

Campus Life

March 2023 Tohoku University

Safety / Security Guide

As a new student, you are probably looking forward to starting your university life (studying, living on your own, working part time, and participating in extracurricular activities). As there is much that might be new and overwhelming, we want to provide you some words of advice for new students to help you get started. We hope that you (and your parents/guardians) will read this to prepare you to have a safe and secure campus life.



Deceptive Recruitment Practices

Following the Entrance Ceremony, some students hold independent recruitment (welcome) events on campus for their extracurricular organizations (circles, clubs, etc.). However, in the midst of the welcome events, **non-university organizations or groups that conduct antisocial activities**, sometimes enter campus without permission and recruit under falsified organization names or activities. Every year we receive numerous inquiries and requests for advice regarding such recruitment.

The university is home to both student organizations (circles, clubs, etc.) that are officially registered with the university (Gakuyu-kai organizations) and independent unregistered student groups. The registered organizations receive support from the university and are affiliated with the Gakuyu-kai (Students' Friendship Association), which is organized and operated by students and university staff. However, some unregistered organizations are known to have connections with antisocial organizations, or do not disclose their true agendas when recruiting. Examples are provided below. Please be extremely careful when joining organizations.

▶▶▶ Be cautious of organizations that do not disclose their affiliation/objectives (deceptive recruitment)!

Organizations practicing deceptive recruitment at the university often target new students from March onward, around the time when the successful applicants are announced. In many of the reported instances, they attempted to recruit members by falsely claiming to represent extracurricular groups that **conduct surveys, group meals, study groups, or volunteer work**. These organizations have also included **cults**, as reported by the mass media. Such groups recruit not only on campus but also via social networking sites and door-to-door at apartment buildings. Some now recruit year-round, not just at the beginning of the school year.

When/where you may be approached:

- While preparing for university (e.g. looking for housing at the University Co-op) Entrance Ceremony, etc.
- Club/circle recruitment season
- Campus cafeterias, benches, empty classrooms
- Door-to-door at apartment buildings
- Movie rental shops, supermarkets

Be cautious if anyone asks any of the following:

- Please fill out a questionnaire.
- Please come to my dinner/study group.
- Do you want to do volunteer activities?
- Can you show me to the nearest convenience store (or bookstore/drug store etc.)?
- Are you happy with your student life?
- Do you want to attend a concert?
- Do you want to play sports (soccer etc.) with us?

How to detect deceptive recruiting:

- 1 Recruiters often approach people who are alone.
- 2 They may act friendly or eager to please.
- 3 They are not always students.
(Some are older adults or expelled students.)
- 4 They will often try to take you off campus for activities.
(They are sometimes based in apartments etc. near campus.)
- 5 They will not immediately disclose their organization's agenda.
(They will try to build a relationship with you before revealing their affiliation.)



▶▶▶ Be wary of the Students' Self-Governing Association, Sakyo, and other non-Gakuyu-kai groups!

The Students' Self-Governing Association is closely connected to another non-university organization (the Chukakuha: Japanese abbreviation for the Japan Revolutionary Communist League National Committee). **The majority of its members are not Tohoku University students.** It often calls on its members to participate in demonstrations, gatherings, petitions, and strikes related to social issues such as anti-war, anti-nuclear, labor, or political activism. Regardless of whether or not you agree with these causes, in some cases students who became involved in this group **were unable to graduate on time, withdrew, or were expelled.** This is because students are often pressured into performing time-consuming activities by the non-student members, such as distributing leaflets, protests, conducting petitions, holding elections, or even occupying the campus, school facilities, or classrooms without permission.



Do NOT pay fees to the Students' Self-Governing Association!

In the past, the Students' Self-Governing Association has tried to collect fees from non-member students, claiming that such fees are required to attend university. **THERE IS NO SUCH REQUIREMENT. Do not pay, even if asked to do so.**

The group known as **Sakyo** (Cultural Circle Steering Committee) presents itself as an extracurricular school organization, but like the **Students' Self-Governing Association** it is composed of both non-university members and students. Some of the following organizations, which are not properly registered and whose real activities are unclear, may be fronts for Sakyo. They sometimes **illegally occupy** campus club rooms. This has happened at Tohoku University on several occasions. The occupiers did not respond to the Gakuyu-kai's requests that they leave, instead conducting protests against the university.

The following are NOT official university organizations:

- The Student Support Committee ■ Buraku Liberation League ■ Cultural Circle Steering Committee
- Fujin Mondai Kenkyukai ■ Undobu Kaigi ■ Hangenpatsu Kodoinkai ■ Shakai Shiso Kenkyukai
- Kawauchi Ryo Mondai wo Kangaeru Kai ■ Believe 21 ■ Kindaishi Zemi ■ Haboho Kenkyukai
- Circle Rin ■ Buraku Kaiho Kenkyukai ■ Spaghetti Club ■ Chosenshi Kenkyukai ■ Green Club
- Shakai Kagaku Kenkyukai ■ Kawauchi Shikyoku ■ Asia Kenkyukai

▶▶▶ If you are approached...

- In addition to verifying the organization's real name and activities, research them online etc. before joining.

Note: Explanations of organizations that belong to the Gakuyu-kai can be found in the Student Life Guide distributed at the undergraduate orientation, the Circle/Club Information Pamphlet distributed at the welcome events, and online.

(Go to the Tohoku University website, select "Campus Life," then click on "Clubs & Circles")

- Do not readily give out personal information (address, phone number, email, SNS contact information etc.).
- Firmly refuse offers from any group whose identity or objectives are unclear to you.



University policy

- Tohoku University forbids organized activities by non-university groups on campus.
- Deceptive recruitment is unacceptable, no matter where it is conducted.
- However, the university does not deny or restrict any student's individual freedom of thought or belief.



