

University Accreditation Results
(Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for university)

Kyoai Gakuen University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Gunma, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2016	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2017 – March.31.2024)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Kyoai Gakuen University

Overview

Kyoai Gakuen University (hereafter, the University), originated as Maebashi Eiwa Women's School and was founded by Christian volunteers in Gunma Prefecture in 1888. One year later, an association, Kyoaisya, was founded to manage the school. In 1988, Kyoai Women's Junior College was established, and in 1999 it was reorganized to become a four-year university with the current name of Kyoai Gakuen University. The University has maintained the Faculty of International Social Studies up to the present date. Its campus is located in Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, and the University has engaged in education and research activities with the founding spirit "to love and live together."

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2009, the University has appropriately solved the issues pointed out in the review. The University has upheld and strived to realize "Living with the Community" and "Student Centrism" as action guidelines. In addition, the University defined five education fundamentals, and to achieve these fundamentals, it has enhanced educational content to develop as a community-based university.

It is commendable that the University has engaged in a variety of activities to collaborate with and contribute to society, including "Interdependent Communities and Learning," and has made an effort to link students with supporting communities. It is also commendable that the University encourages students to participate in initiatives under the "Student Centrism" guideline and enhance learning quality by using the newly built Kyoai Commons (No. 4) building (built in 2011), as a foothold of active learning. Another distinctive feature includes activities in local communities such as "Regional Project Work," an internship with local governments under the service learning term system.

However, challenges that have been identified include the need for a stricter cap on the number of credits students are allowed to register for per year and the enrollment management of transfer students. Furthermore, the University is expected to formulate a policy on internal quality assurance, to link the self-study of each department with that of the entire university, to implement systematic and periodical self-study, and to develop a university-wide internal quality assurance system.

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has systematically worked on active learning to improve the quality of education and has produced remarkable outcomes. For example, the University has employed active learning in a number of classes to encourage students' active participation. In addition, distinct specialized subjects involving field work are included in each course, and Practicum on Regional Problem, which incorporate problem-based learning and service learning in the community, are developed as a group of subjects to help students understand communities in the Kyoai Core Subjects. As an advanced form of these seminars, the University has offered a long-term internship program and the Regional Project Work internship in which students participate in regional activities for six months to develop and enrich various forms of active learning. These educational methods produce a cycle of growth: students are encouraged to learn actively, which in turn motivates them to learn more off-campus.

Education and Research Environment

- It is commendable that the action guideline of “Students Centrism,” the process of learning in which students actively think, learn, and collaborate, is shared among students and now leads students’ everyday voluntary learning activities. In particular, in the Kyoai Commons building, which was designed to promote active and independent learning, both the physical facilities and the learning support provided by the information desk and information technology services have proven to be highly effective in enhancing students’ voluntary activities and learning outside of the classroom. The Kyoai Commons is also a popular place for students to gather and learn, and its hall, with all partitions and walls removed, allows students to observe one another throughout the whole room, encouraging them to actively learn to get to know one another.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University has made efforts to carry out programs that motivate students to organize groups of their own and gain skills to build sustainable relationships with the community. In particular, with “Living with the Community” as an action guideline, the University has made efforts to achieve a variety of social collaboration and social contribution initiatives. Those results have helped the University to be selected for the Center of Community (COC) and accelerated the development of its relationship with society. The University not only provides service to the community, but through the service learning activities of many students, student learning and service to the community occur in tandem (so-called “community-academy synchronization”), resulting in a relationship in which both the University and the community benefit. In particular, students who participated in the Regional Project Work have maintained their relationship with communities even after their class ended and have set up their own projects to demonstrate leadership.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The maximum number of credits a student is allowed to register for per year is set high at 50. This should be improved from the standpoint of the credit system.

Enrollment

- In the Department of International Social Studies in the Faculty of International Social Studies, the ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is low at 0.60. This number should be improved.

Internal Quality Assurance

- Although each individual faculty member as well as each department conducts a substantive review of educational activities, the University as a whole has not systematically, objectively and periodically implemented self-study, to assure the quality of education by the University itself. The University should stipulate a policy on internal quality assurance; define review methods, a process, and a system to use the outcomes for improvement; and develop an effective internal quality assurance system not just for reviewing each case from each department, but to ensure sustainable effort for improvement.