



Development and Application of the Credit-hour System in Japan

—Credit Transfer and Student Mobility—

Masahiro TANAKA of Hirosaki University
on 31 January, 2014 at Hiroshima University



Purpose

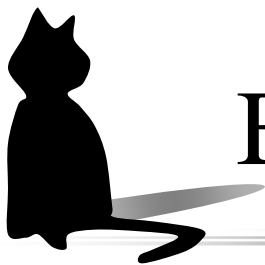
■ This presentation aims to quantitatively describe the current arrangements regarding credit transfer at Japanese universities with reference to an annual survey by the Ministry of Education (MEXT).

▶ This presentation focuses only on universities, not junior colleges or other HE institutions.



Problems

- In Japan, as will be shown in this presentation, neither domestic nor international credit transfer has been popular, with the exception of transfer admission.
- Hence, the obstacles towards the adoption of credit transfer should be investigated.



Basic data (May 2013)

	Number of Universities	Number of Undergrad Faculties	Number of Postgrad Schools	Number of Undergrads	Number of Postgrads
National Univ.	86	355	433	450,834	157,863
Prefectural Univ.	81	171	164	124,502	16,593
Private Univ.	591	1,596	1,207	1,994,013	98,110
Open Univ.	1	1	1	77,013	5,262
Total	759	2,123	1,805	2,646,362	277,828

Resource: Ministry of Education (2013) *Daigaku ni okeru Kyoiku Naiyoto no Kaikaku Jyokyoto ni tsuite.*



Survey 2011

■ Object: all (759) universities

■ Method: questionnaires sent from the MEXT

■ Time: from November 2012 to January 2013

■ Response rate: 99.8%



Reference data

2-C: Situations of the university's credit transfer system (2011)

- ▶ 2-C-1: Situations of the credit transfer system between the university and other Japanese universities
- ▶ 2-C-2: Situations of 'double degree' programmes in conjunction with other Japanese universities
- ▶ 2-C-3 exchange agreements with overseas universities

*The double degree here means a degree awarded by two institutions in conjunction.



ANALYSIS



2-C-1 (Credit transfer system)

2-C-1: Situations of the credit transfer system with other Japanese universities (N=752)

- ▶ 461 (61.3%) answer ‘all faculties and schools use the system’.
- ▶ 150 (19.9%) answer ‘some faculties and schools use the system’.

