

Opening of UTokyo College of Design

The University of Tokyo
April 4, 2025

In September 2027, the University of Tokyo (Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo; President: Teruo Fujii) will launch **UTokyo College of Design** — a bold new educational program set to redefine how design shapes the future.

The University of Tokyo will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2027. Over the course of its history, the university has established itself as one of the leading universities in Japan and the world by nurturing future leaders through a wide range of disciplines and research activities as well as extensive international collaborations.

The University of Tokyo is now pleased to announce the launch of UTokyo College of Design, an innovative integrated Bachelor's/Master's program developed under the strong leadership of President Fujii in collaboration with all the university organizations. This pioneering program will serve as a bold new platform for cultivating visionary leaders who can creatively address the complex challenges of our rapidly changing world. This will be the first undergraduate faculty to be established in almost seven decades (the last being the establishment of Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in 1958).

Please note: This project is currently being planned for submission to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for approval, and may be subject to change in the future.

What is design? What is its purpose?

The University of Tokyo sees design as a broad concept that encompasses not only the shaping of industrial products and artistic design as is commonly understood, but also the creation of new values, systems, and creative processes for solving social issues.

Today, the world is facing increasingly complex challenges – climate change, aging populations, digital transformations, and many others. A single discipline cannot solve these challenges. UTokyo College of Design will bring together academic knowledge from diverse fields, integrate them using design approaches, tackle complex social issues, and empower a new generation who can bring about a positive impact in the world. Students will learn design not just as a skill, but as a way of thinking and become leaders who will contribute to innovation and problem-solving in many fields. The graduates will be committed to driving meaningful change for future society across diverse fields, such as creating new businesses; designing innovative products and services; or proposing new social systems and policies in national or international settings, and in many other ways.

UTokyo College of Design Overview

- ❑ Organization Name: UTokyo College of Design
- ❑ Program: 5-year Bachelor's/Master's program¹
- ❑ Program start date: September 2027 (Fall enrollment)
- ❑ Educators: Top-level faculty members from around the world. The medium of instruction will be English.
- ❑ Number of students: 100 students/year (about 50 international and 50 Japanese students)
- ❑ Campus: Hongo Campus, the University of Tokyo (Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo)

¹ This will be an integrated 4-year Bachelor's combined with a 2-year Master's program with a possible short term completion of the Masters' so the overall length would be five years.

How will the students learn at the College?

UTokyo College of Design offers an innovative integrated Bachelor's/Master's program which is built on two pillars: comprehensive design expertise and wide disciplinary knowledge (organised into five categories called Interdisciplinary Perspectives). These are created utilising UTokyo's rich academic ecosystem and with university-wide support. UTokyo College of Design focuses on active learning and student-centered education. Students will construct their own learning pathways, follow their own interests, deepen their knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. In design, students master multiple design methods and many essential skills necessary for innovation, including user research, concept creation, prototyping, data utilization, and storytelling. In addition, students deepen their learning and practical experience in real-world contexts through individual and group projects, long-term internships in Japan or overseas, and hands-on activities. Students' daily lives are centered around studio-based activities, providing opportunities to learn together and to collaborate and engage with diverse individuals both inside and outside the University.

Supporting students to deepen the learning experience

UTokyo College of Design will attract top talent to establish a world-class faculty. Students will work alongside faculty with diverse backgrounds, including design pioneers, world leading academics of diverse fields, and practitioners. UTokyo College of Design will implement various mechanisms and environments to promote student-centered learning and international experiences, including first-year residences, academic advisors, student exchanges with overseas universities, and learning support systems using digital technologies and AI.

Admission

UTokyo College of Design will introduce an admission system that welcomes excellent and diverse students from Japan and around the world. A student body with a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, experiences and awareness of social issues will enrich our learning community.

Prospective Dean

Miles Pennington

Professor, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, the University of Tokyo

Miles Pennington is Professor of Design Led Innovation at The University of Tokyo, where he is the Director of the DLX Design Lab. Previous to that he was at the Royal College of Art in London as the Head of Program of the Innovation Design Engineering (IDE) joint Master's program with Imperial College, he is an alumnus of the IDE program and graduated in 1992. He was also the Founder and Head of Global Innovation Design (GID), and a Director of the London office of Takram. He moved to Japan in 2017 to join The University of Tokyo where he also is Co-Director of the DLX Design Academy.



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Website will be launched at 16:30 JST on Friday, April 4, 2025