

MARCH 2026

J U A A

# NEWSLETTER

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## ● About this Newsletter

The Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) publish the electronic newsletter annually to engage with our national and international stakeholders, including quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions. This newsletter highlights recent developments in our accreditation, research project outcomes, international collaborations, and other information.

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please email [intl@juaa.or.jp](mailto:intl@juaa.or.jp).



# Message from the President

As I enter my second term as President of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), having assumed this role in 2023, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my greetings.

First, I am delighted to report that the INQAAHE Conference 2025, hosted by JUAA, was concluded with great success. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the organization of the conference, as well as to the participants from Japan and abroad. The conference served as a pivotal platform for international dialogue on how quality assurance in higher education can proactively address rapid societal changes, facilitating the sharing of diverse perspectives rooted in various institutional and national contexts. These discussions provided invaluable insights into the future of Japanese higher education and underscored the significance of accurately communicating international trends in quality assurance within the domestic sector.

The landscape of higher education in Japan is undergoing a profound transformation. Founded in 1947 as a voluntary and autonomous organization established by members of the academic community, JUAA has consistently upheld its founding mission: to enhance the quality of universities in Japan through the voluntary efforts and mutual assistance of members. As the national system of certified evaluation and accreditation is currently under review and its institutional framework is evolving, JUAA's role has become more essential than ever. By supporting quality assurance initiatives led by universities themselves and presenting their outcomes in a manner that is highly regarded both domestically and internationally, JUAA continues to fulfill a vital function. In this context, I am once again strongly reminded of the importance of returning to our origins and placing our contribution to higher education at the center of our activities.

Based on this recognition, JUAA has built our accreditations grounded in sound theory, which is an approach we have long emphasized. In addition to accreditation and evaluation activities, we have continuously undertaken multiple research projects each year through the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (RIQAHE), publishing their outcomes as reports and disseminating findings both in Japanese and English. As part of these efforts, we published a special issue of the "University Evaluation Review" this year, featuring papers primarily based on presentations delivered at the INQAAHE Conference 2025. Through this publication, we aim to share the outcomes of the conference with member universities and other stakeholders, and to contribute to the further development of quality assurance in Japanese higher education.



Furthermore, as globalization accelerates, ensuring the international validity and reliability of higher education has become a collective challenge for nations worldwide. Alongside cross-border collaborations such as dual-degree programs, we are seeing the rapid expansion of new educational models, including micro-credentials and the integration of AI into teaching, learning, and evaluation. In this context, the international credibility of quality assurance agencies themselves, which are responsible for assuring the quality of such initiatives, is being scrutinized more than ever.

JUAA has long engaged in international quality assurance practices, particularly through joint accreditation and collaboration with partner organizations under memoranda of understanding. In addition, JUAA is the only certified evaluation and accreditation agency in Japan to have undergone an external review by INQAAHE (alignment with the Guidelines of Good Practice), through which its activities and operations, including accreditation processes, have been recognized as meeting international standards. Building on these achievements, JUAA will continue to deepen cooperation with our international partners, fulfill our responsibilities as an internationally trusted quality assurance agency, and share the outcomes of its activities both domestically and internationally. In doing so, JUAA will continue to contribute to the enhancement of higher education quality, particularly in Asia.

President  
**Dr. Yuko Takahashi**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yuko Takahashi". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

# Message from the Executive Director

## Navigating the Future of Quality Assurance in Japan (Recent Developments in Accreditation and Evaluation in Japan)

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

It is a great honor to have assumed the position of Executive Director of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) as of April 2025. I am fully committed to ensuring that JUAA remains a steadfast organization supporting our member institutions, contributing to the advancement of quality assurance both within Japan and internationally.

In this foreword, I would like to outline the current institutional reforms in Japan concerning quality assurance in higher education, and share my perspectives on the direction JUAA intends to pursue in response.

Since the introduction of the certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA) system in 2004, Japan's system of external quality assurance for universities has been in place for more than twenty years. While the system has matured, it has also reached a critical juncture. Stakeholders have increasingly pointed to several pressing challenges:

- **Administrative Burden:** Both universities and accrediting agencies are facing significant operational pressures associated with the evaluation process.
- **Consistency Across Agencies:** With five different institutional accreditation agencies currently operating in Japan, ensuring consistency and comparability in evaluation results under a shared quality assurance framework remains a challenge.
- **Public Awareness:** There is a recognized need to improve public understanding of the role and value of accreditation.

In response to these issues, the Central Council for Education of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released a pivotal report on February 21, 2025. This report proposes several transformative shifts, including:

1. **Streamlining Processes:** Reducing the administrative burden on institutions.
2. **Qualitative Depth:** Introducing more nuanced, qualitative evaluations at the undergraduate and graduate levels to further enhance the quality of teaching and research.
3. **Data-Driven Evaluation:** Integrating quantitative analysis based on educational and research data.
4. **Staged Disclosure:** Presenting the quality of education in a clearer, staged manner, specifically highlighting student competency development during their studies.

In line with the policies proposed in the report, the Central Council for Education has established a working group, which has been deliberating on the new accreditation and evaluation system. As of late December 2025, the specific direction of the system has not yet become clear.

