HIRAKU-Global's contribution to Researcher+:

Sharing the lessons we are learning

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Outline

1. The HIRAKU-Global in a minute

2. Sharing 'our' good practices:

- Open communication channels
- Assessing development
- Flexible Program
- Be part of the Program
- Learn from others
- Adjust the activities to the intended target
- Online *vs* face-to-face
- Mentoring
- Internationalization

The HIRAKU-Global

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Home for Innovative Researchers and Academic Knowledge Users Driving Global Impact

- Part of MEXT's "*Strategic Professional Development Program for Young Researchers*".
- 10-year program (2019 ~ 2028).
- Support ≈ 60 HG researchers (HGRs) into becoming world-class researchers.

In the HIRAKU-Global we:

- Organize research-centric events.
- Provide training.
- ...
- Provide mentoring.
- Support international networking.

'Our' good practices

Open communication channels

The HG regularly conveys/collects useful information to/from the HGRs, via:

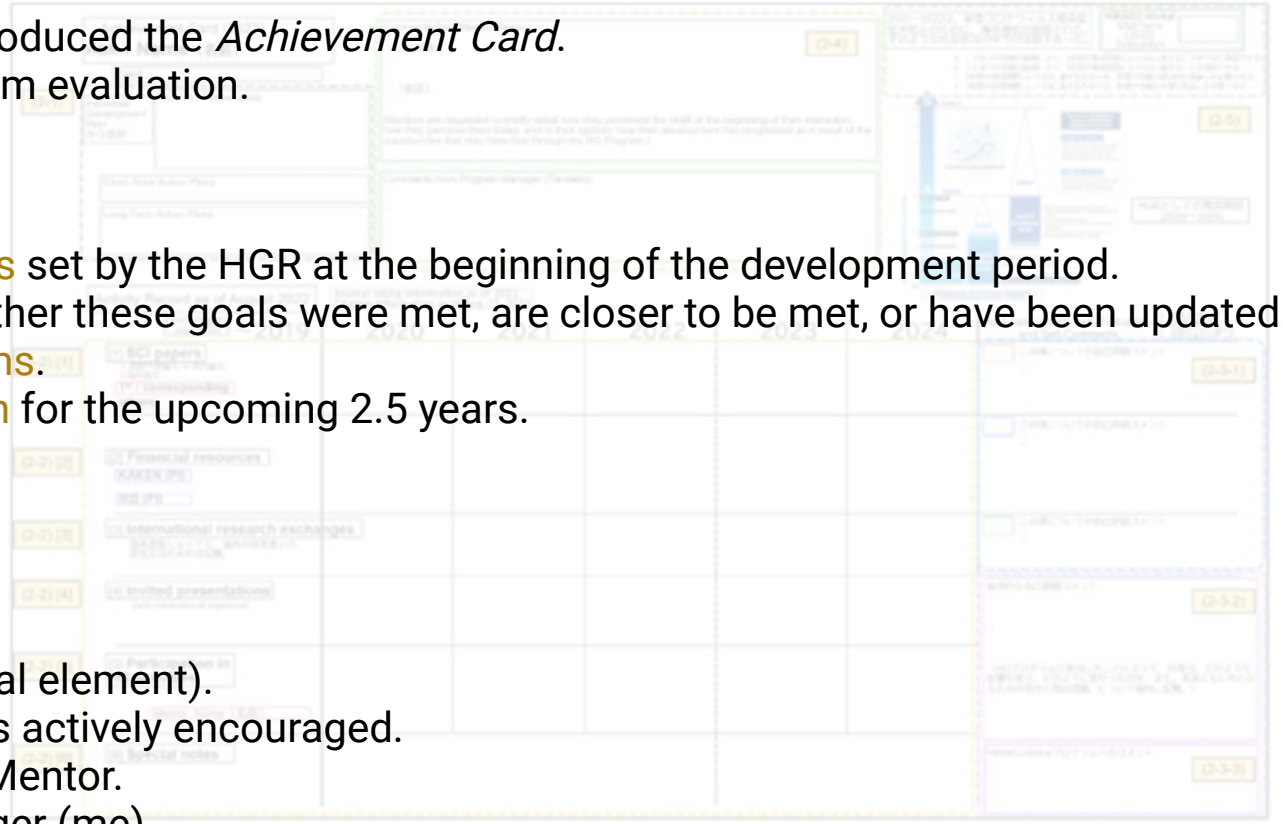
- Starter course
- Annual conference
- HG events (e.g., the HG Retreat, feedback forms)
- Email
- IDP
- HIRAKU-PF (https://hiraku.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/younger_platform/).

Knowing what to expect ahead of time helps all parties.

Good practice:
Share information clearly and in time, as much as possible.

Assessing development

HG has recently introduced the *Achievement Card*.
Used for the mid-term evaluation.



Goals:

- Revisit the goals set by the HGR at the beginning of the development period.
- Determine whether these goals were met, are closer to be met, or have been updated.
- Identify problems.
- Reflect and plan for the upcoming 2.5 years.

