

# Toyo University Report on COVID-19 Countermeasures

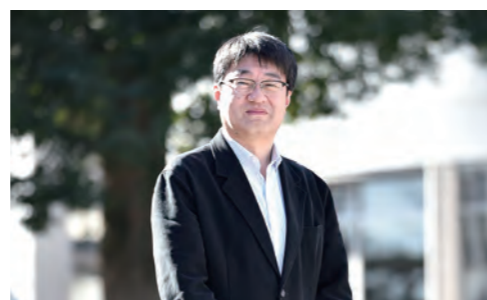
## COVID-19 Spreading Unabated Around the World

Since the first pneumonia case of unknown origin was reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the disease, which was later found to be caused by a novel coronavirus and was named “COVID-19,” has spread all over the world and caused massive damage to the human race. In Japan, in response to the rapid increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in late March 2020, the Japanese government declared a state of emergency for the entire nation in April, urging people to take thorough infection control measures.

The first COVID-19 cluster that caused serious concern in Japan occurred on board the cruise ship Diamond Princess, which was anchored at the Port of Yokohama in February 2020. The ship was quarantined in the port, and infected passengers were transported to medical institutions in Japan and hospitalized there. In late February, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases began to rapidly increase in South Korea, Italy and other areas outside the initial epicenter of China. The epidemic further developed into a global pandemic, sweeping various areas one after another around the world, including the United States and European countries.

Afterwards, the Japanese government took various countermeasures including deciding to postpone the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo scheduled for the summer of 2020, distributing two cloth masks each to all households, and paying a cash subsidy of 100,000 yen per person. On April 7, the government declared a state of emergency for Tokyo and six prefectures and set a target of reducing physical human contact by at least 70%, or by 80% if possible, urging people to stay home and take other infection control measures. On April 16, the scope of the state of emergency declaration was broadened to cover the nation. Although the declaration was lifted on May 25, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Japan is still growing though at an uneven pace. We are continuing our attempt to put the new normal into practice, including continuing to avoid the “three Cs” (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings) and using ICT to work, study or conduct other activities remotely.

### Advice from a Professor



**Professor Kazunori Kato,**  
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● Even if no symptoms are visible, COVID-19 patients are likely to have a large amount of virus in their bodies.

● Unhealthy lifestyles can lower immunity.

● Unhealthy eating habits can increase disease risk.

Novel coronavirus can infect regardless of age and physical condition, and replicate in any infected body in a short time. However, different symptoms of COVID-19 are found between young and elderly people depending on immune responses.

While the strength of immunity declines in parallel with aging, unhealthy lifestyles and eating habits can reduce the quality of immunity even in young people.

Keep in mind that it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and eating habits to protect yourself from virus infection.

## Major Measures Taken by Toyo University

January	24	● Posted its first warning against the novel coronavirus disease on its official website (and has since continued updating the warning)
February	3	● Organized a Novel Coronavirus Disease Emergency Committee chaired by the president
	5	● Issued to students, as well as faculty and staff members, a warning and a notice about what to do if they become infected
	27	● Announced its decision to Canceled graduation ceremony ● Announced the first version of the Principles of Action for students and faculty and staff members (and has since continued updating the principles) ● Canceled students' extracurricular activities, including conferences and events organized by the University
March	6	● Announced its decision to Canceled entrance ceremony
	13	● Announced its decision to postpone the start of spring semester classes initially scheduled for April 6 until April 20 or later
	27	● Held “Manabi LIVE Class Experience,” an online event for prospective students (also in June)
April	3	● Announced the start date of spring semester classes and decision to offer remote classes ● Announced its decision to restrict entry onto each campus
	27	● Began to offer spring semester classes online ● Announced its decision to provide all students (except Correspondence Courses) with a Special Learning Grant of 50,000 yen (a grand total of 1.5 billion yen)
May	18	● Began to provide postal mailing services for library material users and ILL photocopying service users
June	1	● Began procedure for providing the Special Learning Grant
	26	● Began to accept applications for special independent grant-style scholarship RIBBON as a countermeasure against COVID-19
July	1	● Began to phase out entry restrictions to admit onto campus only students who need to be on campus for education, research, guidance, etc.
	31	● Held a parent meeting online

