

## **Establishing an Environment in Shikoku where Female Researchers Thrive**

### *Joint Declaration on the Promotion of Gender Equality by the Five National Universities in Shikoku*

As regional-based universities, the five national universities in Shikoku are committed to promoting distinctive, world-class education and research, and fostering human resources as a basis for regional development, while contributing to the promotion and enhancement of culture, art, industry, medicine, and other areas. However, in Shikoku, the birthrate is rapidly declining, and the region's human resources are migrating away, especially to other urban areas. Consequently, to ensure the continued development of social and economic activities, it is essential to eliminate the problem of gender bias and create a workplace environment that is attractive to women and young people, in order to promote employment and retain our human resources.

In this context, we believe that supporting female researchers and encouraging their active participation is extremely important in order to encourage diverse perspectives and ideas, to invigorate education and research activities, and to foster creativity as an organization. We recognize that having more female researchers actively engaged in education and research will contribute greatly to the future development of each university and the Shikoku region. Therefore we are committed to establishing a research environment in Shikoku that attracts female researchers from around the world, enabling them to play an active role globally from a regional base.

To this end, we declare that we will focus on creating an environment where women can play an even more active role in education and research at each university, and we will strive to nurture female leaders who will lead the next generation. Furthermore, by strengthening cooperation among the universities, research institutions, local governments, businesses, and citizens of Shikoku, we will contribute to the development of universities and a society where individuals can realize their individuality and abilities.

#### Priority initiatives

1. We will increase the ratio of women participating in decision-making in university administration.
2. We will encourage female researchers from Japan and abroad to apply for faculty positions, and create an environment conducive to their development and promotion, in order to increase the number of female researchers.
3. We will actively support outstanding education and research by female researchers.

4. We will enhance support for childcare and nursing care from a gender-equal perspective in order to ensure a good work-life balance for university members.
5. We will enhance our programs for women's career development and for developing female leaders for the next generation.
6. We will establish an educational and research environment, and an employment system that encourage diversity, and establish networks between the universities and other related institutions.

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