

# A GUIDE FOR THE TOHOKU UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE LABORATORY STUDY PROGRAM (COLABS)

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## 1. Study

### (1) Curriculum

The Tohoku University COLABS program consists of the Individual Research Training in Lab (IRTLab) course as the core course (required), and elective courses of your choice offered in English.

- > COLABS students are required to take 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) Equivalent or more each semester, including the ECTS Equivalent from the IRTLab course.
- > Students who feel that they were not assigned to suitable laboratories for IRTLab should contact the Student Exchange Division as soon as possible.

### CORE COURSE (Required)

#### **Individual Research Training in Lab (IRTLab)**

IRTLab is a course offered for short-term (semester-based) international exchange students only. Participation in the research group activities counts as 12-30 ECTS equivalent for the IRTLab course each semester. As per Table 1, ECTS equivalents will be awarded based on "Total School Hours", after successful performance as determined by the committee in charge. IRTLab offers four categories to students, each of which has different "Total School Hours." Students are required to submit an abstract and a report containing the outcome of their IRTLab by the designated deadlines, and to present orally around the end of the program. However, this does not mean that students are required to complete a thesis by the end of the exchange term. Some parts of their research outcomes can be used for the contents of their thesis with the consent of their academic advisors at Tohoku University. In order to obtain the maximum outcome in the IRTLab course, students should discuss their results with their academic advisor and get feedback before submission. For further information, please see "(2) Course Description of Individual Research Training in Lab".

## ELECTIVE COURSES

Students interested in taking elective courses should discuss the content and the course schedule etc. with their academic advisors. Detailed information on courses will be obtained from each Graduate School, as in A)-B) below (class availabilities may vary by semester and each graduate school).

- A) > International Graduate Program for Advanced Science ([IGPAS](#)) in the Graduate School of Science: IGPAS offers graduate-level classes in English and the classes are open to COLABS students.  
> Master course programs; Graduate Schools of [Science](#) / [Engineering](#) / [Information Sciences](#) / [Life Sciences](#) / [Environmental Studies](#) / [Biomedical Engineering](#) / [Agricultural Science](#) / [Medicine](#) / [Dentistry](#) / [Pharmaceutical Sciences](#)  
**\*\*You may ask the relevant Academic Affairs Section of your Graduate School for more details.\*\***
- B) Junior Year Program in English ([JYPE](#)): \*All courses are offered in English.  
(The JYPE program is designed for undergraduate students, however, COLABS students can also take JYPE courses.)

## (2) Course Description of Individual Research Training in Lab (IRTLab)

The following assignments are required to complete the IRTLab course.

Assignments	Applicable Students	Deadline	Language
(1) Summary (template available)	All Student (each semester)	Fall – middle of Jan. Spring – middle of Jul.	English
(2) IRTLab Poster presentation (w83 cm x h120 cm)	Fall-&-Spring students	early Feb.	
	Spring-&-Fall students	early Aug.	
(3) IRTLab Oral presentation (approx. 15 min.)	• Fall-only students • Spring-&-Fall students	early Feb.	
	• Spring-only students • Fall-&-Spring students	early Aug.	
(4) Research Paper (A4 size / 30-40 pages*) *suggested length	All Students (in the last exchange term)	Fall – Feb. 15 Spring – Aug. 15	

Note:

- All the COLABS students are obliged to attend 1-2 day IRTLab Presentation event(s). **\*MANDATORY\***
- All the assignments mentioned above must be approved by your academic advisor before submission.
- The summary is an important outline of the abstract to be shared with other participants, therefore, any confidential information must be excluded due to the university's Intellectual Property Protection policies.
- Avoid setting up a dormitory move-out inspection on the presentation dates.

**IRTLab Course Categories** The IRTLab course offers four categories as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. School Hours (workload) for each category of IRTLab and ECTS Equivalents per semester.

Category Name		IRTLab 1	IRTLab 2	IRTLab 3	IRTLab 4
School Hours for IRTLab (hours)	1. Implementation Hours (Research)	150	240	300	420
	2. Participation Hours in Laboratory Activities	150	210	250	330
Total School Hours		300	450	550	750
<b>ECTS Equivalent of School Hours (25 hours = 1 ECTS)</b>		12	18	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>

**Note:**

- Numbers for School Hours indicate workload (hours) per semester, 15 weeks.
- Implementation Hours for IRTLab 1 to 4 will be 2.0, 3.2, 4.0 and 5.6 hours per day on average respectively.
- Table 1 above is provided to facilitate credit transfer between partner institutions and Tohoku University. ECTS equivalents will be awarded based on the "Total School Hours" above, after the student's successful performance as determined by the committee in charge.
- The above School Hours are minimum estimates to complete IRTLab. COLABS students are also required to perform course work at their graduate school, department, and laboratory.
- While "IRTLab 4" requires full School Hours (750 hours per semester or 50 hours per week) for 30 ECTS Equivalents, students who register for category 1, 2, or 3 ("IRTLab 1", "IRTLab 2" or "IRTLab 3") must take Tohoku University courses offered to achieve 30 ECTS Equivalents in total.
- Table 2 shows total Tohoku University credit units from elective courses per semester necessary to complete the COLABS program, according to the student's choice of IRT Lab course.