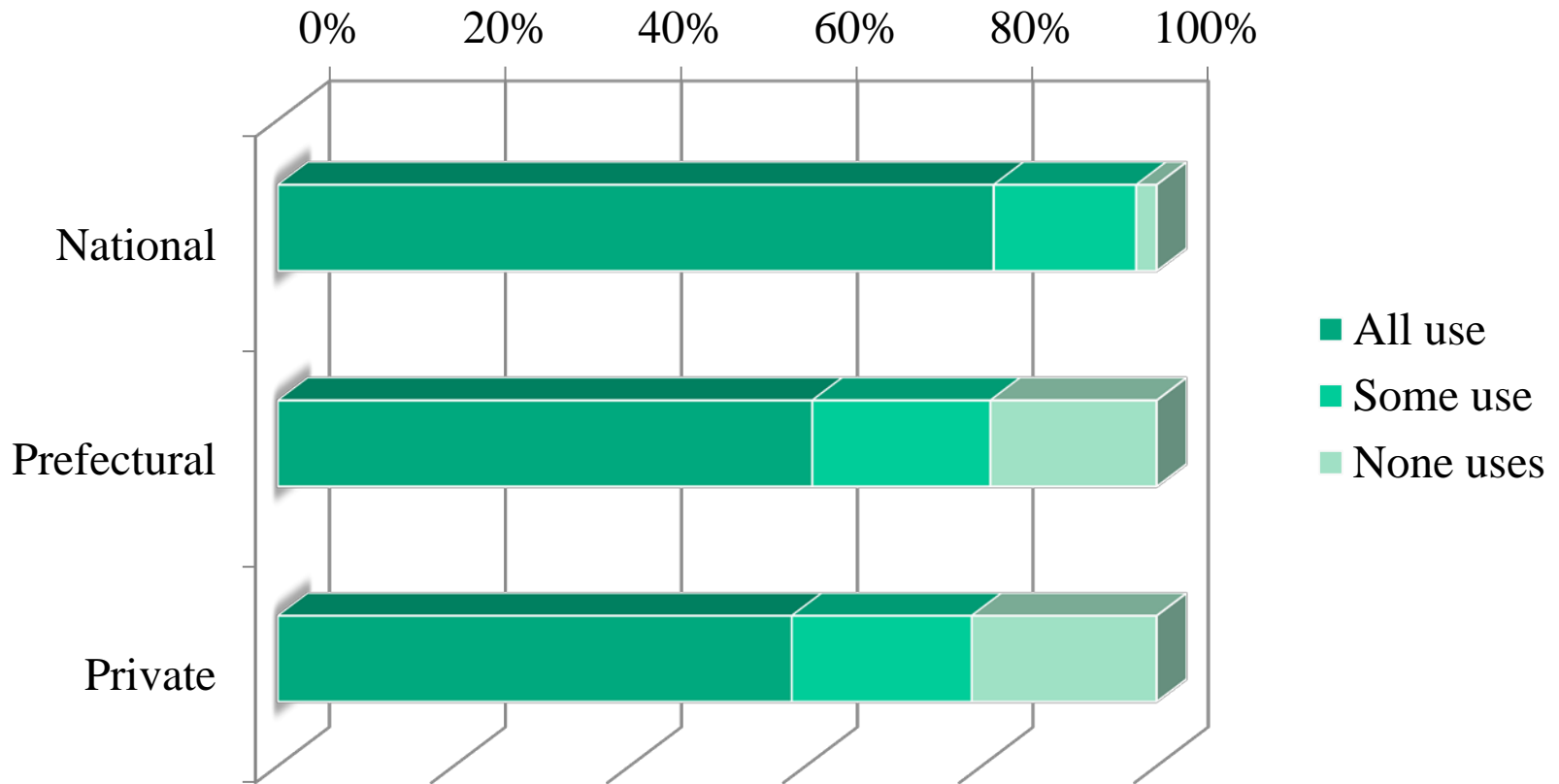
This means that **611 institutions (81.3%) use the credit transfer system in 2011** (as compared to 577 in 2009 and 565 in 2008).

- ▶ The number is constantly increasing.

* The survey for 2010 was not carried out due to the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March, 2011.



2-C-1 (Differences among universities)





2-C-1 (Implementation methods)

■ Methods of implementation of the university's credit transfer system (N=608 in 611)

- ▶ 259 (42.6%) answer 'the system is implemented by means of agreements with individual universities'.
- ▶ 297 (48.8%) answer 'the system is implemented through a university consortium'.
- ▶ 68 (11.2%) answer 'the system is implemented by other methods'.
 - Most of the 68 add that they separately signed agreements with individual universities besides participating in consortia.



2-C-1 (Domestic student mobility 1)

■ Number of students who transferred credits from other universities (N=589 in 611).

▶ 402 (68.3%) answer ‘less than 10 students did it’.

■ 184 of these answer ‘no student did it’.

▶ Only 35 (5.9%) answer ‘100 or more students did it’.

■ Thus, at nearly 70% of Japanese universities with the credit transfer system, it is like an ‘empty shell’.



2-C-1 (Domestic student mobility 2)

■ The average number of students who transferred credits from other institutions is 28.03, and the median is 3.

- ▶ The average number of undergraduates at the 589 universities is 4161.82, and its median is 2148.
- ▶ This suggests that **only 0.67% of students on average—0.14% on median**—use the credit transfer system.

■ At the top 5 universities, the numbers are respectively 2354, 1725, 565, 447, and 379.

- ▶ All 5 of these are middle-size private universities, four of which accommodate under 6,000 undergraduates in all, in the western part of Japan.



