

考試科目	英文寫作	系所別	英國語文學系	考試時間	2月5日(一)第1節
------	------	-----	--------	------	------------

Part I. Read the passage and answer the following questions :

In the constantly evolving landscape of higher education, global apprehension regarding the downsizing and closure of humanities and social science departments, as exemplified by the educational developments in Japan, continues to resonate. The directive from the Japanese government, urging universities to adopt a "more practical, vocational education," underscores this transformative moment, eliciting profound concerns among academics worldwide. The situation in Japan reverberates globally, reflecting ongoing debates on the intrinsic value of humanities. Comparable discussions about the significance of humanities versus practical subjects are unfolding in various countries, including the USA, EU, and UK.

Over 50 Japanese universities undertook the closure or downsizing of their humanities departments after the 2015 directive from Education Minister Hakuban Shimomura. This directive urged higher education institutions to provide a "more practical, vocational education" aligned with societal needs. The ensuing ripple effect has impacted higher education institutions worldwide, with numerous universities witnessing the downsizing and closure of humanities departments. Institutions such as Northumbria University, Ulster University, the University of Nottingham, and the University of Surrey have grappled with challenges, leading to the closure or significant reduction of departments due to budgetary constraints. Simultaneously, higher education funding mechanisms in the UK have been accused of exhibiting bias against the humanities, diminishing the importance of esoteric research. This crisis has also permeated the United States, as evidenced by West Virginia University's decision in 2023 to discontinue 28 majors, including French and Russian, along with graduate majors in Education. This move, involving a 12% reduction in professors, is attributed to budgetary shortfalls, declining enrollment, waning student interest in humanities courses, and parental pressure for career-oriented majors. Similar reductions are anticipated across the United States, particularly in rural areas where budget constraints and declining enrollments are more prevalent. Critics argue that these shifts may sap states of intellectual prowess, resulting in fewer well-rounded leaders and citizens. Other state universities, particularly those in rural areas, are making analogous choices, as exemplified by Missouri Western State University eliminating numerous majors and minors, and the State University of New York at Potsdam cutting degree programs, including art history, dance, French, Spanish, and theater.

Student preferences also appear to be shifting away from the humanities. Data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics reveals a decline in the percentage of bachelor's degrees conferred in the humanities by four-year institutions, dropping from 16.8% in the 2010-11 school year to 12.8% in 2020-2021. Prestigious institutions like Harvard University have not been immune to these trends. Harvard experienced a notable decline in humanities concentrators, particularly among incoming freshmen, with the number falling 9 percentage points in the previous decade. Despite debates on the future of the humanities, the number of humanities concentrators at Harvard has stabilized, while concentrations in Computer Science have surged. However, the proportion of freshmen intending to concentrate in the humanities at Harvard remains lower

考試科目	英文寫作	系所別	英國語文學系	考試時間	2月5日(一)第1節
------	------	-----	--------	------	------------

than in previous years. In the 2019-2020 academic cycle, 13.5% of students graduated with a degree in the arts and humanities, compared to 21.1% in the 2010-2011 academic cycle. The Crimson freshman survey for the class of 2025 reported only 7.1% anticipating a concentration in the humanities, with 49.1% intending to pursue sciences or engineering.

This shift has prompted serious concerns among multiple colleges about their humanities departments, fearing a loss of humanity value and crucial critical thinking skills imparted by humanities education. This transformation raises fundamental questions about the university's mission, whether it should respond to market forces and popular preferences and base educational decisions on supply and demand. Many educators oppose a shift towards viewing higher education solely as a cost-benefit calculation, emphasizing the potential loss of arts and humanity values that have been integral to university education since ancient Greece. As Professor Di Bartolomeo of West Virginia contends, cutting departments that bring diversity of opinion, cultural background, and experience to university education risks undermining the fundamental values of education.

1. Discuss the impact of the downsizing and closure of humanities departments, as highlighted by developments in Japan. How has this trend affected higher education of Taiwan, and what are the implications for academia? Please elaborate your reflection or insights to write a paragraph of 200 words. (25%)
2. What is your opinion on whether universities should respond to market forces and popular preferences, and base educational decisions on supply and demand? (25%)
3. Please write a 500-word essay arguing that Humanities are indispensable. You are encouraged to reference information from the provided reading or incorporate additional evidence to support your arguments. (50%)

備

註

- 一、作答於試題上者，不予計分。
- 二、試題請隨卷繳交。