

Kyoto University's Award-Winning Research

“There is a need to encourage long-term research, even if we don't know where it will lead us, nor foresee its applications.”

Kenichi Fukui

Kyoto University is acknowledged as one of the most accomplished research-oriented universities in Asia. The validity of that reputation is testified by the accolades conferred on our alumni and researchers, most notably seven Nobel Prize laureates who undertook vital research during their time at the university. In addition to those awards, several other Kyoto University faculty members have received respected accolades, including two Fields Medalists and one recipient of the Gauss Prize.

Nobel Prize		
1949	Physics	Hideki Yukawa
1965	Physics	Shinichiro Tomonaga
1981	Chemistry	Kenichi Fukui
1987	Physiology and Medicine	Susumu Tonegawa
2001	Chemistry	Ryoji Noyori
2008	Physics	Makoto Kobayashi
2008	Physics	Toshihide Maskawa
Fields Medal		
1970	Mathematics	Heisuke Hironaka
1990	Mathematics	Shigefumi Mori
Gauss Prize		
2006	Mathematics	Kiyoshi Ito
Kyoto Prize		
1995	Basic Sciences	Chushiro Hayashi
1998	Basic Sciences	Kiyoshi Ito
2004	Advanced Technology	Alan Curtis Kay
2010	Advanced Technology	Shinya Yamanaka
Japan Prize		
2005	Information and Media Technology	Makoto Nagao
2005	Cell Biology	Masatoshi Takeichi
Lasker Award		
1987	Basic Medical Research	Susumu Tonegawa
1989	Basic Medical Research	Yasutomi Nishizuka
1998	Basic Medical Research	Yoshio Masui
2009	Basic Medical Research	Shinya Yamanaka

The philosophical outlooks of Hideki Yukawa and Kenichi Fukui in particular have left enduring legacies at Kyoto University. Yukawa was the first Japanese national to be awarded the Nobel Prize, receiving his award in 1949, shortly after the end of WWII. An active peace campaigner, Yukawa has provided a great deal of inspiration for subsequent generations of researchers in Japan.

Fukui firmly advocated that students should be encouraged to undertake original research early in their academic careers. This had a direct influence on Kyoto University's education system, which allows for early specialization. The university's encouragement of interdisciplinary collaboration was also influenced by Fukui, who famously held the belief that breakthroughs in science are produced by the unexpected fusion of remotely related fields.

“Those who explore an unknown world are travelers without a map; the map is the result of exploration. Their destination is not known to them, and the direct path that leads to it is not yet made.”

Hideki Yukawa