



Beginning with the 2017 academic year, the University has decided to introduce a four-quarter school year, with the aim of increasing its international compatibility.

As of academic year 2017, Hitotsubashi University has decided to reorganize its undergraduate programs by introducing a four-quarter school year.

As shown in Figure A, the present school year comprises two semesters: the Summer Semester from April to the end of July and the Winter Semester from the end of September to the beginning of February. Effective April 2017, the existing two semesters will each be split roughly in half, to create a school year of four quarters.

However, there will be certain minor changes in the periods of these quarters. Almost no changes

will be made with regard to the April–July period, provisionally renamed the Spring and Summer Quarters. However, the Autumn Quarter will begin slightly earlier than at present, around September 20, and it will continue from then to the beginning of November, with the Winter Quarter following until the beginning of January. The end of this quarter will also be slightly earlier than at present. All classes at the Graduate School of Law will finish before the end of the calendar year. Some leeway will be given to all Faculties and other Graduate Schools at the end of the year, with a few classes and tests

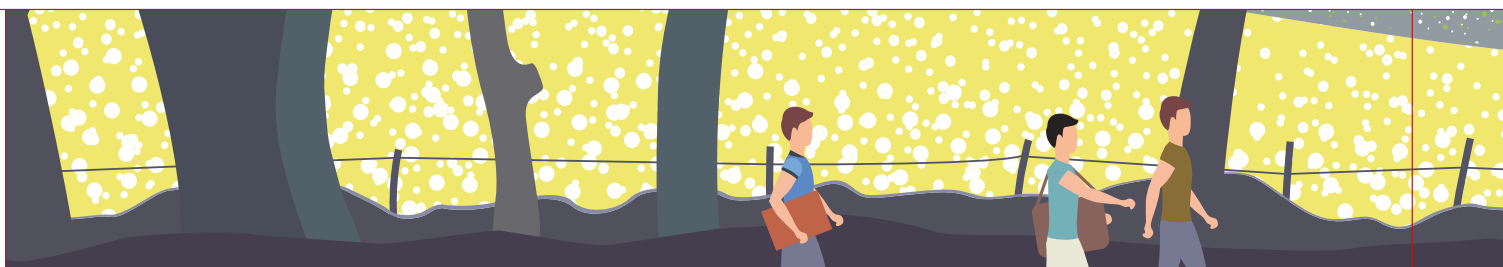


Figure A: Comparative schedules for Academic Year 2016 (undergraduate) and the four-quarter school year



being held early in the following year.

After the Winter Quarter is completed, a period of intensive lecture courses will follow. During this time, it is envisioned that Hitotsubashi University teaching staff will offer lectures that will benefit students' education through intensive short-term studies.

Furthermore, the total number of class hours will change along with this reformation of the school year. Until now, two credits could be earned by taking 1,350 minutes of instruction in fifteen 90-minute classes along with a test. However, in the four-quarter school year, this will be revised to 1,365 minutes of instruction in thirteen 105-minute classes along with a test. Although a period for intensive lecture courses will be added to the four quarters, we have been careful to ensure that no major change occurs in the length of the summer vacation. The total number of class hours has been changed as a measure to meet the hours required by the Standards for Establishment of Universities

Board Member/Executive Vice President for Education, Student Affairs and Strategic Planning

Tsuyoshi Numagami (who supervises educational and student affairs) explained the reorganization of the school year as follows:

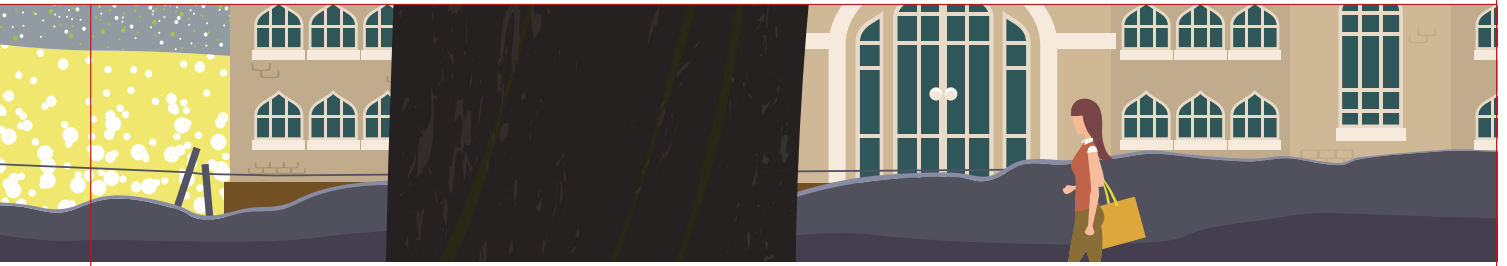
“The largest objective of this reorganization of the school year is to increase our students’ international mobility. Under the present system, our school year is very different from that of universities in other countries, and therefore, there have been several restrictions on studying abroad. However, introducing the four-quarter school year will allow our students to avail themselves of more diverse study abroad opportunities than before, and I believe that it will be easier for overseas students to come to Hitotsubashi University as well.”