Regardless of how discussions within the Central Council unfold, I firmly believe that JUAA will continue to conduct evaluations that are fair to all universities and supportive of their autonomous efforts for improvement.

Drawing upon the expertise JUAA has cultivated over the past eighty years, we will continue to refine our quality assurance methodologies by incorporating domestic and international best practices. To this end, close collaboration with our partner agencies, member institutions, and all stakeholders is more vital than ever.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support and partnership as we strive to remain an organization worthy of your trust and a leader in the global quality assurance community.



**Mr. Mamoru Tashiro**

Executive Director / Managing Trustee



# Accreditaion

As an organization certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) conducts 'Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation,' 'Professional Graduate School Certified Evaluation and Accreditation,' and 'Program Accreditation.'

# FY2025 Accreditation Results

The Board of Directors of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) has finalized the results of its FY2025 accreditation activities. We extend our sincere appreciation to the institutions that applied and to the reviewers who contributed their expertise throughout the process. A summary of the number of institutions reviewed and the accreditation decisions is provided below.

Type of Accreditaion		Number of Application	Decision
Institutional CEA	Universities	22	<b>Accredited: 20</b> Unaccredited: 2
	Universities (Supplementary Review)	1	<b>Accredited: 1</b> Unaccredited: 0
	Junior Colleges	1	<b>Accredited: 1</b> Unaccredited: 0
CEA for Professional Graduate Schools	Business	7	<b>Accredited: 7</b> Unaccredited: 0
	Public Policy	1	<b>Accredited: 1</b> Unaccredited: 0
	Public Health	1	<b>Accredited: 1</b> Unaccredited: 0
Program Accreditation	Veternary Medicine	4 (including 2 offering joint degree program)	<b>Accredited: 4</b> Unaccredited: 0
	Dentistry	4	<b>Accredited: 4</b> Unaccredited: 0

# Overview of the FY2025 Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

**By Ms. Miwako Tsuta**

Associate Director, Institutional Accreditation Division, Accreditation Department

From FY2025, the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (CEA) for universities and junior colleges has entered its fourth cycle. This year, JUAA reviewed 22 universities and one supplementary review (all private institutions), as well as one public junior college, through document reviews and site visits.

Building on previous cycles, which first focused on the establishment of internal quality assurance (IQA) systems (2nd cycle), and then on their effectiveness (3rd cycle), the fourth cycle places greater emphasis on IQA grounded in learning outcomes and on its practical functioning. In particular, to promote student-centered learning, JUAA examines whether institutions clearly define expected learning outcomes, deliver education aligned with those outcomes, assess student achievement, and use the results to drive continuous improvement.

While many institutions have made progress in articulating and mapping learning outcomes to curricula, challenges remain. In several cases, academic management within IQA systems was not yet sufficiently developed, and assessment results of learning outcomes were not fully utilized for educational improvement.

This year also saw the first application under JUAA's flexible measures framework. Under this approach, evaluation focuses on institution-specific priorities and assesses their outcomes and impact. Although eligibility is limited, more institutions are expected to adopt this framework in the coming year. JUAA will continue to support institutional distinctiveness and the realization of mission and goals through this initiative.

Several new practices were also introduced in the fourth cycle. JUAA expanded stakeholder input by collecting feedback from enrolled students, including graduate students, through web-based surveys, and by conducting interviews with external stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners, during site visits. These efforts have enriched the evaluation process by incorporating broader perspectives.

To better highlight institutional strengths, JUAA has refined its reporting format. Commendations are now presented in two categories, "Outstanding Initiatives" and "Notable Strengths," and each of the ten standards is rated on a four-point scale (S, A, B, C), alongside narrative comments. These enhancements are intended to improve clarity and promote wider recognition of good practices. Selected cases will be published on the JUAA website around May.

Amid ongoing national discussions on the future of the CEA system led by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), JUAA remains committed to its mission. Through its accreditation activities, JUAA will continue to support the enhancement of education and learning outcomes across higher education institutions in Japan.



# Overview of the FY2025 Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation

**By Mr. Kei Sato**

Associate Director, Program Accreditation Division, Accreditation Department

## 1. Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (CEA) for Professional Graduate Schools

In FY2025, the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) accredited all nine professional graduate school programs that applied: seven in business, one in public policy, and one in public health.

The evaluations identified a number of notable strengths. One business school were commended for a outstanding initiative, while eight programs were recognized for distinctive features across all three fields. A common strength was the effective use of case-based education to integrate theory and practice, supporting the development of highly skilled professionals and highlighting the distinctive nature of professional graduate education.

At the same time, all programs received suggestions for improvement, while two programs (both in business) were issued recommendations requiring prompt and concrete action to ensure full compliance with relevant requirements. Institutions are expected to address the suggestions and continue strengthening both compliance and the development of their distinctive features.

## 2. Program Accreditation

JUAA also conducts program accreditation in veterinary medicine and dentistry as a form of third-party review separate from the national CEA system.

In FY2025, all eight applying universities were accredited: four in veterinary medicine (including two joint programs) and four in dentistry.

The evaluations again highlighted a range of strengths. Four universities received commendations, and all were recognized for distinctive features. These included improvements in clinical education driven by efforts to obtain international accreditation in veterinary medicine, as well as, in the field of dentistry, initiatives to foster interprofessional collaboration skills.

