

Kwansei Gakuin University  
IBM Japan

To Members of the Press

**Kwansei Gakuin University and IBM Japan Launch the "AI Talent Development Program: Virtual Learning Edition" for Companies, Local Governments, and Universities: Aiming to Reach 50,000 Annual Attendees by Fiscal Year 2024, Contributing to the Creation of AI Talent**

April 27, 2021

Kwansei Gakuin University (led by President Osamu Murata and located in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture) has developed the [AI Talent Development Program: Virtual Learning Edition \(KGAI-VL\)](#) together with IBM Japan (led by General Manager Akio Yamaguchi and headquartered in Chuo, Tokyo), and will launch this program starting in July 2021 as a paid service for companies, local governments, and universities. KGAI-VL includes three courses (each lasting about 20 hours) titled "AI for Beginners," "Introduction to Application Design for AI Solutions," and "Introduction to Data Science for AI Solutions." These courses are all offered online in an on-demand format. KGAI-VL also features a chatbot built with [IBM Watson Assistant](#) that answers questions from learners. This means that anyone belonging to a partner company or local government can take these courses whenever and wherever they are, as many times as they wish. Kwansei Gakuin University will launch this program for companies, local governments, and universities with the aim to reach 50,000 annual attendees by fiscal 2024 and to contribute to the creation of AI talent.

As digital transformation continues to accelerate, there is a desperate shortage of AI talent worldwide. In Japan, experts have warned that in 2030, [the shortage of AI talent will reach up to 790 thousand people](#).<sup>\*1</sup> The Japanese government has established the [AI Strategy 2019](#)<sup>\*2</sup> as a crucial national policy. This strategy seeks to foster AI literacy in 500 thousand university and technical college students and 1 million working adults every year. AI technology has brought the world to a significant turning point in history, with rapid changes occurring in the structure of society and in work styles. Kwansei Gakuin University similarly encountered a large hurdle in educating talent who could propel digital transformation. With technological advances in AI and automation, the set of essential skills and abilities changes on a daily basis. IBM Japan has established three key measures—driving digital transformation, co-creating new businesses through advanced

technology, and nurturing IT and AI talent—and has engaged in initiatives to eliminate the shortage of AI talent, such as by expanding internal training programs for employees and partners, providing services with the social contribution program [SkillsBuild](#) for re-skilling people in the workforce, and building a [public-private collaborative education model](#).

In this context, Kwasei Gakuin University started a [collaborative project](#) with IBM Japan in 2017 to train talent who have knowledge in AI and data science, and who have the ability to solve real-world issues by utilizing this knowledge. Through this project, it developed the "[AI Talent Development Program](#)." This program places emphasis on practical activities, incorporating the academic insight from Kwasei Gakuin University as well as the advanced case studies from many different social implementations of AI by consultants and data scientists at IBM Japan. The "[AI Talent Development Program](#)" has 10 courses and has been available for all students since April 2019 regardless of major. In fiscal 2021, the three fundamental courses, "AI for Beginners," "Introduction to Application Design for AI Solutions," and "Introduction to Data Science for AI Solutions," were converted into e-learning programs and offered to students as KGAI-VL. The KGAI-VL version of the "AI for Beginners" course that aims to nurture AI literacy saw 2,071 registered students in its first Spring semester, demonstrating the high level of interest that students show toward AI.

Announced today, KGAI-VL features three courses, "AI for Beginners," "Introduction to Application Design for AI Solutions," and "Introduction to Data Science for AI Solutions," with the same content as the program held on campus. This program provides guidance in audio with subtitles, and includes explanation from lecturers, demo videos, online seminars, time-limited project research sessions, random tests, and many other features in an online platform.\*<sup>3</sup> To maximize the effectiveness of learning, Kwasei Gakuin University and IBM Japan have built a system using [IBM Watson Assistant](#) where a chatbot can answer questions from learners, letting people take the courses at any time and in any location. Each course lasts for about 20 hours. Learners pass the course if they attain a suitable score in all the online tests\*<sup>4</sup> (with questions set randomly) assigned for each section, whereupon they are issued with a certificate and an Open Badge.\*<sup>5</sup> The fee for each course is 20,000 yen per year (22,000 yen including tax), and 6,000 yen (6,600 yen including tax) when taking the same course again for the second year onward, encouraging people to engage in continuous learning to reinforce their knowledge. Some 5,000 adults from the workplace are expected to enroll in this program in fiscal 2021, and

1,500 employees from the Daido Life Insurance headquarters will take courses starting this July.

From fiscal 2022 onward, three new courses titled "Practical Seminar in AI Applications A (Web Application Design Using Java)," "Practical Seminar in AI Applications B (Machine Learning and Deep Learning Using Python)," and "Practical Seminar in AI Applications C (Web Design)," will be added on a gradual basis, and a total of six courses will be available in fiscal 2024. Going forward, this program will be proposed to companies, local governments, and universities,<sup>\*6</sup> and from fiscal 2022 onward it will be rolled out for adults in the workforce, high school students, and other users. Kwansei Gakuin University and IBM Japan will expand the number of annual attendees to 50,000 by fiscal 2024, thereby contributing to the creation of AI talent.

\*1: Reference: The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, *The Shortage of IT Human Resources*

[https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/it\\_policy/jinzai/houkokusyo.pdf](https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/it_policy/jinzai/houkokusyo.pdf)

\*2: Reference: The Cabinet Office, *AI Strategy 2019*

<https://www.maff.go.jp/j/kanbo/tizai/brand/attach/pdf/ai-15.pdf>

\*3: This service uses Learning Ware, an LMS provided by ProSeeds, so there is no need for companies, local governments, or universities to install a system on premises.

\*4: The passing grade for online tests can be changed, and restrictions on fast-forwarding or skipping lectures can also be removed through configuration. However, certificates will not be awarded if the configuration has been changed in this way.

\*5: Open Badges are digital certificates managed by Open Badge Network using blockchain technology.

\*6: Contact Kwansei Gakuin University for details on pricing for universities.

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