Table 2.

Total Tohoku University credit units of elective courses per semester necessary for completion of COLABS

Categories of IRTLab (Required Course)	IRTLab 1	IRTLab 2	IRTLab 3	IRTLab 4
Total Tohoku University credits of elective courses per semester necessary for completion	9	6	4	0

**Students are strongly advised to take "IRTLab 4" or "IRTLab 3".**

Consulting with the academic advisor about course selection (IRTLab and elective courses) is required prior to registration.

**Description of School Hours (Workload) for IRTLab****① Implementation Hours**

Implementation hours are spent by students working with the support of the research groups (laboratories) to which they are assigned, doing individual research on current topics closely related to their majors, as a part of a master/doctor thesis. During implementation hours, students conduct experiments, calculations, theorizations and related activities, and are expected to acquire basic research-related knowledge and techniques for doing real research. To achieve IRTLab course goals and objectives, which emphasize fundamental and high-quality research experiences, the implementation hours are set at 150-420 hours/semester in the four categories, more than 50% of the total school hours.

**② Participation Hours in laboratory activities:** Students are assigned to laboratories with consent from the faculty member in charge and encouraged to participate in various activities at the laboratory.**Oral presentations:**

During the participation hours in laboratory activities, students are expected to prepare for a few oral presentations, which will be required as compulsory activities. In the oral presentations, students are expected to show their understanding of basic theories in their major, to come up with solid research proposals, to analyze experimental results, and then to combine ideas and laboratory research results into creative and academically self-consistent works.

**Seminars:**

Students are required to participate in a seminar, which is an important part of laboratory activities, usually once a week for 90-120 minutes. Active participation and good preparation are needed to acquire comprehensive knowledge and to develop the ability to think analytically and critically.

**Meetings:**

Meeting with academic advisors is one of the most important aspects of the laboratory activities. Students can ask various questions, discuss with their advisors and receive suggestions, concerning their research projects. Sometimes, students may be given assignments by their advisors, which will greatly enhance their research projects. The students are supported by individual tutors in the laboratory, who will guide them greatly in research and daily life.

**Tutorials:**

Tutorials conducted as laboratory activities are opportunities for discussions and group work with the tutors and other laboratory members, during which senior students often instruct juniors. Students are encouraged to discuss the results of their research with lab mates to receive feedback, while doing the same concerning the work done by others. Through tutorials, students are motivated, and learn from each other, to be competent and responsible members of the laboratory.

### Independent study:

The independent study for laboratory activities includes completing assignments, reading relevant papers, analyzing research data and preparing to submit papers on research to the academic advisor at the end of the exchange term.

### Other laboratory activities:

These allow students to interact intellectually and culturally with other students and professors, and to acquire intercultural understanding. This allows students to form life-long friendships and future close relations.

The allotment of these participation hours in laboratory activities varies depending on the assigned laboratory, disciplines, and/or graduate school. Detailed information on the laboratory schedule will be provided by academic advisors.

✂The updated Class Schedule is obtained at your assigned graduate school.✂

### (3) Registration for Courses (Online)

Submit your Online Registration Form by the deadline:

Fall Semester	middle of October
Spring Semester	middle of April

- > Each class is 90 minutes long, except for some of the Japanese Language Program classes at Kawauchi (JLPK).
- > 2 Tohoku University credits are given for most of the lecture courses.
- > 1 Tohoku University credit is equivalent to 45 hours of study time.
- > Any course change requests **will be declined** after the relevant deadline, mentioned above.
- > Students are responsible for completing the JLPK Class Registration on the designated website if applicable.

### (4) Grading System, Transcription, and Credit Transfer

The relevant faculties will certify course credits. The academic credits earned at Tohoku University should be acceptable at the students' home institutions in accordance with the student exchange agreement.

① Grades in the courses will be assigned as follows:

AA ...90-100% / A ... 80-89% / B ... 70-79% / C ... 60-69% / D ... Fail

② A copy of the academic transcript will be sent via email to each student's home university and the student approximately two months after classes end (April and/or October). Students are responsible for obtaining the credits at their home university on the basis of the transcript. Total earned Tohoku University credits can be transferred to a student's home university in accordance with its credit transfer policies.