Please be sensible and responsible representatives of Tohoku University!



Naturally, violating the law will result in harsh social and legal sanctions, as well as separate **disciplinary actions as per university regulations (expulsion, suspension, official reprimand, etc.)**.

Careless behavior could result in the **end of your university career, and possibly your professional career**. As members of the local community and students of Tohoku University, please **have consideration for others (respect their rights), observe Japan's laws, use common sense, and act responsibly**.

If this is your first time in Japan, please be aware that Japanese social norms and laws are probably different from those of your home country.

▶▶▶ Forbidden Behavior

- Sexual assault, including non-consensual photography, non-consensual touching, indecency with minors, stalking etc.
- Crimes such as theft, assault etc. ■ Online libel
- Use of drugs, such as marijuana, amphetamines, and "loophole drugs"
- Violating traffic laws while operating bicycles, motorcycles, etc.
- Giving alcohol to persons under 20 years of age, pressuring others to drink (alcohol harassment)
- Any other behavior that violates the law or social norms
- Violations of community standards, such as creating excessive noise, improperly disposing of garbage etc.



▶▶▶ The drinking/smoking age is 20 in Japan!

As of April 1, 2022, the age of adulthood was lowered to 18 in Japan. However, persons **under the age of 20 are not allowed to drink alcohol or use tobacco products**. Students may be under the impression that once they are college-age, they can drink and smoke. However, if you are under 20, please do not drink or smoke, regardless of the situation.

Alcohol



Every year, problems and accidents involving alcohol consumption by university students occur. **In the past Tohoku University students have been hospitalized for alcohol poisoning due to binge drinking. An entire student organization was suspended when it was learned that minors had been encouraged to drink at its welcome party.**

Alcohol can severely impair your judgment, leading you to do things you would never do normally. Drinking by minors in particular can lead to serious problems and accidents. To ensure a productive student life, please refrain from drinking alcohol, even if you are pressured to do so.

Smoking



Smoking (including vaping/e-cigarettes) is prohibited on all Tohoku University campuses. While minors are prohibited by law from smoking, even students who are of legal age cannot smoke on campus.

Some people start smoking out of curiosity, boredom, or because of peer pressure. However, if you are thinking of taking up smoking after you turn 20, we encourage you to consider its addictiveness and impact on your health.



Sendai City Ordinances



▶▶▶ Sendai bicycle safety bylaws

These bylaws created the following obligations/guidelines (①–⑤), including **mandatory enrollment in cyclist liability insurance**, for cyclists when riding **within the Sendai city limits**.

- ① Cyclists must follow the Road Traffic Law and all related regulations.
- ② Cyclists are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with bicycle safety information.
- ③ Cyclists must not endanger pedestrians or other cyclists.
- ④ Cyclists are encouraged to have their bicycles routinely inspected and maintained.
- ⑤ **Cyclists must enroll in cyclist liability insurance.**

Also, until now bicycle helmets have been required only for children under the age of 13, but starting April 1, 2023 all cyclists will be required to wear helmets, regardless of age.

When cycling, please wear a helmet to reduce the risk of injury in the event of an accident.

Cyclist insurance is partially covered under the Personal Accident Insurance (Gakkensai) and Supplementary Personal Liability Insurance for Students (Gakkenbai) that students (excluding international students) are required to join. However, Gakkensai coverage is very limited. Therefore, if you plan to use a bicycle in the city, we ask that you enroll in cyclist liability insurance to cover you in the event that you become liable for damages.

Examples of cyclist liability insurance:

■ TS Mark, provided by a bicycle shop

■ Cyclist insurance provided through an insurance company

■ Comprehensive Personal Liability and Accident Insurance for Students (Gakkensai Futaigakuso)

■ Personal Liability Insurance for Students provided by University Co-op

Note: Please check the details of your existing insurance before enrolling in cyclist insurance. You may already be covered under the personal liability provisions of your or your family's vehicle or fire insurance plan.

Cyclist liability insurance for international students is covered under the generally required Gakkensai and Inbound Futaigakusou* (Comprehensive Personal Liability and Accident Insurance for Students) policies, so please be sure to enroll in these. *Requires enrollment in Gakkensai.

▶▶▶ Ordinance against aggressive soliciting in downtown Sendai

This ordinance forbids touts, soliciting, waiting outside for customers, and loitering with the intent to solicit in designated areas of the city.

First-time violators of this ordinance are issued a warning. The second time, an injunction will be issued. **For the third offense, the violator will be fined up to JPY 50,000, and their name and address may be published.**

A Tohoku University student was actually reported for violating this ordinance, and was disciplined by the university.

When performing part-time work, make sure you understand your duties and do not perform any work that violates city ordinances or Japanese law.



Counseling & Advice

At the beginning of the school year, many incoming students face large changes of environment as they enter university and begin living in an unfamiliar place. Adjusting to a new life can be physically and mentally exhausting. This can lead to stress, which is a further burden on both the mind and body. Please do not hesitate to schedule counseling if you find yourself too tired to attend classes for multiple consecutive days, or if during the course of everyday university life you encounter problems, concerns, or anxieties.

🖥 Student Health Care Center ☎ **022-795-7829**

Center for Counseling and Disability Services

🖥 University Counseling Center

☎ **022-795-7833**

🖥 Disability Services Office

☎ **022-795-7696**

- Academic, career, or interpersonal concerns/anxieties
- Stress, mental/physical health
- Concerns/problems related to studies/student life
- Counseling/support for students with disabilities

🖥 Student Services Division ☎ **022-795-7818**

- Lost & Found (Kawauchi Kita Campus)
- Thefts/accidents
- Reporting suspicious recruitment activities
- Counseling for/reporting of student life issues