

Fall Welcome 2026

Hello, everyone. On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Nara Institute of Science and Technology, NAIST for short, I am delighted to welcome you all as you embark on your postgraduate studies here. I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations to your families.

Our faculty and staff are proud that you have chosen NAIST as a place for your studies. NAIST is a unique university with distinctive features and strengths. Above all, there are no undergraduate programs here. We admit graduates from diverse universities and technical colleges, and many international students are joining NAIST as well. Indeed, about one out of every four students at NAIST are international. Today, we welcome 102 new students from 24 countries and regions, including Japan.

As a university community rich in diversity, NAIST declared in 2022 that it is a “co-creative community.” Our “Declaration of Co-creative Community” says:

“The Co-creative Community we aspire to is a community where members strive for the creation of new value through the exchange of opinions with courtesy and empathy. We value our individual differences and pursue mutual understanding and respect while rejecting discrimination.”

The entire Declaration is on our university website and also posted at the entrance of each Division building. Please make time to read it.

As you just heard, the Declaration says, ‘we value our individual differences.’ Indeed, in the era of AI, individual differences are becoming increasingly important. Recent studies indicate that generative AI tends to reduce the diversity of ideas. For example, a paper reported last year a large-scale analysis of scientific literature, which found that, since the release of ChatGPT in late 2022, the number of papers per author has increased. At the same time, content and linguistic similarity have also increased.

Another study published earlier this year found that the widespread use of large language models (LLMs) as writing assistants is linked to reduced writing complexity that signifies writers’ personality, cultural background, and demographics. This phenomenon may stem from the “homogenization” of AI output, driven by limited diversity in the data used to train AI models or in how they are trained. But AI is not the only thing to blame. We also tend to look to AI output as representative of broader views or the best expertise of today. A growing body of studies now makes researchers worry that generative AI and the way we use it may homogenize our culture and cognition.

Some say we don’t need to worry too much about it, since it is yet another “McDonaldization.” Have you ever heard the word McDonaldization? The word was coined by George Ritzer, an American sociologist. He pointed out that globalization in the 20th century caused cultural homogenization where the principles of fast-food

chains, such as efficiency and predictability, prevailed. But so far, cultures seem quite resistant to the homogenizing effect of globalization. On the other hand, given the scale of AI adoption in our society, its impact could go far beyond globalization.

I believe many of you are using AI every day in one way or another. If you use AI to think, create, and behave just like everyone else, you'll likely receive no more recognition than the majority does. As you know, in the job market, you will be evaluated more by the relationship between supply and demand than by the intrinsic value of your abilities or knowledge. What matters is becoming a sought-after, rare talent.

Also in research, being different is critical, and today you have joined NAIST, a unique research university that strives to reach frontiers where nobody has yet arrived. I want you to know that our university's Japanese name includes the word "Sentan," meaning "cutting-edge." To be at the cutting edge of science, the NAIST community welcomes you who bring different perspectives, ideas, experiences, and approaches. Our Declaration of Co-creative Community says, "We affirm that the different ways of thinking and various experiences of our community members support multi-faceted perspectives and unique approaches," which are essential to cutting-edge research.

One more thing, before I close. Let me introduce our school motto to those new to our campus:

"Outgrow your limits."

That's our university motto.

"Outgrow your limits."

I want you to remember that you don't know your full potential yet. Don't set limits on yourself. NAIST has a remarkable environment for you to "outgrow your limits" beyond what you think your limits are. We urge you to take advantage of this extraordinary environment. You can find endless opportunities to get involved with projects and diverse people whose interests align with yours. Our faculty is a group of world-class researchers who are looking forward to collaborating with you.

I cannot wait to see how you develop and what you achieve at NAIST to make the world a better place.

Have fun and outgrow your limits!