

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

Kobe Women's University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2031)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Kobe Women's University

Overview

Kobe Women's University defines one of its founding spirits as "to educate women who will help build a democratic and culture-oriented nation that will contribute to world peace and the welfare of humankind." The University outlines one of its purposes as "cultivating women who are pure, noble, and competent," and one of the graduate schools' purposes as "teaching and researching specialized academic theory and practice, pursuing deeper understanding, and contributing to cultural development and advancement." To this end, the University has formulated the Medium-Term Goals and the Medium-Term Plan for the five-year period from AY2019 to AY2023.

Regarding the University's internal quality assurance, the Kobe Women's University/Kobe Women's Junior College Internal Quality Assurance Committee (hereafter "Internal Quality Assurance Committee") is positioned as an organization playing a central role in quality assurance, and the Inspection and Evaluation Committee is formed under this committee. In addition, the faculties, departments, graduate schools, their courses, teaching and learning organizations and committees, and administrative organizations have established mechanisms for implementing specific measures. However, divisions and committees at the school corporation's headquarters are tasked with some inspections and assessments, and the relevant information, including the inspection and assessment results, is inadequately compiled by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee. The Regulations on Kobe Women's University/Kobe Women's Junior College Internal Quality Assurance (hereafter "Internal Quality Assurance Regulations") stipulates the items to be discussed by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, but in some cases, the Kobe Women's University/Kobe Women's Junior College Division Chief Meeting (hereafter "Division Chief Meeting") is actually tasked with these items as well as planning and formulating internal quality assurance. With many items unconfirmed, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee is unable to fulfill its role as stipulated in the regulations and other rules. The school corporation's divisions and committees involved in quality assurance and the University's divisions and committees should be organized to clarify their roles and coordination in internal quality assurance, and to effectively operate the improvement and enhancement cycle based on the inspection and assessment results. The present internal quality assurance system was

developed after the Internal Quality Assurance Policy was established in AY2019. Given the inconsistencies between its regulations and actual conditions, the University is expected to address this situation by establishing a mechanism for inspecting and evaluating the appropriateness of the internal quality assurance system and periodically reviewing its appropriateness and functionality.

As for education, the undergraduate and graduate schools as well as their faculties, departments, and master's and doctoral courses have appropriately formulated and published their diploma policies with the student learning outcomes clearly stated. In terms of consistency between the curriculum policy and the curricula, all faculties and departments have designed and clarified curriculum maps and course models to their students. Lesson subjects are also illustrated in connection with the diploma policy for students to easily monitor and understand the curricula in a systematic and sequential way. These arrangements indicate that the University has appropriately designed the curricula based on the curriculum policy, with consideration given to a systematic and sequential process. To encourage students' active learning, the University aims to ensure credit validity and to promote lessons focusing on student participation; it also responds to specific student needs by establishing a homeroom teacher system for students to readily request consultation on all aspects of campus life including study.

The University undertook a particularly notable initiative in renovating a student lounge on the Suma Campus in AY2022 as part of its efforts to improve campus amenities based on student ideas and perspectives. Redesigned in pursuit of greater comfort from the viewpoint of students, the facility now attracts more users and provides learning opportunities for students as well. In addition, the Extracurricular Student Activity Grant Program (Shinjo Support), newly established in AY2022, is expected to cultivate human resources in line with the University's educational goals. Furthermore, the University dispatched full-time faculty members in the Faculty of Nursing, along with graduate students in the Graduate School of Nursing, to a large-scale COVID-19 vaccination site during the pandemic. It is highly commendable that this activity contributed to improving the physical and mental health of the community, while providing students with a practical learning opportunity.

There are several areas of improvement the University should address, however, involving education, student enrollment, and finance, in addition to the above issues related to the internal quality assurance system. In terms of educational program and learning outcomes, the Science of Health and Nutrition Master's Course in the Graduate School of Science of Health and Nutrition does not specify the basic concept of curriculum implementation. The graduate schools provide a vague connection between

the student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy and the measurement methods. In regard to student enrollment, the average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years and the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low in the faculties, while the graduate schools have low ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap. The student quotas should be managed thoroughly. As for finance, the University is far from establishing the financial base necessary to sustainably conduct its educational and research activities. Steady efforts are required to establish a sound financial base by formulating a financial plan and effective measures based on the actual financial status.

