universities the results of up to two tests conducted between April and December for 3rd year high school applicants, in consideration of the burden of the applicants and the impact on their high school education.

Re-examination of the multiple choice answer format

- Re-examine the format in favor of formulating questions that place more emphasis on the ability to think, judge and express.

Indication of test results

1. Multiple-choice questions: Provide universities with more detailed information than the current National Center Test
2. Description-type tests: Determine conformity to the conditions (in terms of format and content) of the correct answer set for each question and consider expressing the results by grade.

Test dates, etc.

- Two days in mid-January.
- Multiple-choice questions and description-type tests for Japanese Language and Mathematics are conducted on the same day, within the test times of the relevant subject.

3. Initiatives of the NCUEE

The NCUEE has been deemed the responsible organization of the New Test in the “Final Report” of the Council for the Reform of the High School and University Articulation System, and has conducted specialized and experimental examinations of various issues.

To be specific, it conducted test-taker surveys in the 2016 fiscal year for the introduction of description-type tests and the improvement of multiple-choice questions to further focus on the ability to think, etc. It is currently making preparations for conducting a pre-test for up to 50,000 test-takers in the 2017 fiscal year in order to make specific and full-scale examinations under conditions that are closer to the real test.

With regard to English, as a framework to promote the use of private eligibility and certification tests for the evaluation of the four skills of English (reading, listening, speaking and writing), the NCUEE plans to establish, in response to requests from universities, a system to consolidate the results of the eligibility and certification tests (those whose test content and administration structure satisfy the level and requirements necessary for the test to be utilized for university admissions selection) and provide them to universities with the consent of test-takers, so that NCUEE will fulfill the key roles as the core of provision and receipt of test results, which have been carried out by each private English eligibility and certification testing organization. This is expected to significantly reduce the number of procedures that test-takers must follow when applying for university entrance examinations as well as universities’ burden of operations.

The NCUEE has thus made specific examinations and preparations from various perspectives to ensure smooth administration of the New Test. In April 2017, it established the “New Test Planning Division” to fundamentally strengthen the organization structure. The NCUEE intends to continue to make the utmost efforts for the smooth introduction of the New Test in the 2020 fiscal year by conducting pre-tests and other initiatives as described in the schedule on the following page.
Common Test for University Admissions

Organization Chart of the New Test Planning Division

Test Administration Planning Officer

Test Administration Group I

Test Administration Group II

Four English Skills Test Group

Financial Planning Group

New Test Planning Division

New Test Planning Committee

Special Considerations Planning Subcommittee

Four English Skills Test Planning Subcommittee

Test Items Research Subcommittee

Deputy Director General

(in charge of preparing questions for the New Test)

Planning Coordinator

Test Development Group I

Test Development Group II

Test Items Planning Officer

Japanese WG

Math WG

World History WG

Japanese History WG

Geography WG

Contemporary Society WG

Physics WG

Chemistry WG

Biology WG

Earth Science WG

English WG

Special Test Development WG

History Combined WG

Science Combined WG

Note: The above structure is the organization chart of the New Test Planning Division that was established for smooth introduction of the Common Test for University Admissions. (As of July 2017)

Introduction Schedule of the Common Test for University Admissions (Plan)

2017 fiscal year

July

Formulation/announcement of Administration Policy

Pre-test to be conducted for up to 50,000 test-takers

November

Administration of pre-test

2018 fiscal year

November

Administration of pre-test

Pre-test to be conducted for up to 100,000 test-takers

2019 fiscal year

Early in the year

Formulation/announcement and notification of Administration Outline

Administration of confirmatory pre-test

2020 fiscal year

Early in the year

Formulation/announcement and notification of Administration Guideline

Common Test for University Admissions to be conducted in January 2021

January

Administration of Common Test for University Admissions
### Organization

#### Executives (As of July 11, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Hiroki YAMAMOTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President (Administration)</td>
<td>Kazunobu ASADA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditor (Full-time)</td>
<td>Tatsuzo EITAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditor (Part-time)</td>
<td>Akiko OKUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Testing and Research, Vice President (Academic)</td>
<td>Yusaku OTSUKA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Testing and Research, Deputy Vice President</td>
<td>Tatsuo OTSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Testing and Research, Deputy Vice President</td>
<td>Hiroki YAMAJI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administrative Committees

Advisory Board
This is an advisory body to the NCUEE President, and examines the plan of activities and other important matters of the NCUEE. The Council is comprised of representatives from national, local public and private universities, academics and representatives from high schools.