At the same time, all institutions received suggestions for improvement, while two universities were issued recommendations. The publication of these results is expected to further promote the sharing and wider recognition of effective practices across institutions.

## 3. Future Directions

Discussions are currently underway on the future of the national CEA system, shifting the focus from the current mandatory institutional-level accreditation toward a more integrated framework. This proposed model would require institutions to undergo both institutional and program-level reviews based on their applications, whether these are conducted by a single accreditation body or through a combination of specialized ones.

Program-level evaluation builds on the experience accumulated through CEA for professional graduate schools and existing program accreditation. Its role is expected to become increasingly important as these approaches continue to evolve.

JUAA will continue to support the improvement of educational quality through its evaluation activities and contribute to greater public recognition of educational quality through the dissemination of evaluation results.

At the same time, feedback received this fiscal year highlighted the need to improve the clarity of results and reduce the burden on reviewers. JUAA is examining measures to address these issues and to further strengthen the sustainability and robustness of its accreditation framework.





# Research and Enhancing QA in Higher Education

To enhance the quality of universities in Japan and facilitate international cooperation in education and research, the Association conducts extensive research on domestic and global higher education, primarily through our Research Institute for Higher Education. We disseminate these findings to the public through comprehensive reports.

# Study Programs 2025: Developing Quality Assurance Professionals

Since 2012, JUAA has been continuously offering Study Programs with the aim of systematically developing quality assurance personnel responsible for the establishment, operation, and improvement of internal quality assurance (IQA) systems at member universities and junior colleges.

In this financial year, we organized the Study Programs at two levels, Basic and Advanced, based on participants' assigned duties and their level of familiarity with quality assurance. Both programs were delivered by invited lecturers.



Professor Kawakami delivering a lecture in the JUAA office

The Study Program Basic, titled “Practical Approaches and Tips for Effective Self-Assessment,” was designed for participants who are new to quality assurance or have limited experience and was held at the JUAA office on October 30, 2025. The program aimed to revisit the core concept of “demonstrated effectiveness of initiatives,” a key focus of JUAA’s Fourth Cycle Institutional Accreditation, and to translate this understanding into practical application. We welcomed Professor Tadashige Kawakami, Director of the Office for University Evaluation at Hosei University, and in his lecture, Professor Kawakami emphasized that self-assessments should not be conducted just because it is required but should be actively utilized as a substantive process that leads to improvements in learning outcomes and student achievement. He also highlighted the need for faculty, staff members, and students to engage actively and for clear evidence to demonstrate learning outcomes.



Professor Kawakami providing practical guidance to participants during the group activity

The subsequent workshop engaged participants in a three-stage group activity using self-assessment reports from their own universities as well as those from other universities represented by group members. In these sessions, participants shared findings on the current state of initiatives and IQA at their own universities, discussed the relationship between strengths, issues, and improvement measures, and organized evaluation perspectives, practical tools, and examples of outcomes. Through this hands-on approach, participants gained a practical understanding of how to enhance the effectiveness of self-assessment, identifying ways to strengthen quality assurance practices within their universities.



A group representative presenting their findings and discussion results to the participants



Professor Yamada delivering a lecture in the JUAA office

The Study Program Advanced took place on November 11, 2025, under the theme: “Linking the Assessment of Learning Outcomes to Educational Improvement: Recognizing Current Status and Taking the First Step for Improvement.” Designed for professionals with experience in quality assurance, the program aimed to deepen participants’ understanding of the current status of setting, assessing, and analyzing learning outcomes, and to apply these insights to identify institutional challenges and formulate actionable strategies for improving teaching and learning at their universities.

Professor Takeshi Yamada, Vice Director of the Educational Development Division at Kansai University, served as the instructor. Drawing on his institution’s extensive examples, he presented multifaceted examples illustrating practical methods for linking assessment to educational quality. His presentation addressed the development of assessment plans, the promotion of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), and university-wide initiatives for IQA. Professor Yamada also emphasized student-centric mechanisms, such as feedback loops at enrollment and graduation, alongside faculty development workshops. These initiatives aimed to enhance Institutional Research (IR) literacy and foster an organizational culture where data-driven insights lead to tangible human resource development.

In the subsequent workshop, participants engaged in group discussions focusing on the critical stages of the improvement cycle: designing assessments, visualizing results, and implementing data-driven changes. By sharing specific initiatives and outcomes from their respective institutions, participants gained insights into making self-assessment more effective.



Participants engaging in discussion on their respective IQA systems

The program concluded with plenary discussion addressing systematic issues such as data utilization, organizational structure, and the institutionalization of continuous improvement cycles. This session further solidified the participants’ ability to translate learning outcome data into tangible educational advancements.