The University is in the process of drawing up the next medium-term goals and plan starting in AY2024. With this plan appropriately formulated, the University is expected to lay out the future outlook and vision as a university, and to share them with school members with the aim of enhancing its educational and research activities. The University is also expected to develop an appropriate internal quality assurance structure and fully operate the mechanism to independently assure the appropriateness of its activities, thereby addressing various issues and enhancing its distinctive initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Environment

- The Indoor Environmental Studies Course in the Department of Home Economics, Faculty of Home Economics, renovated a student lounge on the Suma Campus in AY2022. To pursue greater comfort from the students' viewpoint, students and businesses discussed space design in a workshop format and successfully designed a space that meets a variety of student needs. The renovated lounge now attracts more users. The University plans to allocate a budget in AY2023 for the course's renovation project involving another campus facility. It is commendable that the University provides students with opportunities to put their specialized knowledge into practice, while improving campus amenities based on students' ideas and perspectives.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The Extracurricular Student Activity Grant Program (Shinjo Support) was newly

established in AY2022 to support students' self-directed community contribution, volunteer, and other activities aimed at overcoming regional challenges. The program awards grants for projects selected after screening the plans and applications accepted from students, with the achievements including establishing a volunteer center, producing a regional vitalization event, and devising and commercializing a recipe using local resources. Some projects continue to receive grants. This program is commendable as a meaningful initiative that helps cultivate regional human resources with "independence, communicative ability, and creativity" as stated in the University's educational goal.

- The University participated in a large-scale COVID-19 vaccination program organized by Kobe City and its partner companies. Both full-time faculty members in the Faculty of Nursing and graduate students with nursing licenses took part in the inoculation program. The University used this opportunity to expand the vaccination drive for its faculty and staff members as well as residents in some areas. It is commendable that these efforts contributed to creating a safe environment to protect the physical and mental health of local residents, and also provided students with a practical learning opportunity as graduate students worked in pairs with faculty members at the vaccination site, received feedback from them afterwards, and shared the knowledge gained from this experience with other students in the Faculty of Nursing.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The Internal Quality Assurance Committee is positioned as an organization promoting internal quality assurance, but some inspections and assessments are conducted by divisions and committees at the school corporation's headquarters, and the relevant information, including the inspection and assessment results, is inadequately compiled at the Internal Quality Assurance Committee. In addition, items related to internal quality assurance, including items to be discussed at the committee as stipulated in the Internal Quality Assurance Regulations, are discussed, planned, and proposed at the Division Chief Meeting in some cases. These inconsistencies between regulations and actual conditions indicate that the Internal

Quality Assurance Committee is far from fulfilling its responsibility. The University should address these issues by clarifying the roles and coordination of the school corporation's headquarters and the University's organizations involved in internal quality assurance and streamlining its internal quality assurance structure to effectively operate the improvement and enhancement cycle based on the inspection and assessment results.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In terms of the curriculum policy, the Science of Health and Nutrition Master's Course in the Graduate School of Science of Health and Nutrition does not specify the basic concept of the curriculum implementation. This issue should be addressed.
- The graduate schools monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes based on the screening of dissertations, subject grades, and other factors, but the connection between the measurement methods and the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy is unclear. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are low at 0.84 in the Faculty of Health and Welfare, 0.83 in the Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Health and Welfare, and 0.86 in the Department of Health, Sports and Nutrition, Faculty of Health and Welfare. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are also low at 0.88 in all undergraduate programs, 0.82 in the Faculty of Health and Welfare, 0.81 in the Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Health and Welfare, 0.82 in the Department of Health, Sports and Nutrition, Faculty of Health and Welfare, 0.85 in the Faculty of Literature, 0.88 in the Department of Japanese, Faculty of Literature, 0.82 in the Department of English, Faculty of Literature, 0.82 in the Global-Local Studies Department, Faculty of Literature, 0.88 in the Department of History, Faculty of Literature, and 0.86 in the Department of Education, Faculty of Literature. These ratios should be improved.
- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.13 in the Master's Course in the Graduate School of Literature, 0.21 in the Doctoral Course in

the Graduate School of Literature, and 0.17 in the Doctoral Course in the Graduate School of Life Science. These ratios should be improved with the graduate schools' student quotas thoroughly managed.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The University does not conduct faculty development (FD) activities aimed at enhancing its research activities and promoting social contributions and other activities other than improving its education. This issue should be addressed.

University Management

- The University's balance sheet for operating activities has turned negative over the years due to a decline in student fees and other factors, and the University's low ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund continues to trend downward. This situation indicates that the University is far from establishing the financial base necessary to sustainably conduct its educational and research activities. Specific target values are presented in the medium-term plan, but there are discrepancies between these values and actual conditions. To address these issues, the University should make steady efforts to establish a sound financial base by formulating a financial plan and effective measures based on the actual financial status.