Committee on Test Planning
This committee examines the general principles for development of the National Center Test, and sets forth principal policies, such as the schedule, subject areas and subjects, and the range to be covered by the items, as well as general principles for preparing items including wording and composition, and also the method of asking and answering items. The committee is comprised of teachers from national, local public, and private universities, as well as various academic experts.

Committee on Test Administration
This committee deals with the methods of test administration and data processing. The committee is made up of teachers from national, local public, and private universities, as well as high school educators.

- Committee on Special Points of Consideration
  This committee studies, considers and reviews Special Points of Consideration for physically disabled applicants who will take the National Center Test, and is comprised of teachers and other representatives from national, local public, and private universities.

Committee I on Test Development
This committee prepares National Center Test questions for 30 individual subjects in 6 subject areas.

Comprising approximately 420 teachers from national, local public, and private universities and academic experts, the committee is divided into a total of 22 subcommittees that are responsible for proposing questions in the subjects of Japanese, Geography and History (World History, Japanese History, and Geography), Civics (Contemporary Society, Ethics, Politics and Economics, and “Ethics, Politics, and Economics’’), Mathematics (Mathematics I and II), Bookkeeping and Accounting, Basics in Information Processing, Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Earth Science), and Foreign Languages (English, German, French, Chinese, and Korean) as well as formulating questions for physically disabled applicants.

Committee II on Test Development
This committee checks and verifies the composition, contents, answers and wording, and the use of characters for the test items prepared by Committee I on Test Development. The Committee has approximately 150 members consisting of national, local public, private university teachers, and academic experts, who have served as members of Committee I on Test Development. It also has 19 checking groups for each subject area and subjects covered by the test.

Committee III on Test Development
This committee also checks the test items prepared by Committee I on Test Development, focusing on the formats, expressions and conformity of difficulty levels among different subjects, as well as duplications of similar items. It is comprised of national, local public and private university teachers, and academic experts.

High School Collaborators for Test Inspection
The collaborators examine the level of difficulty and range covered by the items in the respective subjects. The collaborators are comprised of high school educators.

Committee on Test Evaluation
This committee evaluates the contents of the NCUEE Test items, and is comprised of teachers from national, local public, and private universities, as well as representatives from various high schools.

Committee on Score Adjustment
This committee analyzes the level of difficulty of the respective subject items in relation to the examination results, and determines whether score adjustment is required for some subjects. Its members are related to national, local public, and private universities.

- Working Committee on Score Adjustment
  This working committee analyzes and prepares basic materials for determining whether score adjustment is required or not, and is comprised of teachers at the NCUEE as well as academic experts.

Planning Committee of the National Research Council for University Admissions
This committee considers specific matters related to the implementation of plans for meetings, etc., in order to promote investigative research for the improvement of university admissions by national, local public, and private universities. It is comprised of national, local public, and private university teachers, and academic experts.
## NCUEE Chronology

### The Joint First-Stage Achievement Test for National and Local Public Universities Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976 (May)</td>
<td>The National University Entrance Examinations Research and Improvement Institution is established in the University of Tokyo to consider the proposed Joint First-Stage Achievement Test for national universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977 (May)</td>
<td>The National Center for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE) is established. Preparations are launched for the Joint First-Stage Achievement Test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 (January)</td>
<td>The first Joint First-Stage Achievement Test is conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983 (March)</td>
<td>Construction of a new office building is completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 (May)</td>
<td>Changes in clerical operations at the Center are made in accordance with the revision of the Act of Establishment of National Schools. The Center is positioned as an organization in charge of collectively handling business activities for the National Center Test, and is also assigned with the provision of information on university entrance examinations, in addition to existing research and study on university entrance examinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 (October)</td>
<td>The HEART system (Higher Education Articulation Support System) is developed and begins to provide information on the admissions of individual universities. The system uses an information network system accessible through telephone lines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The National Center Test Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990 (January)</td>
<td>The first National Center Test is conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 (June)</td>
<td>Events are organized to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the NCUEE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Independent Administrative Organization Institution Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 (April)</td>
<td>The National Center for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE) becomes an independent administrative organization instead of a national agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 (August)</td>
<td>The first Admissions Test for Law Schools is conducted in the 2003 school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (January)</td>
<td>The English Listening Test is introduced to the National Center Test (17th) .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 to 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 (April)</td>
<td>The NCUEE Organization for the Study of College Admissions is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (March)</td>
<td>The HEART system is discontinued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 to Present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (May)</td>
<td>An agreement is signed with KICE (the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 (March)</td>
<td>NCUEE Organization for the Study of College Admissions is abolished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 (April)</td>
<td>Investigation Section Related to Research on Admissions is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (April)</td>
<td>New Test Planning Division is established. Research Promotion Section is established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### NCUEE Data

