

Background

1946-1949

Prior to World War II, the City of Kobe had no municipal institution of higher education. Following the end of the Pacific War, there arose among the people of Kobe a determined movement to establish a city college befitting an international port city dedicated to the higher ideals of peace and culture. An early plan was developed, but ran into difficulties because the war-devastated city had not yet restored itself to its former prosperity. It was also the policy at the time of the American Occupation to discourage war-damaged cities from establishing institutions of higher education, because the expense would be beyond their means.

After repeated requests, however, an exception was made in the case of Kobe, and the city was allowed to establish a college for the study of foreign languages and cultures. On June 1, 1946, the Kobe Municipal College of Foreign Affairs was established with a three-year curriculum centered on English, Russian, and Chinese language studies.



1949 to the present

In the wake of Japan's steady recovery from the ruins of war, sweeping changes took place in the Japanese educational system. In April 1949, with official approval from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Kobe Municipal College of Foreign Affairs expanded into a full four-year university, and was renamed Kobe City University of Foreign Studies.

Since its inception, the University has been characterized by a commitment to growth and development. In 1953, the evening courses were added. As Japan's trade relations with Latin-American countries increased, a Spanish department was added.

In 1967, the university established a graduate program leading to a Master's degree in the departments of English, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish. In 1987, a new Department of International Relations was added, and later, in 1991, the university established graduate programs in International Relations and Japanese/Oriental Studies Course. In 1999, the latter was renamed Japanese and Asian Language and Cultural Studies Course. As the City of Kobe grew in population and economic importance, the idea of developing an "Academic Town" for its citizens took shape. Called "Gakuentoshi," the new academic community is located amid quiet surroundings overlooking scenic mountains in the western part of Kobe. In 1986, the university moved to its new campus and, along with several other universities, forms the center of the new academic town. In 1996, the university established a doctoral graduate school for international cultural studies. In 2004, the Graduate School of English Language Education and Research Course was added.



Chronology

- 1946 Kobe Municipal College of Foreign Affairs founded.
- 1949 Kobe City University of Foreign Studies established; replaces former College of Foreign Affairs.
- 1953 Evening Courses (English Department) are added.
- 1962 Spanish Department added as nation's relationship with Latin-American countries deepens.
- 1967 1967 two-year graduate programs in English, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish established. Graduating students awarded a degree in Master of Arts.
- 1986 The University relocates to a new campus in "Academic Town" in the northwestern part of Kobe.
- 1987 Department of International Relations added, increasing the number of University departments to five.
- 1991 Two new graduate programs established: Japanese/Oriental Studies Course and International Relations Course. In 1999, the former was renamed the Japanese and Asian Languages and Cultural Studies Course.
- 1995 Early in the morning of January 17th, the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake occurred. It struck the southern parts of Hyogo Prefecture, and destroyed the central and eastern areas of Kobe, causing tremendous damage. Damage to the University, however, was light, as it is situated in a western suburb of the city.
- 1996 The University established a three-year doctoral program in International Cultural Studies.
- 1999 The University and several other universities and colleges situated in "Academic Town" create a consortium through which students can take courses for transferable credit. They also have access to "Unity," a conveniently located building of classrooms for common use.
- 2004 A new graduate program established: English Language Education and Research Course.
- 2007 Turned into an independent administrative university.



UNITY