A group representative presenting their findings and discussion results to the participants

# President Seminar 2025: Advancing Diversity through Socially Engaged Education

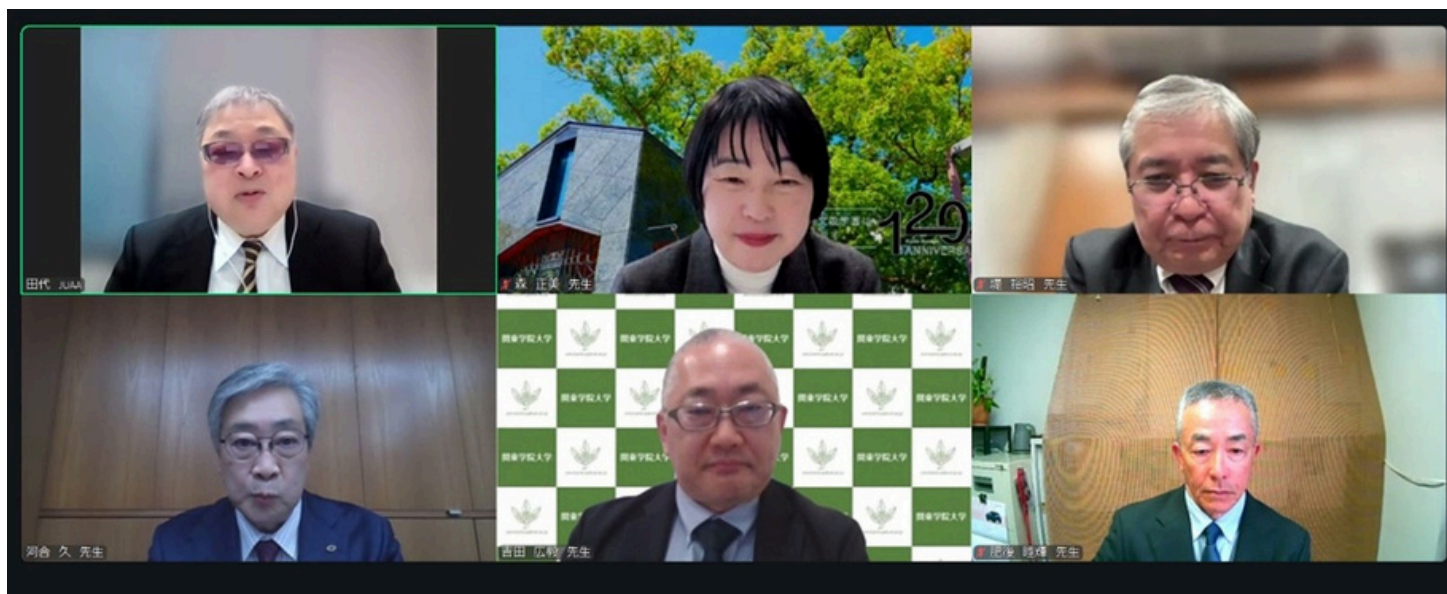
The President Seminar organized by the Japan University Accreditation Association provides a forum for university leaders to share institutional strategies and examine common challenges in higher education. The 2025 seminar focused on how universities can advance diversity through socially engaged education and institutional leadership in an era of expanding learning opportunities.

Following opening remarks by President Yuko Takahashi, the session features presentations from four institutions, followed by a panel discussion. The presentations highlighted various institutional practices that link community engagement with student learning:

First, Kyoto Bunkyo University introduced practiced-based education grounded in the philosophy of “tomo-iki” (emphasizing mutual recognition and shared flourishing), developed through sustained local partnerships. Building on the theme of regional impact, Prefectural University of Kumamoto presented its “Moyaist” program, which employs a staged approach to cultivating regional leaders by combining community engagement, leadership development, and global competences. Furthermore, the focus shifted to institutional governance at Kanto Gakuin University, where the approach is characterized a dedicated center promoting cross-disciplinary learning and systematic assessment of outcomes . Finally, Chubu Gakuin University, in partnership with Gifu University and Gifu City Women’s College, showcased the SPARK initiative, an interdisciplinary education model that addresses regional challenges through multi-university collaboration.

The panel discussion suggested that many initiatives originate in founding philosophies, institutional missions, or degree award policies, and are often institutionalized through the adoption of external funding programs, remaining as distinctive features even after such support concludes. In this context, diversity appeared to emerge not necessarily only from mechanisms such as admissions policies, but through sustained engagement with local communities, whereby forms of diversity already present in the region become more visible and clearly articulated. Participants also emphasized the importance of leadership, institution-wide coordination, and mechanisms to evaluate student learning within these initiatives.

The seminar underscored that advancing diversity through socially engaged education requires integrating community-based initiatives into institutional governance and quality assurance frameworks. It reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue on how universities can respond to complex societal needs while ensuring the quality and relevance of student learning.



From the top left, clockwise: Mamoru Tashiro, Executive Director of JUA (Program Chair); Masami Mori, President of Kyoto Bunkyo University (Case Presenter and Panelist); Hiroaki Tsutsumi, President of Kumamoto Prefectural University (Case Presenter and Panelist); Mutsuki Higo, Assistant to the President of Chubu Gakuin University (Case Presenter and Panelist); Hiroki Yoshida, Vice President of Kanto Gakuin University (Case Presenter and Panelist); Hisashi Kawai, President of Chuo University (Panel Moderator).

# Report on RIQAHE Research Projects

## "New English Resources Available!" – Introduction of the 5 archived reports.

We have recently published five English summaries on our website to share our findings with the global QA community.



### Approaches to Student Achievement Assessment (2019–2021)

**Focus:**

Integrating student achievement assessment (outcome-based) into internal quality assurance systems (process-based) and examining the role of accreditation in Japanese universities, based on a nationwide survey, interviews, and literature review.