### (5) Certificate of Completion

A "Certificate of Completion" will be awarded to students who fulfilled the program requirements. The certificate will be mailed via email to the student's home university and the student with their academic transcripts after the exchange period ends (April and/or October).

### (6) Period of Study in Exchange Programs

Program	Study Period	Program End:
JYPE	One or Two Semester(s)	Poster (Fall) / Oral (Spring)
COLABS		Oral Presentation
DEEP		Final Class

\*If you wish to shorten or extend the exchange period:

- Conform with the home university about the possibilities.
- Discuss your academic advisor at Tohoku University for permission.
- Submit an official confirmation letter from your home university to the Student Exchange Division by the relevant Deadline: **May 15 (spring) / Nov. 15 (fall)**
- JYPE students who enrolled in spring are ineligible for program extensions.

### (7) [Academic Calendar](#)

#### 2. JASSO (Japan Student Services Organization) Scholarship

- ① All JASSO scholars are required to attend the "JASSO Scholarship Guidance".
- ② JASSO Scholarship procedures are as follows:

- **A monthly stipend of 80,000 yen** will be transferred to the student's bank account around the end of every month. (Except April and October. The payment for April will be made around the end of May. The payment for October will be made in November)
- JASSO scholars **must sign the confirmation form** at the Student Exchange Division during the signing period every month.
- JASSO scholars will be disqualified from receiving the stipend for the month if they missed the signing period, regardless of the reason.
- Contact the Student Exchange Division for any questions regarding the JASSO scholarship.

③ Period of Scholarship - The scholarship period is as follows:

Period of Stay	From:	To:
Fall semester only	October	January
Fall and spring semester		July
Spring semester only	April	July
Spring and fall semester		January

**\* JASSO scholars, in principle, cannot change their scholarship period. \***

④ Requirements to receive the scholarship

There are several tasks that must be performed to receive the JASSO scholarship. Students are required to fill in and submit the designated forms by the end of the scholarship period. The designated forms will be sent by the Student Exchange Division.

### 3. Insurance

All exchange students are required to join the following types of insurance.

1. National Health Insurance
2. Personal Accident Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research ("GAKKENSAI")
3. Comprehensive Insurance for Students Lives Coupled with PAS "GAKKENSAI" for International Students ("Inbound futai-gakuso")

### 4. Important Notices

> Adherence to Japanese Law

Students are to adhere to Japanese Law during their stay in Japan. Do not violate the law, or you will be punished under the jurisdiction of Japan.

> Drinking and Smoking

In Japan, the legal age of majority is 20. You are underage until then, with respect to drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking tobacco products; you may also require a legal guardian's permission in order to sign contracts, such as for a credit card.

**NB: Regardless of your age, smoking is prohibited throughout the Tohoku University campuses and the dormitories.**

> Dormitory

Students must follow the rules of the university dormitories during their stay, as per the instructions given at the dormitory orientation when they arrive. Students are not allowed to let friends and/or family members stay overnight in their rooms. Please avoid making any trouble and keep up good relations with other residents.

**Tohoku University will promptly report students who are behind in their rent payments to their home universities. Students will be obliged to return home during the program if they fail to pay even after receiving a reminder from Tohoku University.**

> Driving cars and motorcycles

It is not recommended that students drive cars or motorcycles even if they have drivers' licenses.

> Mobile phones

For those who would like to subscribe to a mobile carrier, it is important to understand and agree to all terms of the contract beforehand. It is the responsibility of the student to make the necessary payments.

> Health and Safety

Staying healthy and safe is the most important thing for making the most of life at Tohoku University. Refer to the information from the [Student Health Care Center and counseling services](#) and [local medical facilities](#) if you are feeling unwell.

> [Counseling](#) and [Disability](#) Services

These free services are available if you encounter difficulties and/or feel anxious during the program. The details of student problems will be kept strictly confidential. (Consultations are held in English.) You may inquire by e-mail or visit the center directly.

## 5. Other

> Admission Discount for International Students

Free or discounted admission can be obtained by international students at public facilities such as museums, parks, and gardens in Sendai. Show your student ID and residence card at the entrance.

> University Library

Students are required to present their library cards to use the University Library.

> Events Intended for International Students

Several excursions and events will be organized for international students.

## 6. Contact information

[Chair of the Program] Yoshitaka KASUKABE, Ph.D. Professor  
Global Learning Center  
yoshitaka.kasukabe.c3@tohoku.ac.jp

[General Issues] Incoming Student Exchange Section, Student Exchange Division  
[Contact Form](#)

[Useful Links] [Tohoku University Information for Incoming Exchange Students](#)  
[Tohoku University International Support Office](#)