



A monthly newsletter featuring updates and highlights related to J-PEAKS.

# Niigata Univ. J-PEAKS **NOW** Vol.2

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**12**

## REPORT

### Opening Symposium and Ceremony Held on December 18 for the “Brain and Life” Innovation Hub

The “Brain and Life” Innovation Hub (BIH) was completed in August 2025 under a national program supporting industry–academia–government collaboration among regional research universities. The hub serves as an open innovation platform in health and life sciences, including the “Brain and Life” focus area of J-PEAKS.

To mark its launch, a symposium and opening ceremony were held on December 18, 2025, under the theme “From the Region to the World: Creating Health and Life Innovation through Industry–Academia–Government Collaboration.”

This issue features photo highlights from the event.



#### Part 1: “Brain and Life” Innovation Hub (BIH) Launch Symposium

The event was held at Nakata Memorial Hall at Asahimachi Campus and brought together approximately 110 participants from industry, academia, and government (80 in person and 30 online).



After opening remarks by Executive Vice President Kazushige Kawabata, four invited guests—including Masaaki Nishijyo, Director-General of the Science and Technology Policy Bureau at MEXT—shared messages expressing their expectations for the University. A congratulatory video message was also delivered by the Director of the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).



Following an overview by President Tatsuo Ushiki and a research presentation by Professor Akiyoshi Kakita, Ms. Yoko Kageyama of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. delivered a keynote lecture titled “Industry Perspectives on the ‘Brain and Life’ Innovation Hub (BIH).” She introduced the AminoIndex® Risk Screening (AIRS), developed through joint research with Professor Takeshi Ikeuchi, and shared expectations for future collaboration in “Brain and Life” as well as “Food and Health”.

The session concluded with an active Q&A, followed by closing remarks from Executive Vice President Kuni Sueyoshi, bringing Part 1 to a successful close.

#### Part 2: BIH Opening Ceremony

After moving to the BIH, President Tatsuo Ushiki delivered opening remarks, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Masaaki Nishijyo, a representative of Niigata Governor Hideyo Hanazumi, President Ushiki, and Professor Akiyoshi Kakita. A commemorative photo was taken around an illustration of the BIH created by President Ushiki.

Beginning in February next year, BIH facilities will open in phases, including the Office for Life Innovation and a co-working space on the first floor, rental labs on the second floor, and the Center for Human Brain Resource Initiative (ChBRI) on the third and fourth floors. Despite ongoing equipment installation, the preview tour drew strong interest, including from the media.

Part 2 concluded with closing remarks by Executive Vice President Toshiyuki Someya. We sincerely thank all participants and contributors for helping BIH take its first successful step.



**Niigata University will host “J-PEAKS WEEK” in September 2026!**

Niigata University will host “Niigata University J-PEAKS WEEK,” a series of J-PEAKS–related events highlighting the University’s research strengths and ongoing reforms through interactive, dialogue-focused programs. More details coming soon!

## PROJECT

## Collaboration in Action: Updates from the New J-PEAKS Centers

Niigata University's J-PEAKS is advancing the establishment of four new centers to foster research outcomes and innovation across priority areas, disciplines, and industry. This issue highlights collaborative initiatives already underway with domestic and international research partners.

### 1 Brain Research Institute + Center for Human Brain Resource Initiative (ChBRI)

[Opening April 2026 on BIH 3F-4F]

Joint Japan-India Neuroscience Symposium  
Held (September 9)

Through research exchanges and tours with researchers from the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) and the Centre for Neuroscience (CNS) at IISc, we confirmed plans for joint labs, collaboration in medicine and health, student exchange, and strengthened neuroscience research.

<https://www.niigata-u.ac.jp/en/news/18666/>



### 3 Sakeology Center + Food & Health Innovation Center (FHI)

[Opening January 2026 on Collab Research Bldg. No.2 1F-2F]

J-PEAKS Collaboration Kickoff Meeting with the  
University of Bordeaux Held (September 24)

We welcomed Professor Patrick Lucas from the Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences (ISVV) at the University of Bordeaux and confirmed plans to expand collaboration beyond sake and wine studies. Niigata University also shared an overview of FHI and research on eating and swallowing.

<https://www.niigata-u.ac.jp/j-peaks/news/956802/>

(Available in Japanese only)



### 2 AI and Big Data Science Integration Research Core (AB-Core) [Opening on Former Education Bldg. 9F]

Smart Home Research Visits to the University of  
Sherbrooke and Université de Montréal-  
Affiliated Geriatrics Institute (August 19-21)

To support AB-Core initiatives, researchers from Niigata University visited the two institutions to discuss collaboration and future prospects in smart home and data science, with insights now informing preparations for experimental facilities on campus.

<https://www.niigata-u.ac.jp/j-peaks/news/956092/>  
(Available in Japanese only)



### 4 International Rice Co-Creation Innovation Center for Climate and Environmental Resilience (IRICE)

[Opening April 2026 on Agriculture Mechanical Eng. Bldg.]

Exchange Meeting with Tokyo University of  
Agriculture and Technology at Niigata University  
Centers (October 29)

Five representatives from Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, including Liaison Officer Akinori Yamanaka and Professor Shunsuke Adachi, visited Niigata University to discuss overseas sake brewing and rice cultivation in Hawaii and Vietnam, reaffirming collaboration as J-PEAKS-selected universities.

<https://www.niigata-u.ac.jp/j-peaks/news/987942/>  
(Available in Japanese only)



## UPDATE

## Call for Proposals to Open in April 2026: Strategic Leap Program (1st Stage)\*

(\*The internal call for proposals previously known as the "J-PEAKS Fund" has been renamed the "Strategic Leap Program.")

Preparations for the call are underway. The program has two key objectives:

- To generate outcomes, including publications, external funding, and innovation;
- To promote effective, university-wide use of new centers and strengthen collaboration with domestic and international partners.

Use of the new centers is required. Further details will be shared on the J-PEAKS website.

## ● J-PEAKS Mini Column—Voices from the Field ●

We are pleased to present the second issue of J-PEAKS NOW. Since assuming this role with the launch of the program in April, time has flown by, and even the inaugural issue feels recent. A recent J-PEAKS survey achieved a response rate of over 50% at Niigata University—well above the overall average. We sincerely thank all who participated. As the survey continues in future years, we remain committed to ensuring that faculty and staff can clearly experience the program's impact.

As the year draws to a close, a research exchange meeting with our partner institution, Chubu University, is scheduled for the 26th. We look forward to sharing more updates on J-PEAKS activities in the coming year and appreciate your continued support. (YS)

## ● Contact & Website ●

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### ○Niigata Univ. J-PEAKS Website

<https://www.niigata-u.ac.jp/j-peaks/>

Updates on J-PEAKS-related events and activities are available here.



### ○Niigata Univ. J-PEAKS Internal Website

<https://app.cais.niigata-u.ac.jp/shurl/fw/2PLWiy>

To support timely information sharing and ensure transparency, materials such as the program's overall design, budget allocations, and meeting documents are available to internal users. For more detailed information, please scan the QR code.

