

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

Tenri University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Nara, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Tenri University

Overview

Tenri University, originally the Tenri School of Foreign Language, conducts educational and research activities based on its Founding Spirit centered on the Tenrikyo teaching of the “Joyous Life,” and the three main educational objectives of “religious awareness,” “international awareness,” and “spirit of selfless service” embody this Spirit. To achieve these objectives, the University has formulated Tenri University Vision 2025 as its medium- and long-term plan in the lead-up to the 100th anniversary of its founding, and is promoting various activities based on the educational policy of “fostering individuals who can independently determine what they should do and actively take action.”

Regarding the University’s education, all faculties and graduate schools appropriately design their curricula based on the diploma and curriculum policies in line with the vision. Curriculum maps and course charts have been created since AY2018 to visualize the connection between diploma policies and curricula as well as clarify the position of each subject in the curricula. Teaching methods apply active learning approaches that include group work, discussions, and presentations to encourage student participation. The student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies are monitored and evaluated through graduate surveys, subject grades, and screening of graduation theses or projects based on the assessment policy.

To assure the University’s quality of education, the faculties and other divisions use self-study check sheets to conduct inspections and assessments, and based on the findings, the Self-Evaluation Committee compiles the university-wide assessment results. Following instructions issued by the Planning Evaluation Meeting and the University Council, the faculties and other divisions formulate and implement improvement measures. Inspections and assessments are carried out under this system every academic year, with improvement and enhancement efforts made based on the results. This process indicates that the University’s internal quality assurance system is effectively functioning in general.

The University has undertaken distinctive initiatives with its affiliated Tenri Central Library and Tenri University Sankokan Museum. These institutions house large valuable collections, including national treasures and important cultural properties, which are placed on exhibit and made accessible for educational and

research activities. For example, original ancient documents and classical Japanese materials are used for courses in the Department of History and Culture Studies and lessons on library resources. In addition, the library's wide range of materials has helped produce new research outcomes in the fields of religious culture and Japanese history. These approaches are highly commendable. The University also engages in various social cooperation and contribution activities based on the educational objective of the "spirit of selfless service." It is highly commendable that the University is promoting student and faculty initiatives that contribute to regional revitalization by supporting student volunteer community activities in cooperation with local municipalities, while offering grants to faculty members for research aimed at overcoming regional challenges.

There are several issues the University needs to address, however. Some faculties, departments, and graduate schools fall short of fulfilling their student quotas; some have not established faculty organization policies for each curriculum, and have failed to systematically undertake faculty development (FD) efforts to enhance their research and social contribution activities. These issues should be addressed. In terms of finances, the University has not built a solid financial base to sustainably carry out its educational and research activities. This financial situation needs to be improved through steady implementation of the University's medium-term plan. Moreover, it is not entirely clear to outsiders how the University's Founding Spirit is connected to its educational objectives, and the University should explore ways to make this easier to understand.

In the coming years, the University is expected to review its internal quality assurance system centered on self-evaluation check sheets in pursuit of more effective operations, resolve the above issues by efficiently operating the university-wide PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, and take advantage of its distinctive features to progress further.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Environment

- The University's affiliated Tenri University Sankokan Museum and Tenri Central Library have been established to promote mutual understanding of people in different parts of the world by learning about their lives and histories. These facilities possess and exhibit large collections of valuable materials and artifacts,

including cultural and archaeological materials from around the world as well as Japan's national treasures and important cultural properties. These materials are also made accessible for educational and research purposes. It is commendable that lessons adopt realistic approaches using original ancient documents, and that the materials have helped produce new research outcomes in the fields of religious culture and Japanese history.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The University has signed a comprehensive partnership agreement with Tenri City in Nara Prefecture with the aim of fostering individuals devoted to the “spirit of selfless service (devotion to others)” based on its founding spirit, and supports students actively involved in contributing to the local community. The Accreditation Review Committee, formed by representatives from the University, Tenri City, and businesses, recognizes students who have contributed to the city's administrative policies as Students Contributing to Administrative Policies. In addition, the Research Grants for Community Issues program has been created to offer grants to the University's faculty members for research aimed at overcoming community issues. It is commendable that the University is contributing to regional revitalization by promoting the active participation of students and faculty members in community outreach activities.

Suggestions for Improvement

Student Enrollment

- The Graduate School of Religion and Culture Studies has a low ratio of 0.08 in student enrollment to the student enrollment cap. This ratio should be improved with the graduate school's student quotas thoroughly managed.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The University has failed to take sufficient steps to enhance its faculty members' skills and abilities to better develop their research activities and promote social contribution activities. Further efforts should be made to systematically implement FD activities for improvements other than education in a multifaceted

way.

University Management and Finance

- Tenri University Education Corporation Medium-term Plan sets the goal of securing stable revenues; it aims to optimize personnel costs and shift away from a financial structure relying on donations from religious institutions, but the labor cost ratio remains high. In addition, the university corporation's overall balance sheet for operating activities has been negative since AY2020, and the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund remains low. This financial situation should be improved with the medium-term plan steadily implemented.

Recommendation

Student Enrollment

- The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are low at 0.74 in the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Human Studies, 0.88 in the Faculty of Letters, and 0.81 in the Department of History and Culture Studies, Faculty of Letters. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are also low at 0.74 in the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Human Studies, 0.87 in the Faculty of Letters, 0.83 in the Department of History and Culture Studies, Faculty of Letters, and 0.88 in the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of International Studies. These ratios must be improved with the faculties' student quotas thoroughly managed.