

Message from the Dean

Opening New Horizons for Community Interpreting in Japan

In 2022, the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies of Aichi Prefectural University established Japan's first Community Interpreting Studies course. Community interpreting is essential to ensuring that everyone in our society today has access to information and the protection of basic human rights.

Our course aims to train interpreters who can facilitate smooth communication in a multilingual and multicultural society across a wide range of settings, including healthcare, the legal system, government services, disaster response, education, and social welfare.

Selected as a MEXT Project, our program is designed to raise public awareness of community interpreting while educating professionals who can design and manage community interpreting as part of social infrastructure. The curriculum is enriched through collaboration with local communities and governments, as well as partnerships with overseas graduate schools that are engaged in innovative initiatives in this field.

It is our hope that this course opens new horizons for community interpreting in Japan.

Dr. Shinji Nakata

Dean, Graduate School of International Cultural Studies
Aichi Prefectural University

Establishing the Course

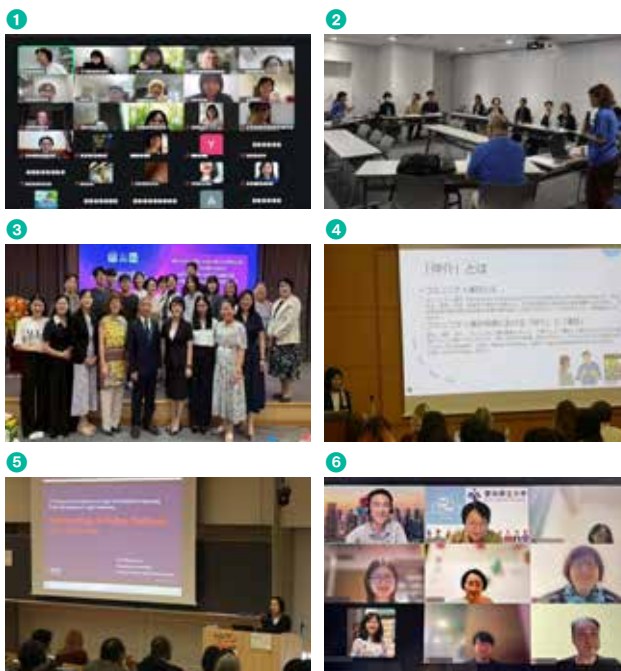
With the number of foreign residents in Japan surpassing 3.95 million by mid-2025, the country is fast becoming a multicultural and multilingual society. While Japanese society welcomes foreign workers as a solution to labor shortages, the structures for integrating them as members of society face many challenges.

It is well known that community interpreting is essential to coexistence, but social recognition remains plagued by three issues: 1) due to a shortage of qualified interpreters specialized in the medical, judicial, administrative, and educational fields, untrained "ad hoc" interpreters are used even in critical situations, 2) low public awareness of community interpreting as a quasi-public good hampers its functioning as social infrastructure, and 3) until now there was no graduate program in Japan that integrated distance interpreting and AI and machine translation into a practical training system.

Educating talented personnel to deal with a multilingual, multicultural society is essential to bring about social change. With its high numbers of foreign residents, Aichi Prefecture is the right location for this project.

Community Interpreting Studies Course —Activities to Date

The Course conducts many practical training courses and lectures in active collaboration with domestic institutions.



- 1 International joint class on "Community Interpreting Studies"
- 2 Summer seminar
- 3 Study tour in Hanoi
- 4 Public class on "Mediating in a Multilingual Society"
- 5 The Public Symposium on Legal Interpreting
- 6 International joint class on "Public-service Interpreting and Social Resources"

Partnerships with Overseas Graduate Schools

Starting with RMIT University, a leader in training highly skilled community interpreters and field experts, our program collaborates with five universities in different countries.