**Key Finding:**

National universities implement more comprehensive assessment practices, but challenges remain in graduate programs and in defining clear learning outcomes in degree award policies. Assessment practices also vary by university type and size.

**Takeaway:**

This study highlights the importance of universities clearly defining learning outcomes in degree award policies, communicating them transparently to students and the public, and adopting flexible, discipline-sensitive assessment models. Furthermore, the findings point to a need for special attention to graduate programs, where internal quality assurance is often less developed.

[https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project\\_02.pdf](https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project_02.pdf)

### Teaching and Learning Management 2.0 (2021–2023)

**Focus:**

Examining faculty perceptions of national Teaching and Learning Management (TLM) policies, gaps between institutional frameworks and student experiences, and ways to improve undergraduate education through learner-centered, discipline-sensitive approaches.

**Key Finding:**

Awareness of TLM policies varies by discipline, rank, and role. Many faculty view TLM as a procedural burden due to workload, limited understanding, and fragmented support. Students often lack awareness of degree awarding policies, and visualization of learning outcomes is inconsistent.

**Takeaway:**

The analysis indicates that universities need to shift from compliance-focused approaches to learner-centered, discipline-sensitive TLM, promoting departmental ownership, streamline administrative tasks, fostering communication, and implementing faculty development initiatives. Furthermore, it is essential to embed student engagement to ensure learning outcomes are meaningful, transferable, and aligned with real-world needs.

[https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project\\_03.pdf](https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project_03.pdf)

### Effective Online Education and Evaluation Criteria (2019–2021)

**Focus:**

Identifying quality assurance standards, faculty support, and institutional strategies for effective online and hybrid education during and after COVID-19.

**Key Finding:**

Universities rapidly adopted online learning, but challenges remain in monitoring student learning, faculty workload, technical support, grading consistency, and student engagement. Support systems and infrastructure vary, and international QA agencies mostly retain traditional evaluation principles.

**Takeaway:**

Effective online education requires institutional support, faculty ICT training, reliable student help desks, and clear policies on grading, privacy, and copyright. The findings suggest that universities need to share best practices and collaborate with national and international frameworks to ensure sustainable, high-quality digital learning.

[https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project\\_01.pdf](https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project_01.pdf)

# Developing Competencies in Bachelor's Programs for Contemporary Society (2021-2023)

## Focus:

Examining how Japanese universities reform undergraduate education to develop competencies for 21st-century societal challenges (DX, sustainability, global awareness) and align them with employer expectations.

## Key Finding:

Universities advance curricula reforms through general education, liberal arts, and interdisciplinary clusters, leveraging faculty resources. Despite progress, employers may not fully recognize efforts, and indirect communication limits alignment with workforce needs. Challenges include limited human resources, variable faculty engagement, and sustainability concerns.

## Takeaway:

The results suggest that universities need to strengthen communication and collaboration with employers to ensure graduates gain competencies such as problem-solving, collaboration, ethical awareness, and adaptability. There is also a demonstrated importance of curricula that combine liberal arts and specialized education, fostering active and project-based learning alongside employ interdisciplinary approaches to cultivate transferable skills.

[https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project\\_04.pdf](https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project_04.pdf)

# The Current State of the Credit System and Its Substantive Implementation (2023-2024)

## Focus:

Re-examining the institutional meaning and "substantive implementation" of the Japanese academic credit system as a foundation for quality assurance, through historical analysis of global models and surveys on recent regulatory reforms.

## Key Finding:

The credit system functions as a "proxy infrastructure" with inherent structural ambiguity. While it is formally based on learning time, there is a lack of shared understanding regarding this principle. Consequently, credits currently serve more as internal indicators of curricular weight within individual universities rather than as universally transferable measures of learning outcomes.

## Takeaway:

Achieving "substantive implementation" requires moving beyond mere technical or operational adjustments. Universities must shift from compliance-based time counting to a qualitative reconsideration of curriculum design. This involves enhancing credit transferability, clarifying governance frameworks for institutional flexibility, and redefining the credit system to better support intellectual creativity and systemic integrity in higher education.

[https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project\\_05.pdf](https://www.juaa.or.jp/media/files/pdf/en/research/project_05.pdf)

## Publications

At the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), we regularly publish materials on quality assurance, including handbooks and the JUAA Book Series, as well as periodicals such as University Evaluation Review and University Staff Journal.

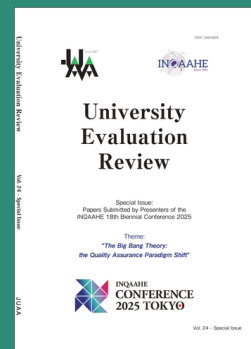
University Evaluation Review is published annually to contribute to the establishment of both basic and practical theories related to university evaluation and the improvement of university education in Japan and internationally, and to promote the application of these theories to the practice of university evaluation.

Similarly, University Staff Journal is published once a year to support the development of fundamental and practical theories for enhancing the quality and professionalism of university staff, and to facilitate the application of these theories to their practical work.

