

Speech on Entrance Ceremony
Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine
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Congratulations on your admission to Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine. I would like to extend our warmest congratulations on behalf of faculty members of the Graduate School of Medicine. We are pleased to welcome you all, filled with hope and eyes shining with delight.

Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine was established in 1955. In 2000, we moved to a new phase to place importance on graduate schools, which shifted the center of education and research for the enrichment of the School of Medicine to the Graduate School of Medicine. In 2017, the Graduate School of Medicine was reorganized into the Faculty of Medicine and the Graduate School of Medicine by separating the organization of faculty members, which is newly named as Faculty of Medicine and the Graduate School of Medicine was restructured into an organization which solely graduate students belong to, in order to send out the manpower flexibly to enable us to provide global education of graduate school by organically integrating different disciplines.

Our Doctoral (PhD) Program provides one major (medicine), three courses; “Basic Medicine Course” to train medical researches and physician scientists, “Social Medicine Course” to nurture human resources who will work actively in the field of social medicine and public health, and “Clinical Medicine Course” to nurture human resources who will execute high-level of clinical research. In 2009, our Graduate School of Medicine introduced MD-PhD Program. The program allows 6th-year students at the School of Medicine to take required subjects of the Doctoral Program of the Graduate School of Medicine while studying under the curriculum for their final year in the School of Medicine. Furthermore, we launched the Clinic and Research Combination (CLARC) Program in 2013. This allows post-graduate year 2 medical residents to enroll in the Graduate School of Medicine, enabling them to start a combination of Clinical Training and Doctoral Program.

The Master’s Program was inaugurated in 2002. This program aims to train researchers and highly specialized professionals with creativity and comprehensive viewpoints. In 2017, the Public Health Course was newly established, where the educational system to acquire Master of Public Health was introduced. In addition, we provide a One-Year Course intended for those who are working in the field of medicine and possess a certain amount of practical

experience to complete the course in one year.

Under the philosophies of the Graduate School of Medicine, I- “to lead the world with cutting-edge research in medical science,” II- “to equip the next generation of medical researchers and medical professionals with a strong sense of ethics and a well-rounded character” and III- “to contribute to the health and welfare of humanity,” the Graduate School of Medicine sets its educational goal to nurture individuals who possess high ethical standards and highly specialized knowledge as well as research and teaching or practical capabilities.

The remarkable developments in medicine present are based on past research developments. We can witness in the past, such as the discovery of penicillin by Dr. Sir Alexander Fleming, the production of monoclonal antibodies by Dr. Köhler and Dr. Milstein, develop of the immune checkpoint blockade by Dr. Tasuku Honjo, that the history of the Nobel Prize is the history of medical science. Two Nobel Prizes have been awarded to faculties of our university: Dr. Akira Suzuki in 2011 and Dr. Benjamin List in 2021. It is clear that there will be no progress in medicine of tomorrow without the research of today conducted and supported by researchers and graduate students.

However, there are alarming circumstances where the number of students who enroll in medical graduate schools is decreasing, causing damage to the number of young medical researchers and physician scientists, who are to play an important part in the field of tomorrow’s medicine; we would like to pay our heartfelt respects to you who have chosen the way of Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine in these circumstances.

Nowadays, scientific technologies such as the analytical techniques for science, technologies for AI and ITC are remarkably advancing, and those are introduced and rapidly spreading into the medical research and medicine. We ask our graduate students to cultivate within yourselves the foundations that will enable you to be researchers and doctors after completing graduate school, who can see into the future, not be tossed around the technologies that come and go while learning the basics to focus on the principles of new technologies. I would like to send you the words of Isaac Newton: “stands on the shoulders of giants.” The word “giants” signifies the studies one has accumulated within oneself. I earnestly hope all of you continue to build up your studies and aim for even greater heights.

I believe the exposure to front-line research and executing your own research at this graduate school should be a life fortune for those who wish to become basic researchers, clinical doctors who conduct research, and medical specialists or highly specialized professionals with research skills.

During the course in this graduate school, please enhance not only your ability to plan and execute the research but also enrich your qualifications and abilities to cope with the dramatic changes of society and, most importantly, to maintain your spirit to keep on challenging.

Students who are going to learn the latest medical research are expected to take the initiative in implementing highly creative knowledge and solving various problems based on a high ethical standard as members of outstanding scientists, and to contribute to the demands of society. We sincerely hope that the day will come when you acquire the degree by achieving respectable research results, and complete this graduate school.