#### Budget for the 2017 Fiscal Year

**Revenue Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount (million yen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination Fees</td>
<td>10,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Results Issuance Fees</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Results Notification Fees</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University reform promotion subsidy</td>
<td>851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Projected Expenditure Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount (million yen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work-related Costs (Personnel)</td>
<td>10,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Administration</td>
<td>9,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Information on the National Center Test</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on Improving University Admissions Selection Methods</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Administration Costs (Personnel)</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Funds</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidized projects for promoting university reform</td>
<td>851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The sum of the individual budget items in the tables above (shown in million yen) may not equal the relevant total amounts due to rounding.*

#### Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Last Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977.5 - 1982. 3</td>
<td>Mutsuo KATO</td>
<td>President of Tohoku University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982.4 - 1985. 3</td>
<td>Kiyowo KOSAKA</td>
<td>President of Okayama University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985.4 - 1988. 3</td>
<td>Yoshihisa GYOTEN</td>
<td>President of Kobe University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988.4 - 1992. 3</td>
<td>Mikio ARIE</td>
<td>President of Hokkaido University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992.4 - 1996. 3</td>
<td>Ryoei TAKAHASHI</td>
<td>President of Kyushu University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996.4 - 1999. 3</td>
<td>Tsutomu HIROSHIGE</td>
<td>President of Hokkaido University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999.4 - 2003.11</td>
<td>Kosaku MARUYAMA</td>
<td>President of Chiba University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004.1 - 2007. 3</td>
<td>Masaaki ARAKAWA</td>
<td>President of Niigata University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007.4 - 2013. 3</td>
<td>Takashi YOSHIMOTO</td>
<td>President of Tohoku University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013.4 -</td>
<td>Hiroki YAMAMOTO</td>
<td>President of Shimane University, Auditor at Kumamoto University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Full time Staff of 115 Persons (As of April 1, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Officers</th>
<th>Manager of Testing and Research, Vice President (Academic)</th>
<th>Deputy Manager of Testing and Research, Deputy Vice President</th>
<th>General Affairs and Planning Div., Operations Div., New Test Planning Div.</th>
<th>Research Division</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative Staff / Technical Staff</td>
<td>Professor / Associate Professor / Assistant Professor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Auditor</td>
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<td>99</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>115 (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note1: The numbers in parentheses ( ) indicate part-time executive officers or specially appointed educators; they are in addition to the numbers not enclosed in parentheses.

Note2: One of the Deputy Managers of Testing and Research is Director of the Research Division.

Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Site Area</th>
<th>Total Floor Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCUEE main building, etc.</td>
<td>16,275 m²</td>
<td>15,035 m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transitions in the Number of Applicants and the Percentage of Prospective Graduates who Apply

Number of Applicants

Number of New High school Graduates | Number of Applicants |

Percentage of Prospective Graduates who apply

Number of Participating Universities and Colleges

Number of Universities and Colleges

Private 2-year Colleges
- Local Public 2-year Colleges
- Private 4-year Univ.
- Local Public 4-year Univ.
- National 4-year Univ.

Private 2-year Colleges
- Local Public 2-year Colleges
- Private 4-year Univ.
- Local Public 4-year Univ.
- National 4-year Univ.

Year Name Last Position

1977.5 - 1982.3
- Mutsuo KATO
- Kiyowo KOSAKA
- Yoshihisa GYOTEN
- Mikio ARIE
- Ryohei TAKAHASHI
- Tsutomu HIROSHIGE
- Kosaku MARUYAMA
- Masaaki ARAKAWA
- Takashi YOSHIMOTO
- Hiroki YAMAMOTO

1982.4 - 1985.3

1985.4 - 1988.3

1988.4 - 1992.3

1992.4 - 1996.3

1996.4 - 1999.3

1999.4 - 2003.11

2004.1 - 2007.3

2007.4 - 2013.3

2013.4 -
Location

NATIONAL CENTER FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

2-19-23 Komaba, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, 153-8501 JAPAN
TEL 03-3468-3311
URL http://www.dnc.ac.jp/

October 2017