In FY2025, Vol. 24 of University Evaluation Review, focusing on quality assurance in graduate education, and Vol. 14 of University Staff Journal, which explores the role of universities in realizing an environmentally sustainable society, were published by the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (RIQAHE). In addition, JUAA will publish a Special Issue of University Evaluation Review (Vol. 24) in English, bringing together selected papers developed from presentations delivered at the INQAHE Conference 2025 held in Tokyo. As a special initiative, this issue has been compiled to share the outcomes of the Conference with JUAA member institutions and to disseminate its key insights more broadly to the international quality assurance community. The Special Issue will be made publicly available on the Association's official website.



University Evaluation Review Vol. 24



University Evaluation Review Vol. 24 - Special Issue



## Global Network & Engagement

With the ongoing globalization of higher education, it has become imperative to enhance its compatibility and credibility. JUAA implements joint accreditation in mutual cooperation with quality assurance agencies in Taiwan (TWAEA), Thailand (ONESQA), Mongolia (MNCEA), and Vietnam (CEA VNU-HCM). Additionally, in order to contribute to the promotion of internationalization of universities, we are working to ensure cooperation with overseas quality assurance agencies.



## Hosting INQAAHE Conference 2025: Reflections and the Way Forward

The Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) was pleased to host the 18th INQAAHE Conference from May 13 to 16, 2025. The conference welcomed 264 higher education professionals from 65 countries and regions, creating a forum for international dialogue on the future of quality assurance in higher education. Throughout the conference, participants engaged in active and substantive discussions on emerging challenges and shared priorities in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Held under the theme “The Big Bang Theory: the Quality Assurance Paradigm Shift,” the conference addressed a wide range of global issues. Discussions were structured around four sub-themes: Quality Assurance and Sustainability Agenda; Quality Assurance and Innovative Learning Pathways; Quality Assurance and Artificial Intelligence; and Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications and Credentials. Through these discussions, participants explored how quality assurance systems must evolve in response to sustainability imperatives, new forms of learning, technological transformation, and growing cross-border mobility of learners and credentials. The diversity of perspectives, shaped by different institutional, national, and regional contexts, enriched the dialogue and deepened mutual understanding.

The program also showcased contributions from Japanese universities and quality assurance professionals, offering international participants valuable insights into current practices and developments in Japanese higher education. A visit to the University of Tokyo further enhanced this exchange by providing first-hand exposure to Japan’s academic environment. In addition, cultural experiences offered through the gala party and other social events fostered informal interaction, networking, and trust-building beyond the formal sessions, and were widely appreciated by participants.

JUAA has been a full member of INQAAHE since 1996 and has remained actively engaged in its activities over the years. In 2023, JUAA successfully underwent an external review by INQAAHE and was recognized as aligned with the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP). Building on this longstanding commitment and the trust that has been established, hosting INQAAHE Conference 2025 was a source of great pride for JUAA and marked an important milestone in future strengthening international collaboration.

The success of the conference was made possible by the active participation and constructive contributions of attendees from around the world, as well as the strong support of INQAAHE leadership and colleagues, speakers, and partner organizations. JUAA extends its sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to making the conference a meaningful and memorable event.

Through this experience, JUAA reaffirmed the vital importance of creating spaces for international dialogue where quality assurance agencies and higher education stakeholders can learn from one another and collectively address shared challenges. JUAA looks forward to building on the knowledge, experience, and international networks gained through the conference and to further strengthening collaboration with partners worldwide in pursuit of trust, transparency, and continuous improvement in higher education.

# Refining the International Quality Assurance Framework: MOET Recognition and the Accreditation of VJU

The year 2025 has marked a significant phase in the Japan University Accreditation Association's (JUAA) ongoing efforts to support academic integrity and international collaboration. As part of our commitment to cross-border quality assurance, JUAA recently achieved two important milestones in Vietnam: formal recognition by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the successful accreditation of Vietnam Japan University (VJU) under the International Joint Accreditation Standards (iJAS). These developments reflect a steady deepening of the educational partnership between Japan and Vietnam.

On March 11, 2025, JUAA was officially authorized by Vietnam's MOET to operate as a foreign quality assurance agency. This authorization is a noteworthy development, establishing JUAA as the first Japanese accreditation body to receive such a mandate in Vietnam. By aligning its operations with the standards required of international agencies, similar to those previously granted to bodies like the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), JUAA has integrated its processes into Vietnam's evolving higher education landscape. This recognition grants our iJAS framework an equivalency status, ensuring that institutions accredited by JUAA are recognized as meeting the rigorous quality standards expected within the Vietnamese domestic context.

The iJAS framework serves as a collaborative platform for JUAA and its partner agencies across Asia. It is designed to facilitate a shared understanding of quality while remaining sensitive to the specific academic and cultural contexts of each nation. As higher education becomes increasingly globalized, the development of such coordinated frameworks is essential for ensuring transparency and mutual trust. Our work in Vietnam illustrates this move toward a more integrated Asian Higher Education Area, where quality assurance acts as a bridge for institutional cooperation.

The practical implementation of this framework was demonstrated through the evaluation of Vietnam Japan University (VJU). As the inaugural case for iJAS-based accreditation in Vietnam, VJU provided a valuable opportunity to apply these international standards in a local setting. In March 2025, an international panel of five reviewers from Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam conducted an on-site visit. The team engaged in in-depth discussions with university leadership, faculty, and students to review the institution's governance and educational outcomes.

