

**Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for
Professional Graduate Business School**

**Department of Advanced Management,
Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University**



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: National	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2029)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the Department of Advanced Management, Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University

The unique purpose of the Department of Advanced Management, Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University, is to “develop business professionals with advanced knowledge in a specific field and in business management in general, along with logical thinking skills, the ability to apply knowledge in practice, an international mindset, sound judgment, and communication skills, thereby able to play a core role in the Japanese business community.” To achieve this purpose, the Department has pledged in its medium- and long-term vision to improve educational outcomes by adopting (a) Research-Based Education, defined as an education approach grounded on advanced research capabilities in all aspects of business management, and (b) the Project Research Method aimed at generating sophisticated solutions through in-depth discussions between students and faculty members. To put these concepts into practice, the Department has established the Project Research Method (PRM), By the Job Learning (BJL), and Research Based Education (RBE) as the three strategic principles to guide its MBA program, which aims to develop professionals with morality, creativity, an international outlook, and specialized skills.

The MBA program offers a structured curriculum consisting of core, specialized (applied), specialized (practical), and project-style subjects as four subject groups. Courses are organized according to year level to ensure progressive learning. In line with its emphasis on research-based education and work-study balance, the education program offers both project-style and lecture-style courses, giving the curriculum a clear structure that supports the Department’s unique purpose. Furthermore, taking the Case Project Research, Theme Project Research, and Thesis Supervision Seminar in that order allows students to progressively develop independent research skills.

In collaboration with the MBA program’s alumni association, MBA Cafe, the Department provides exclusive student support programs, such as a career development service. The Department also supports students’ extracurricular and alumni activities in cooperation with MBA Cafe and the non-profit Research Institute of Advanced Management (RIAM) organization. These support programs are unique and commendable features of the MBA program that help students resolve academic concerns and promote deeper learning of graduates as well as current students.

For the faculty, the Department organizes the Commerce and Business Administration Workshop, held around ten times a year in addition to faculty

development sessions, and has established and regularly operates an overseas research program financed by Kobe University Rokkodai Foundation's research and education grant. Given the MBA program's emphasis on research-based education, these programs are especially effective in helping improve the quality of full-time faculty members and promoting research education that connect academic theory and practice. These distinctive features of the Department are commendable undertakings.

There are several areas of improvement the Department should address, however.

First, the limit on the number of credits a student can take in a year should be revised to align with the objectives of the credit system. According to the Standards for Establishment of Universities, one credit represents 45 hours of learning. The present limit of 50 credits per year is practically impossible to earn given that balancing work and study is one of the MBA program's cornerstone principles. This is an issue that was raised in the previous certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business schools conducted in AY2018, and the Department is advised to revise its credit policy to ensure alignment with the credit system's objectives. Second, although the Kobe University Grading Policy provides target proportions of "Excellent" and "Good" awarded to students, the grade distribution guideline is not followed in practice. The Department is advised to consider adopting a grading policy that better reflects the actual grading practice. With respect to faculty diversity, while the Graduate School as a whole is making progress, the Department needs to make further efforts to increase the number of female and international teachers. On school management, the administrative burden shouldered by teachers is heavy due to increased tasks related to self-study activities and reduced staffing levels. As a result, teachers have less time for research and teaching. The Department should simplify and streamline the relevant administrative duties to improve this situation.

The final area of improvement concerns the Department's involvement with the outside community. The Department's Advisory Board meets the criteria to serve as the Collaboration Council for Educational Programs, and is functioning properly and effectively in that capacity, yet no university regulation stipulates that the Advisory Board is the Collaboration Council for Educational Programs. It is acceptable for a body such as the Advisory Board to serve as the Collaboration Council for Educational Programs so long as it meets the requirements prescribed by Standards for Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools. In such cases, however, it should be clearly stated in university regulations that the body serves as the Collaboration Council for Educational Programs. The Department is therefore advised to stipulate in the university regulations that its Advisory Board is equivalent to the Collaboration Council for Educational

Programs required under Standards for Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools.

Going forward, the Department is advised to utilize the results of this certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business schools and continue its self-study efforts for improvement, assure and enhance the quality of its education program, and further develop its unique characteristics.