## Major Student Support Initiatives

### Online Company Briefings Held to Connect Students to Companies

In March, earlier than other universities, Toyo University held an online job fair for students studying at all its campuses. The event received positive responses from both the recruiter of the 45 participating companies as well as students. In June, the University held not only the second online company briefing targeting fourth-year students, but also an online internship job fairs for first- to third-year students. These job fairs had some positive effects unique to online events, including the attendance of students who were conducting job hunting activities in their hometown outside the Tokyo metropolitan area. In August, a similar event was held and streamed live. Going forward, we will continue holding online events to enable students to keep in touch with companies.

### Providing a Special Learning Grant of 50,000 Yen

On April 27, 2020, Toyo University began to offer spring semester classes online. As an independent measure to enable students to ensure and maintain an internet-based learning environment, the University provided all undergraduate and graduate students, excluding Correspondence Course students, with a Special Learning Grant of 50,000 yen per student—a grand total of 1.5 billion yen. From June 1, students registered their bank accounts via “ToyoNet-G” (the University’s education affairs system), and provision of the grant through bank transfer began on June 19.

### Online Career Consultation with Expert Consultants

We place importance on enabling job hunting students in different circumstances to receive individualized career consultation services provided by expert consultants. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented us from offering face-to-face career consultation services due to restrictions on entering the campuses, we have continued offering online support to students. Enhancing our career support services by increasing the number of consultants in charge as needed and other means, we have so far held over 5,000 online consultation sessions throughout the University. Since companies are also using online tools to implement their recruitment procedures, including interviews, many students who have used our online services have given positive responses such as, “The online career consultation enabled me to get properly prepared for companies’ online interviews.”

### Providing Two Independent Grant-Style Scholarships to Support Students Financially

We are taking measures to help undergraduate students facing difficulty in continuing to study at the University due to the sudden impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their financial situation. In June, we established the Toyo University special scholarship RIBBON as a countermeasure against the economic impact of COVID-19. It relies on donations given by many parties, including the Alumni Association, Hosiukai (the parent association), trustees of the Toyo University Incorporated Educational Institution, and faculty and staff members. In addition, in July we called for applications for this academic year’s Toyo University Category 2 Scholarship (Scholarship for Students with Financial Hardships) to help undergraduate students who excel in both academic achievements and character yet are facing very severe economic difficulties.

### Providing Career Support Events Online

We have continued to provide the latest updates on job hunting activities and offer programs about preparations for such activities in online. Throughout the AY2020 spring semester, we offered various online programs and events, including a program offered in April to fourth-year students and entitled “How to Succeed in a Rapidly Growing Number of Online Job Interviews.” Then in June, we held an event entitled “Online Consultation & Q&A (Comprehensive Consultation),” which was intended for students who are experiencing anxiety about job hunting activities. We are also posting videos online to raise career awareness among first- and second-year students, while offering an online internship preparation program targeting third-year students every Monday. We have thus continued supporting students to encourage them to do what they can do now for their future careers.

### Consultation Services Provided to Enable Students to Lead Stress-Free Campus Lives

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed students’ living environment and forced them to deal with various things to which they are unaccustomed. The Student Counselling Office accepts students’ requests for advice on their anxiety or concerns by phone, e-mail, Webex, or other channels. For the latest information about these counselling services, including the office hours and how to apply to use the services, refer to the University’s official website.

Report 1

### INIAD Students Learn and Contribute to Society by Creating and Running Toyama Prefecture's Infection Control Website

On April 9, 2020, Toyama Prefecture's website announced that their official COVID-19 infection control website was launched. It was created and is being run by a group of interested students. They are led by third-year student Issei Terada at the Department of Information Networking for Innovation and Design, Faculty of Information Networking for Innovation and Design (INIAD), Toyo University. Here, Issei talks about this initiative.