The review process was thorough and constructive. The panel noted the institutional development VJU has achieved since its establishment a decade ago, particularly in its governance structures and the stability of its academic programs. The review highlighted that the university's progress in a relatively short period serves as a practical example of institutional growth within the regional context. Following the review, JUAA formally granted VJU accreditation in May 2025. With MOET's recognition in place, this accreditation status is intended to support VJU's standing both within Vietnam and in the broader international community.

The successful accreditation of VJU provides a foundational model for future iJAS activities. By demonstrating that quality assurance processes can be effectively coordinated across borders, we have established a professional precedent for future collaboration in the region. JUAA remains committed to its role as a stable and reliable partner in the pursuit of educational quality. We express our appreciation to MOET, VJU, and our international colleagues for their cooperation in building a sustainable and transparent framework for higher education in an interconnected world.



Review panel and VJU leadership following the on-site visit

# Strengthening International Collaboration through MoUs and Partnerships



President Takahashi discussing AI and quality assurance with MQA representatives.

In 2025, JUAA made significant strides in deepening collaboration with quality assurance agencies across Asia. In July, at the request of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), President Takahashi participated in a session on “Quality Assurance in the Age of AI” at the Malaysia Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. Together with the CEO of MQA, she discussed how evaluation practices are evolving to accommodate AI-enhanced learning while keeping ethics, equity, and social responsibility at the core, highlighting the importance of strengthening international cooperation in higher education quality assurance.

In December, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were renewed with the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA) and with the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI). The renewed MoU with MNCEA, signed online on December 12 with President Takahashi in attendance, marked the second agreement between the two institutions. This renewal strengthens collaboration through staff and expert exchanges and joint projects, contributing to the advancement of higher education quality in Mongolia, Japan, and the broader Asian region. The MoUs with KCUE and KUAI were also renewed for the third time, reflecting the mutual commitment of the parties to continue collaboration.

Additionally, steps were taken to build new partnerships, including signing a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Uzbekistan’s National Quality Assurance Agency for Education (NQAAE). Established in May 2024, NQAAE serves as the country’s sole authority for higher education quality assurance. This initial agreement follows an official visit by NQAAE leadership in December, laying a solid foundation for sustained and strategic cooperation in the years ahead. As part of these efforts, an MOU was also concluded with Vietnam’s Center for Education Accreditation – The University of Danang (CEA.UD), outlining collaboration in evaluator training, workshops, and conferences.

Collectively, these initiatives underscore JUAA’s sustained and forward-looking commitment to expanding regional partnerships and deepening international collaboration, while strengthening its role as a trusted and proactive contributor to quality assurance in higher education across Asia.



Dr. Yuko Takahashi, President of JUAA, and Dr. Bakhtiyor Yuldashev, Director of NQAAE.

# Strengthening Regional Ties at the 2025 APQN Conference

From 20 to 23 November 2025, representatives from the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) attended the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Annual Academic Conference in Hong Kong. Hosted by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), the event focused on the timely theme “Embracing Industrial Collaboration for Quality Higher Education.”

The conference served as a key platform for quality assurance (QA) agencies, higher education institutions, and policymakers from across the Asia-Pacific. Participants engaged in insightful keynote speeches and parallel sessions to explore how deeper synergy between academia and industry can enhance the relevance and social impact of higher education in an ever-evolving global landscape.



Ms. Kato (JUAA) presenting on industry-led internship frameworks in Japan



With colleagues from TWAEA and CEA VNU-HCM

Representing JUAA, Ms. Kato, Assistant Director of the Research & Planning Division, delivered a presentation titled “Industry-led Rulemaking for Internships in Japan.” Her presentation outlined the shifting landscape of Japan’s internship system, focusing on the expanding role of industry in establishing frameworks and the subsequent implications for quality assurance. She also addressed the current challenges faced by quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions, while offering perspectives on strengthening the bridge between academia and the industrial sector.

The session sparked an engaging dialogue among participants from various economies, who shared their respective experiences with industry engagement and work-integrated learning. These exchanges highlighted both common regional challenges and diverse innovative approaches, underscoring the vital role of mutual learning in addressing emerging issues in quality assurance.

Overall, the conference provided a valuable opportunity for JUAA to engage with international peers, gain insights into global best practices, and deepen professional networks within the Asia-Pacific quality assurance community. JUAA’s participation reaffirmed the critical importance of international cooperation in advancing a higher education system that responds effectively to evolving societal and industrial needs.

# JUAA at AACSB Asia Pacific Conference: Bridging Global and National Accreditation Standards



Professor Yokoyama (JUAA) discussing the dual structure of MBA education in Japan.

Professor Kenji Yokoyama of Nagoya University of Commerce & Business, who serves as Vice-Chair of the Business School Accreditation Committee, together with a staff member from JUAA's Program Accreditation Division, attended the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) Asia Pacific Accreditation Conference held in Seoul, South Korea, from June 25–26, 2025. Hosted by Chung-Ang University, the conference brought together over 200 participants from 20 countries.

The conference featured discussions on key topics, including business school accreditation standards, developing future business leaders for the AI era, and strengthening data-driven Assurance of Learning (AoL).

