

**Words of Welcome for Incoming Students,  
September 21, 2024 (both for Undergraduate and Graduate)**

**Aiji Tanaka  
President, Waseda University**

Dear Incoming Students of Waseda University and their Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of Waseda University, I am delighted to welcome all incoming students today. Congratulations on your entrance to Waseda University. I extend my heartfelt congratulations also, of course, to your parents, other family members, and friends.

We considered inviting family members in addition to incoming students to the entrance ceremony, but we were concerned that it would be dangerously congested on the road in front of Waseda Arena. Consequently, we have been inviting only the actual incoming students to this Arena for the last several years. We hope you will understand our decision.

Today, I would like to speak to you about two things. First, I will talk about Waseda's educational ideals and philosophy. Second, I will talk about what I wish you to study and learn from what we offer at Waseda.

First, as the president of Waseda University, I have been advocating three ideals for almost six years. Those three ideals are “intellectual resilience,” “flexible sensitivity,” and “responsive reasoning.”

What does “intellectual resilience” mean? Most of the issues that human beings are facing today do not have one correct answer. For example, think of the COVID-19 pandemic, global warming and climate change, or the wars and armed conflicts that have killed so many people and continue to violate human rights all over the world, you name it. No one has a single “right” answer to solve any of these problems.

I hope that at Waseda University you will develop the “intellectual

resilience” to think through your own solutions to problems for which the way forward is still unclear. However, finding a new solution does not mean simply allowing a new idea to pop up in your mind. Such an idea will not be accepted in the real world. It is essential to learn from the scholarship of thinkers who have come before us.

What is scholarship? Ever since the invention of a writing system over 5,000 years ago, human beings have recorded and compiled the essence of their experiences in the form of scholarship. Scholarship may not provide answers to unknown new problems, but it records how human beings confronted unfamiliar problems in their own day. By learning about these human efforts at Waseda, you will gain relevant knowledge.

Another important ideal to foster is “flexible sensitivity.” Under the concept of “flexible sensitivity,” we encourage our students to accept, understand, and respect people of different nationalities, ethnicities, languages, religions, creeds, genders, and sexual orientations. If you can respect and understand people with a different background from you, you will have flexible sensitivity.

Nowadays, the world has become borderless, and it is necessary for all of us to live and work together with various kinds of people, both inside and outside Japan. In such a world, it is important to be considerate of other people with different backgrounds from yourself. Therefore, you should cultivate a flexible sensitivity that you bring to bear on all your interactions.

In order to foster “flexible sensitivity,” it is most effective, in my opinion, to study abroad, as this entails living in another country, meeting various kinds of people, and viewing your own country or community from the outside. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Waseda University sent out 4,580 students to study abroad, and received 8,350 international students to come and study at Waseda. Both numbers are the highest by far among Japanese universities.

Many of you are already outside your home country now. Please cherish this opportunity. Those who were raised in Japan and have not lived outside Japan yet, please try to seize an opportunity to study abroad through one of

Waseda's many exchange programs.

I myself, in fact, went to the United States, did all my graduate work in the U.S. for 10 and a half years, and received a Ph.D. there. This experience really helped my career later. I still appreciate and draw upon the experiences I had then.

The third ideal is “responsive reasoning.” This ideal suggests the importance of listening to others and understanding their reasoning. As a consequence of this practice, you will enhance the level of thinking of both yourself and others. You should have confidence in your own intelligence as a student at Waseda, which is a major research institution. At the same time, you should respect the intelligence of others as well.

We are confident that we have created the very best educational environment in Japan to foster “intellectual resilience,” “flexible sensitivity,” and “responsive reasoning.” For example, we have been offering a course called “Academic Writing and Discussion in English” (known as AWADE) that is an academic English writing course comparable to Freshman English at Yale University or UCLA. This course is highly recommended to all students, including native English speakers, because it can teach you how to both think and express your opinions logically. This course is offered by the Global Education Center (which we call the GEC).

The GEC also offers a course called “Introduction to Academic Writing in Japanese” that would be very useful to international students as well as Japanese students to further develop their writing ability in Japanese. It was designed according to the same philosophy of logical writing as AWADE.

For those international students who are not yet proficient in the Japanese language, our Center for Japanese Language offers various levels of courses in Japanese language.

Another example of our university-wide courses designed to cultivate students' academic capabilities is a series on data science. Our Center for Data Science (known as the CDS) offers various levels of courses on data

science, including a series of Introduction to Data Science courses. Through these courses, you can learn how to use AI (or Artificial Intelligence) to analyze big data. This is a unique feature of our Center for Data Science.

These are only some examples of educational programs across departments and schools at Waseda. Waseda is the only university in Japan to offer these kinds of diverse educational programs for students.

I hope that at Waseda you will also find some extracurricular activities worth devoting yourselves to. Waseda offers an almost infinite variety of opportunities to develop your interests. At the same time, please be serious about studying diligently.

I hope you will enjoy your student life at Waseda. In four years, when you graduate from Waseda, you will be even more exceptional and admirable than you are already.

Congratulations on your entrance to Waseda University!

Welcome to Waseda!

Thank you!