2-C-1 (Domestic student mobility 4)

■ Number of students from other universities who obtained credits for transfer (N=587 in 611)

▶ 396 (67.5%) answer 'less than 10 students did it'.

■ 204 of these answer 'no student did it'.

■ The top 5 institutions accepted respectively 5122, 940, 865, 661, and 511 students.

▶ Interestingly, these top 5 are different from the top 5 with many students who transferred credits from others.

■ Open University accepted 5,122 students. The number two in this category is a very large famous private university.



2-C-2 (Double degree)

■ Double degree programmes with other Japanese universities (N=747).

▶ 741 (99.2%) answer 'no programme is offered'.

▶ Only 6 (0.8%) answer 'some programmes are offered'.

■ Even at these 6 institutions, few students chose double degree programmes.

■ Hence, double degree programmes are uncommon in Japan.



2-C-3 (International student mobility 1)

International student mobility agreements with foreign universities (N=747).

- ▶ 609 (81.5%) answer ‘at least one agreement is signed’.
 - 367 of these answer ‘these agreements are for credit transfer with overseas universities’.
 - 129 of the 609 answer ‘these agreements are for double degree programmes with overseas universities’.

Hence, international double degree programmes are already widespread among Japanese universities, although domestic ones are not.



2-C-3 (International student mobility 2)

■ Number of double degree programmes (N=130)

- ▶ The maximum is 19, and the minimum is 1.
- ▶ The average is 2.92, and the median is 2.

■ Number of overseas students who took a double degree programme at the university (N=135)

- ▶ 107 (79.3%) answers 'less than 10 students did it'.
 - 46 of these answers 'no student did it'.
- ▶ The average is 9.59, and the median is 2.

■ Therefore, international double degree programmes have also not yet been very active in Japan, although many programmes are offered.



2-C-3 (International student mobility 3)

■ Number of domestic students who went abroad for a double degree (N=133).

▶ 121 (91.0%) answer ‘less than 10 students did it’.

■ 88 of these answer ‘no student did it’.

■ Thus, Japanese universities accepted small numbers of overseas students for their double degree programmes and sent far small numbers of their students to foreign institutions.

▶ This implies the tendency of Japanese students to be ‘inward-looking’ (little eagerness to study abroad).



2-C-3 (International student mobility 4)

■ Number of overseas students who transferred credits from the university (N=361).

▶ 214 (59.3%) answer 'less than 10 students did it'.

■ 93 of these answer 'no student did it'.

▶ The average is 23.74, and the median is 6.

■ Number of domestic students who transferred credits from foreign universities (N=362).

▶ 230 (63.5%) answer 'less than 10 students did it'.

■ 91 of these answer 'no students did it'.

▶ The average is 24.89, and the median is 5.



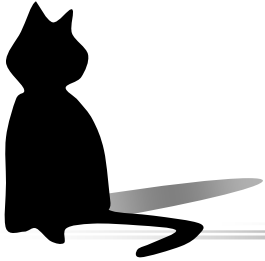
2-C-3 (International student mobility 5)

■ International credit transfer is more active than domestic transfer.

■ Research-oriented universities tend to employ more positive measures for international credit transfer.

▶ One reason for this is the competitive ‘Global 30 programme’ financed by the MEXT.

- Under this programme, selected universities are required to offer more courses in English and establish an appropriate system to accept more overseas students.



CONCLUSION



Conclusion 1

■ This presentation has yielded these findings:

- ▶ The majority of Japanese universities already have a credit transfer system; however, these systems are seldom utilised by students.
- ▶ Double degree programmes, especially domestic ones, have not yet taken root in Japan.
- ▶ International credit transfer is seen more often than domestic transfer, thanks to government support.



Conclusion 2

- The merits of credit transfer and double degrees might be unclear for Japanese students.

- Tight programme schedules might discourage students from using the credit transfer system.

- Japanese students might not be keen on going abroad.

- ▶ In order to prove these hypotheses, further research is essential.



Many thanks for listening.

Masahiro Tanaka
