

ICU Global Youth Essay Competition

2025

For students from all over the world

International Christian University (ICU) and the Japan ICU Foundation invite youth from around the world to share their views on how to make society better. Each year, essay topics are selected in the areas of human rights and current events. For 2025, pre-register in mid-September and submit your essay between October 6 and 10. Apply to win great prizes!

Pre-register

September 9

Sept. 19

Learn more and apply online ▶



2025 Essay Questions



Select one of the following questions.

ICU's "Service-Learning" program has been a pioneer in Japan since 2002. This program focuses on learning through service (voluntary) activities, combined with reflection and prepares students to become life-long learners who think critically and act in service of others and world peace. Have you engaged in such service activities in your community? Based on your reflection, what did you learn about yourself and the community? To deepen your learning, what perspectives would you like to explore at university?

From its founding after World War II, ICU has been committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 focuses on the "right to freedom of opinion and expression." Have you ever had an experience that made you realize how important this right is? What can you do immediately—beyond posting on social media—to uphold this right? Start by looking for resources in your community.



<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

This essay competition abides by the ICU Policy on Academic Integrity and ICU's Perspective on the Use of Generative AI by Students.



<https://www.icu.ac.jp/en/academics/undergraduate/policy/>



Top Prize (1 winner)

100,000 yen gift card.



Second Prize (1 winner)

50,000 yen gift card.



Third Prize (10 winners)

A copy of the "Illustrated Universal Declaration of Human Rights in French, English, and Japanese" translated by ICU students.



TIPS

We are not looking for essays that propose the "correct" solutions that already exist. We want to learn about YOUR original ideas.

A good essay has a good thesis and organized arguments (introduction, body, and conclusion).

Pre-register

September 9
Sept. 19

Pre-registration: September 9 (Tue.), 11:00 JST - Sept. 19 (Fri.), 15:00 JST, 2025

Essay Submission: October 6 (Mon.), 9:00 JST - Oct. 10 (Fri.), 15:00 JST, 2025

Announcement of Winners: By January 12, 2026. Results will be announced on the ICU website and by email.

Participation fee: Free

Application Process:

All participants should pre-register and submit essays through the designated online form in PDF format in the periods specified above. Check the website for the essay format. Before submitting, ask one person to review and provide feedback on your essay (approx. 50 words). You must submit this feedback in your essay form.

<https://www.icu.ac.jp/en/news/GlobalYouthEssay2025.html>



Eligibility:

Applicants must be aged 15-17 as of September 19, 2025 (inclusive) and must currently reside outside of Japan. Students enrolled in post-secondary education as of September 19, 2025 are ineligible to apply.

Language: English

Word Limit: 650 words max.

Organizers:



ICU is a leading private university characterized by its bilingual (Japanese/English) liberal arts education in Tokyo, Japan. From its establishment in 1953, ICU has aimed to educate students in an international setting to be stewards of a just and peaceful world. Visit <https://www.icu.ac.jp>.



The Japan ICU Foundation is an independent educational foundation based in New York City. Its mission is to work with International Christian University to nurture global citizens who contribute to the well-being of humanity. Visit <https://www.jicuf.org/>.