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ICLHE Across Contexts: Japan

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Japan are strengthening their international outlook and striving to secure top places in international ranking schemes by enhancing the quality of their research and teaching; attracting international students, faculty members and researchers; and providing international experiences for domestic students. The Japanese government and many HEIs see increasing the provision of English-medium instruction (EMI) as one way to achieve these goals.

A rising number of both international and domestic students currently study for at least part of their degree in English. Recent high-profile government funding schemes have helped to accelerate this growth. However, EMI implementation in Japan, especially the development and delivery of entire degree programs taught in English, can be challenging; and can be understood through a four-category framework (Bradford, 2016). Similar to in other countries, those working in programs in Japan face linguistic challenges and cultural challenges which cause concern about reduced program quality and lack of inclusivity in the internationalized classroom. Programs also experience administrative and managerial challenges, including elements that are logistical in nature; HEIs in Japan face a particular challenge related to student recruitment. However, the most complex challenges encountered by many Japanese HEIs are institutional challenges. These challenges pertain to the way people, both those inside and external to the program, perceive it. Challenges relating to the English-taught program's branding, its position within the university, and faculty buy-in fall into this category.

This presentation provides a deeper understanding of how Japanese HEIs are implementing EMI, focusing particularly on English-taught degree programs at the undergraduate level. It examines HEI motivations for implementing EMI, outlining recent government policy initiatives that encourage it. It then describes the structure of new English-taught degree programs and analyze the obstacles to implementation that HEIs in Japan are facing.

- Bradford, A. (2016). Toward a Typology of Implementation Challenges Facing English-medium Instruction in Higher Education: Evidence from Japan, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 2016, 20(4), pp. 339-356.