

Analysis of Japanese Trends for Better Cultivation of Human Resources in Science and Technology (HRST)

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Throughout the 1st and 2nd Science and Technology (S&T) Basic Plans of Japan (1996-'00/'01-'05), the policy for “Fostering and Securing of Human Resources in Science and Technology (HRST)” has been regarded as one of the most important subjects to be tackled with the first priority. In fact, as a consequence of this policy, Japanese systems for cultivating HRST have been greatly strengthened, resulting in, for example, the substantial increase of post-doctorates (in excess of 10,000, as of 2003).

From now on, it is vital to set up and promote a policy so that these advanced human resources (doctorate recipients including post-doctorates) are surely employed and amply utilized in various forms of professions and employment sectors. The recent survey by MEXT in 2003 has clarified, however, that the employment sectors of doctorate recipients in Japan are still dominated by universities and other academic institutions, while the percentage of doctorate recipients employed by industrial sectors is lower in Japan than that in U.S by 17 points. These facts clearly indicate the need for prompt and effective actions to be taken for the better balance and increased diversity both in employment and job search processes.

Hence, in the process of drawing up the 3rd S&T Basic Plan, it is critical to investigate actual conditions of HRST in Japan, and to make a set of policies to widen both the career paths and the employment sectors for doctorate recipients.

In this presentation, we report on our recent questionnaire-survey which were conducted on researchers and administrators in academic institutions and industry and clarify “actual conditions of Japanese HRST”. In addition, we describe our bench-marking studies to clarify distinctive features of present situations in Japan with respect to other countries, and discuss key points for “diversifying occupational opportunities and employment sectors for advanced HRST in Japan”.