Persons involved:

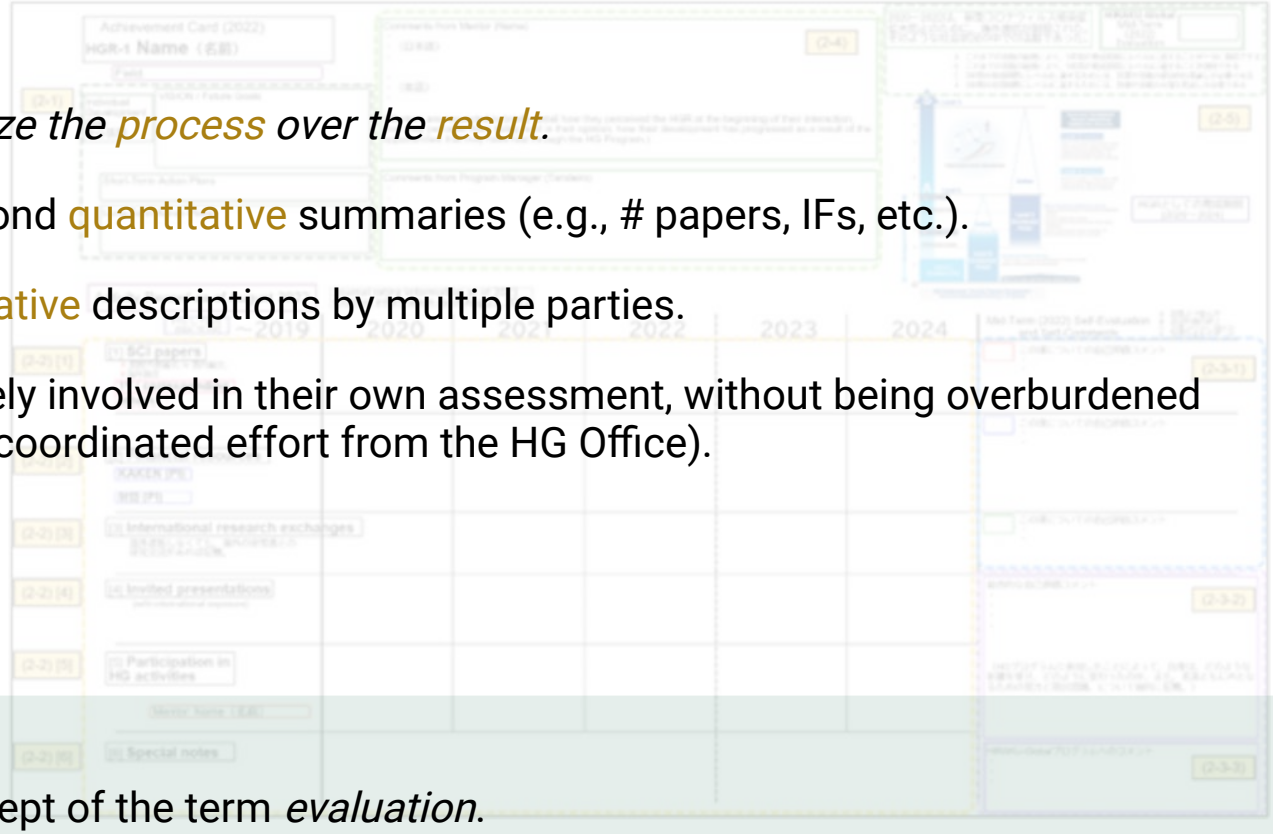
- The HGR (central element).
  Self-reflection is actively encouraged.
- The HGR's HG Mentor.
- Program Manager (me).
- Chair of the Evaluation Development Committee (Prof. Aida).

Assessing development

Crucial:

> *We emphasize the process over the result.*

- We go way beyond quantitative summaries (e.g., # papers, IFs, etc.).
- We value qualitative descriptions by multiple parties.
- HGRs are actively involved in their own assessment, without being overburdened (thanks to well coordinated effort from the HG Office).



Good practice:
Broaden the concept of the term *evaluation*.

Flexible Program

We partly choose Program activities following specific requests from the HGRs.

- Avoid hierarchical relationship.
- HGRs (also) know what they need.
- It helps each HGR to find their own path to success.

Good practice:
Listen to the ECRs. Cater to their needs.

Be part of the Program

HGRs are asked to:

- Make presentations.
- Engage in discussions.
- Intervene. Ask. Disagree.

In some case, we used research outputs from the HGRs as the starting point for discussion.
(Not easy to achieve on a large scale.)

Ideally, we discourage HGRs from being passive agents.

Good practice:
Foster active participation.

Learn from others

We try to learn from other researcher development environments:

- Advisory Board.
- Exchanges with URAs from other universities.

This is aligned with JST's efforts with Research^{+}.

Good practice:
Create opportunities to get inspired.
(And retribute whenever possible!)

Adjust the activities to the intended target

We are currently setting up an upcoming event.
It will be led by a foreign researcher.

I have been putting considerable effort into sensitizing the foreign researcher with respect to:

- Clarifying what is the current state of development of the HGRs.
- Choosing the most effective contents.
- Being mindful with respect to using the English language.

Whether this will work as we intend is still to be seen.
But that is what we are working towards to.

Good practice:
Cater each event to the intended target, as much as possible.

Online *vs* face-to-face

HIRAKU-Global = Ehime Uni. + Hiroshima Uni. + Tokushima Uni. + Yamaguchi Uni.
Therefore, the HG holds most of its events online.

Online events work fine in general.
They do allow for different types of interactions.

But, face-to-face events have unique features that are hard to replicate behind a screen.

This was also shared with me by other researcher developers abroad.

Good practice:
Consider setting up a hybrid (online, face-to-face) set of events.

Mentoring

The availability of mentors is one of the strongest suits of the HG.

HG Mentors provide:

- Guidance.
- Advice.
- Perspective.
- (Constructive) criticism.
- Another opportunity for the HGR to express him/herself.

We are extremely privileged for being able to collaborate with exceptional mentors.

Good practice:
Provide mentoring.

Internationalization

In a globalized world, we need to think beyond our own borders.

The HG, through the generous funding from MEXT, is able to sponsor international research exchanges.

The challenge, for the HG universities and all Japanese universities, is to work on sustainable ways to continue such practices after the project is over.

Good practice:
Promote internationalization.

地方協奏による世界トップクラスの研究者育成

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