This initiative started from an idea that came to me: I wanted to do something to contribute to Toyama Prefecture, my home area. In creating this website, we used the program of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's COVID-19 infection control website, which the TMG has made open to the public for reproduction and modification under an open source license. We collaborated with Toyama Prefecture in building an application programming interface (API), a system for communicating information, to ensure quick and accurate information disclosure.

Information on the website is updated constantly based on open data published by Toyama Prefecture, including the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases in total and by age group and gender, as well as the number of PCR tests. We use bar graphs to show the number of confirmed cases by age group and the number of consultation cases at the center for people with potential exposure to COVID-19. This allows users to grasp the composition of confirmed cases and changes in the figures at a glance. The website attracts maximum 15,000 views per day.

Because this is the local government's official website, we place importance on making it usable to everyone, including people from abroad, people with poor vision, and members of the LGBT community. We asked international students at INIAD to help us in offering the website in multiple languages, including English and Chinese. We also actively release information via SNS, and strive to incorporate the opinions of users as much as possible. For example, when pharmacies in Toyama Prefecture requested us to we release information in printed format for the convenience of senior citizens, we created files for printing and made them available for public use. And we are continuing to operate flexibly.

Such a series of processes has enabled us to increase our skills and provided us with a valuable experience of working with a sense of mission to offer accurate information. I'm happy that our activities have helped society. I believe that the nationwide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has inspired citizens to play a more active role in solving problems in administrative systems and social issues using technologies in a movement called "civic tech." From now on, I hope to further take up the challenge of participating in activities to promote innovation by proactively using data held by government bodies and companies.



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Report 2

### Online Classes Open Up New Possibilities for Education in a Post-COVID-19 Era

As a COVID-19 infection control measure, Toyo University offered all spring semester classes online, in principle. Since this initiative was launched, students have had diverse responses. Here is an interview about online classes with Professor Kentaro Shibusawa, Faculty of Economics, who studies the digitization of education and published the Kindle book *Online kogi —corona no naka de kangaeru—* (lit. "Online Classes: Thoughts amid the COVID-19 Pandemic") together with his seminar group members on June 17, 2020.



For the past 10 years, I have given online classes to high school students, participating in the University's initiative for high school–university collaboration.

From my experience in this initiative, I believe that online classes can enable students to actively learn. In online classes, instructors can use various systems and tools to promptly receive students' responses and incorporate them in the ongoing classes, so that students can easily get involved in the classes.

Since this class style was introduced in the spring semester, online classes have produced some positive effects for students. One is an increase in their levels of understanding. For example, in lecture-style classes with over 200 attendees, students tend to hesitate to raise their hand and ask a question. By contrast, in online classes, students can ask questions without hesitation using the chat function. I have found that finding answers to their own questions helps them improve their own understanding, resulting in a larger number of students becoming able to write accurate papers. In addition, I believe that many students are enjoying the higher efficiency of their learning by attending classes in places where they can easily concentrate.

Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that online classes are perfect. In certain class formats, I sometimes feel difficulty in controlling the tempo of conversation, maintaining a favorable atmosphere and energy level unique to classes, or holding active discussions. Moreover, since many students attend online classes via their smartphone, they have to keep watching on a small screen. Furthermore, students differ in their communication environment and motivation for learning, and I imagine that the written assignments which they are very often given may impose a heavy burden on them. Taking into account such possible barriers, we as instructors should design classes in which students can learn more comfortably in consideration of the characteristics of each course, the number of attendees, and class content according to the faculty or department.

Amid the greater spread of online interactions over society, education is also required to be provided online. Online education has already become a standard in some countries. We as instructors in Japan shoulder the responsibility of firmly establishing online classes in the country through improvement processes based on students' real needs. This online-class initiative should not end up as a stopgap measure only amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We should develop online classes so that we will be able to freely choose to give online or face-to-face classes according to the number of attendees or the characteristics of the course. Paying due consideration to the balance of online classes and student lives in general, I will devote my energy to ensuring that online classes will establish a new important position in education in Japan.



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