This is quite evident if one considers the school schedule of foreign universities (Figure B). For example, at Stanford University in the United States, summer programs are held from the fourth week of June to the third week of August. Summer programs are short-term intensive programs conducted by universities during the summer vacation in various countries. By participating in such programs, Hitotsubashi students have

the opportunity to interact with other students from around the world. However, at present, these summer programs overlap with the second half of our Summer Semester, making it practically impossible for any of our interested students to participate. If they try to participate in a program from August, when our summer vacation begins, there are virtually no programs left for them to join.

“So, people end up joining special programs set up for Japanese students. However, with the new four-quarter school year, you can spend the entire Summer Quarter attending a summer program elsewhere. For example, in your second year, if class schedules are arranged so that students don’t have any compulsory subjects during the Summer Quarter in their second year, it would be possible to send more students abroad. Since our summer vacation period begins after that, the chance of studying abroad in the summer will significantly increase,” continued Vice President Numagami.

The same is relevant for the winter period. As the new schedule corresponds with that of foreign universities, it will be easier to



consider studying abroad for a semester starting in mid or late January.

Participating in summer programs conducted around this time at universities in the Oceania region will also be possible.

As stated above, the major benefit of reorganizing the school year is that studying abroad will be significantly easier than before. Now, students can arrange short-term language study overseas in their first year at Hitotsubashi University, attend a summer program in their second year, and plan long-term study abroad in their third or fourth years. We consider this reorganization especially valuable for our University because we have made “creating globally competent talent” an important theme.

At the same time, a system that receives students from our designated overseas partner schools in the same manner as we send our students to study there is also required. We have already launched a range of initiatives for this purpose, including the provision of various classes in English, enhancing Japanese-language education, and expanding the international student dormitories. The implementation of the new four-quarter school year may be considered to be another step toward fulfilling this initiative.

In addition to enhancing our international mobility, another key aspect of this reorganization is the major expansion of the period available for intensive lecture courses. As we can see in Figure A, until now, intensive lecture courses have been conducted for one week each in early August and early February. As of academic

year 2017, in addition to these periods, intensive lecture courses will also be conducted in January and February for two classes per day for five to seven days.

“When students study intensively for short periods, they acquire more, so I want the students to make good use of these intensive lecture courses. The principal objective of this reorganization of the school year is to broaden the choices for overseas studies, but such measures will hopefully also enhance the opportunity and variety in studying for those who want to settle in Japan for their studies,” said Vice President Numagami.

Some issues still need to be addressed with regard to this reorganization of the school year. The most important of these is that lectures will increase in length to one hour and 45 minutes.

As Vice President Numagami explained, “There is, of course, the concern that holding lecture-style classes in large-scale spaces for this length of time will put addi-

tional pressure on students and teachers alike, and both may need some time to get used to it. To handle this, we will need to adjust how classes are conducted. In contrast, at Hitotsubashi University where seminars and several of the classes involve discussions and debates between the lecturer and the students, or among the students themselves, 90 minutes are often not enough for some types of classes. This tends to happen in classes at the graduate level. In such cases, 105-minute classes may turn out to be more effective.”

Moreover, 105-minute long classes will affect the daily school schedule.

Vice President Numagami concluded, “We still have outstanding issues to resolve, but there are pros and cons in any situation, so there will always be a tradeoff. While understanding the disadvantages, we also need to consider the merits. The key is how a balance can be maintained according to the current situation we are facing and the goals we are pursuing.”