At the conference, Professor Yokoyama served as a panelist in a session on the theme “Balancing AACSB and National Accreditation Requirements,” where representatives from Korean Association of Business Education Accreditation (KABEA), and Lembaga Akreditasi Mandiri Ekonomi Manajemen Bisnis & Akuntansi (LAMEMBA) of Indonesia presented their respective national accreditation systems, their relationships with AACSB, and possibilities for future collaborative efforts.

During the panel, Professor Yokoyama provided an introduction to JUAA and its accreditation activities, along with the distinctive features of MBA education in Japan. He also highlighted the unique dual structure of Japan’s graduate management education, which consists of both professional degree programs and master’s-level MBA programs.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity to learn from international accreditation initiatives and to connect with peers across the Asia–Pacific region. The sessions emphasized interactive dialogue and networking, encouraging active exchange among participants.

AI innovation was featured as a central theme throughout the conference, underscoring the growing importance of integrating AI tools into university education and accreditation practices. Going forward, JUAA will continue to explore the effective use of AI in quality assurance and strengthen collaboration with international accreditation agencies.



Panelists, moderator, and the host institution representative

# International Internship Program Enhances Professional Capacity in Quality Assurance

The Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) organized the International Internship Program from July to October 2025 as part of its continuing efforts to strengthen professional capacity and promote international collaboration in higher education quality assurance (QA). Implemented in cooperation with partner QA agencies overseas, the program aims to deepen understanding of national QA systems and accreditation practices while fostering the development of QA professionals through mutual learning and exchange.

In this cycle, JUAA served as the host institution. With operational support from its Office for International Planning, the program brought together six participants: two staff members each from the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA) and Thailand's Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), and JUAA itself. Through a structured combination of lectures, institutional visits, and practical observation, participants deepened their understanding of Japan's higher education system and JUAA's accreditation framework from both conceptual and operational perspectives.

The program included comprehensive sessions on the structure and governance of Japanese higher education, the objectives and procedures of institutional accreditation, and approaches to internal quality assurance within universities. These sessions highlighted how external evaluation supports institutional improvement while ensuring accountability, and emphasized the evolving role of QA as a mechanism for educational enhancement rather than mere compliance verification.

A central component of the internship was the opportunity to observe evaluation practices directly. Participants attended and observed on-site accreditation visits at universities and professional graduate schools. Through these experiences, they gained first-hand insight into the organization of peer review, the examination of institutional evidence, and the conduct of dialogue between reviewers and institutional representatives. Observing the site visit process enabled participants to understand how evaluation standards are applied in practice and how professional judgment is exercised in real institutional contexts.

To broaden their perspectives on quality assurance approaches, participants also visited the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE). The visit introduced a discipline-specific accreditation framework and provided insight into reviewer training systems and evidence-based evaluation strategies. Participants observed how QA frameworks are adapted to disciplinary characteristics and professional expectations.



JABEE executives and internship participants at the JABEE office



Internship participants engaging in discussion between site visit sessions

Throughout the program, active exchange among the participants and with JUAA staff played a key role in the learning process. Discussions enabled participants to share information on their respective national QA frameworks, review methodologies, and current policy developments. These exchanges fostered deeper understanding of both shared challenges and context-specific approaches, including strategies for strengthening internal quality assurance, enhancing reviewer professionalism, and conducting site visits efficiently and effectively.

The program concluded with participant presentations offering comparative analyses of QA systems across countries, including reflections on their own national frameworks. These presentations synthesized lessons learned during the internship and identified practical insights for strengthening institutional QA mechanisms. The exchange of perspectives underscored the importance of sustained dialogue among QA agencies and highlighted opportunities for continued cooperation in capacity development.

Participant feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program and affirmed its practical relevance. Many participants emphasized that observing on-site accreditation visits provided a concrete understanding of how evidence-based evaluation and developmental feedback are implemented in practice. Participants also reported gaining deeper insight into key features of Japan's QA system, including the mandatory nature of external quality assurance, the strong emphasis on internal quality assurance, the clarification of learning outcomes, and the transparency of evaluation results. The role of accreditation as a driver of continuous institutional improvement was also highlighted.

Participants further noted that perspectives on systematic data utilization, digitalization of QA processes, and the complementary roles of professional judgment and technological tools, including AI, offered valuable insights for strengthening QA practices within their own organizations. The visit to JABEE was particularly well received, with participants highlighting the structured reviewer training system and evidence-based QA strategies as especially informative and applicable to their institutional contexts.

The successful implementation of the program was made possible through the cooperation of universities and partner agencies in Japan. Building on this experience, JUAA will continue to implement the International Internship Program on a regular basis in collaboration with partner agencies, further strengthening professional capacity and advancing international cooperation in higher education quality assurance across the Asia-Pacific region.



Internship participants with their certificates of completion following the final presentation

## Editors' Postscript

As we close this issue, we reflect on a year of significant international engagement for JUAA. The INQAAHE Conference 2025—realized through nearly two years of preparation—stands out as a major milestone, marking both a significant achievement and an opportunity to recognize our growth as an organization.


Alongside this, our continued efforts in capacity building and international collaboration have further strengthened our engagement with the global QA community.


This issue is the result of a collective effort, and we sincerely thank all colleagues who contributed their time and insights. We warmly welcome your feedback as we continue to engage with the global QA community.


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