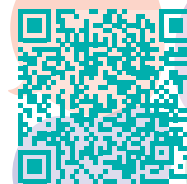
Australia RMIT University	Taiwan Tunghai University
Spain Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	Vietnam National University, Hanoi University of Languages and International Studies

AICHI PREFECTURAL UNIVERSITY Graduate School of INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL STUDIES

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING STUDIES COURSE

Joint Development of Professionals with Necessary Communication Design Skills for a Multilingual/ Multicultural Society

MEXT Project for the Establishment of
Networked Graduate Schools in the
Humanities and Social Sciences



Graduate School of
International Cultural Studies



Aichi Prefectural University



Community Interpreting
Studies Course

Joint Development of Professionals with Necessary Communication Design Skills for a Multilingual/Multicultural Society

Vision for Our Graduates

- ▶ Top level community interpreters in the medical, judicial, administrative, disaster prevention, education, and welfare fields
- ▶ Managers and designers of community interpreting social infrastructure
- ▶ Researchers and instructors in the field of community interpreting

Background

- Rapid rise in number of foreign residents and increasing multilingualism and multiculturalism
- Dependence on non-expert ad hoc interpreting
- Course in Portuguese-Spanish for Medical Fields (2007-2021) at Aichi Prefectural University

Current Status and Issues

- Establishing Japan's first Community Interpreting Studies Course in Aichi Prefectural University's Graduate School of International Cultural Studies in 2022
- Lack of experts and instructors in Japan
- Using technologies such as remote interpretation and AI or machine translation, and teaching interpreter ethics
- Underdevelopment of community interpreting as social infrastructure and low social status of interpreters relative to their expertise

Achievement Targets for Graduates

- At least 70% certified as Consultation Interpreters or Coordinators by the Institute for Multicultural Society Professionals
- At least 70% employed in their field as interpretation providers, entrepreneurs, civil servants involved in institutional design, and specialized staff
- At least 30% presenting research at academic conferences and in related organizations

Career Paths

- Professional community interpreter (e.g., employed by interpreting company)
- Administrative staff responsible for institutional design of community interpreting
- Social business entrepreneur
- Foreign resident help desk staff
- Medical and legal staff
- Researcher and instructor

Aichi Prefectural University Graduate School of International Cultural Studies Master's Course in Community Interpreting Studies

4–5 participating students per year (8–10 students total)

Challenge I

Education and Research through International Collaboration

- 1 Joint seminars and classes (online) and joint master's thesis instruction with partner graduate schools
- 2 Interactive short-term training and project-based learning
- 3 Collaborative international research on institutions, human resource development, curriculum research, etc.

Challenge II

Curriculum Innovation

- 1 Adding a new Major in Coordinating from 2026 in addition to the existing Major in Interpreting
- 2 Remote interpreting, AI and machine translation, and ethics learning
- 3 Mock courtroom classes and a new advanced courses in judicial and medical interpreting theory and conference interpreting practice
- 4 Systematizing and integrating technology into the Interpreting and Coordinating majors

Challenge III

Taking Our Local Collaborations with Governments and Communities Global

Developing research and knowledge exchanges with domestic and foreign government officials and researchers

Challenge IV

Career Development and Business Models for Mid-Career and Foreign Workers

- 1 Career development and integration of a diverse workforce including public servants and people with foreign roots
- 2 Launching a university-based venture for community interpreting

Program Mission

- ▶ Develop professional human resources in community interpreting in collaboration with overseas and domestic partner institutions.
- ▶ Build community interpreting as new social infrastructure in Japan.

Overseas Partner (2–3 participants from each university)

- Master of Interpreting and Translation, RMIT University, Australia
- Master in Conference Interpreting, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain
- M.A. in Japanese Language and Culture, Tunghai University, Taiwan
- M.A. in Japanese Linguistics, National University, Hanoi University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam



Business Partner Organizations

- Aichi Medical Association
- Aichi Prefectural Board of Education
- Aichi International Association
- Nagoya International Center
- Aichi University Graduate School of Law
- Tatsuya Ohtake Law Office
- Aichi Prefecture Multicultural Society Section
- Aichi Medical Interpretation System (AiMIS)
- mediPhone Corporation
- The Institute for Multicultural Society Professionals (TaSSK)

Implementation Structure

- Project Management Committee, chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies
- Project Evaluation Committee
 - ◆ Aichi Prefectural University Committee for Internal Quality Assurance Promotion
 - ◆ External Evaluation Committee (local authorities and experts)