

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

International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2024	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2032)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies

Overview

The International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies sets forth the mission of contributing to advanced research on Buddhism based on the historical background of Buddhist studies in Japan, including the tradition and accumulation of Buddhist doctrinal studies and philological research in Japan, as well as research on Buddhism through exchanges with the West since the modern era. The College defines its purpose as “researching and teaching academic theory and applications of Buddhism and related cultures as the common heritage of humankind, and pursuing in-depth understanding, while cultivating researchers with highly specialized knowledge in this field, various research methods and skills, and broad perspectives beyond the specialized field as well as working professionals with deep religious and cultural backgrounds and the motivation and ability to analyze and resolve various contemporary issues, thereby contributing to the development of human culture.”

To achieve its founding spirit and purpose, the College has formulated the five-year International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies Medium-Term Plan (hereafter “Mid-Term Plan”) from AY2024 to AY2028 to enhance its educational and research activities.

Regarding internal quality assurance, self-studies are conducted under the president who oversees the College’s internal quality assurance based on the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies Self-Study Regulations (hereafter “Self-Study Regulations”). The Self-Study Committee in charge of formulating improvement plans based on the results is formed to carry out biannual self-studies in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Policy. Although the committee is tasked with formulating improvement plans based on the self-study results and providing support for each division’s improvement efforts, its members work individually on improvements in different committees and other bodies they concurrently serve on. This situation indicates that the Self-Study Committee’s planning and support for improvements is insufficient. Since the College is considering a swifter, more flexible internal quality assurance system, this issue should be addressed with the new system clarifying the roles and coordination of divisions and internal quality assurance promotion organizations to make improvements based on the self-study results.

As for education, the College has appropriately designed its curricula based on the diploma and curriculum policies. The College adopts various approaches to promote students' active learning and effective teaching, such as introducing course numbering and clarifying the methods of feedback from faculty members to students. All faculty members and students participate in Special Research on Buddhist Studies, in which supervisors and other faculty members monitor and evaluate the learning outcomes of all students by having them present their research about once a year.

Among the distinctive initiatives are those of the College's research institutes. The International Institute for Buddhist Studies promotes academic exchanges between Japan and other countries by holding lectures by eminent foreign scholars, and publishes the research outcomes in multiple languages based on these exchanges. The publications featuring contributions from leading scholars in Japan and overseas are well-received internationally. The Research Institute for Old Japanese Manuscripts of Buddhist Scriptures is working on a project to comprehensively collect and organize Buddhist manuscripts in Japan and abroad, with a database being developed for releasing its findings to the public. The institute's image resources are also available for public viewing at the College's library, along with books of the Tripitaka. As the two institutes widely release their collection resources and research findings, the College is making highly commendable efforts to return its research outcomes to society with meaningful organizations established to promote Buddhist studies. The College also offers international students writing assistance by checking their Japanese for papers, class assignments, presentation drafts, and other documents. It is notable that the assistance is provided with consideration given to students' self-directed learning, thereby improving their research skills, including writing proficiency in Japanese.

There is an area of improvement the College should address, however, in addition to internal quality assurance as mentioned above. The Postgraduate Division of Buddhist Studies, Programme of Buddhist Studies (Five-Year Doctorate Course), does not specify the research guidance methods and schedules as research guidance plans. This issue must be addressed with the methods and schedules specified and clarified to students beforehand.

In the years ahead, the College is expected to resolve these issues through internal quality assurance efforts and to advance its distinctive initiatives, thereby making improvements to its various activities.

Notable Strengths

Educational and Research Structure

- The College has established the International Institute for Buddhist Studies and the Research Institute for Old Japanese Manuscripts of Buddhist Scriptures to achieve the mission and purpose of advancing research on Buddhism. The International Institute for Buddhist Studies holds lectures by eminent foreign scholars to promote academic exchanges between Japan and other countries, and publishes the research outcomes in multiple languages based on these exchanges. The publications featuring leading scholars in Japan and overseas are well-received internationally. The Research Institute for Old Japanese Manuscripts of Buddhist Scriptures continues its work on a project to comprehensively collect and organize Buddhist manuscripts in Japan and abroad, with a database being developed to release its findings to the public. The institute's image resources are available for public viewing at the College's library, along with books of the Tripitaka. The College is making commendable efforts to return its research outcomes to society with meaningful organizations established to promote Buddhist studies, as the two institutes widely release their collection resources and research findings.

Student Support

- The library staff offer international and other students writing assistance as supplementary learning support for regular courses by checking their Japanese for papers, class assignments, presentation drafts, and other documents. Proofreading and advice are provided with consideration given to students' self-directed learning, thereby improving their research skills, including writing proficiency in Japanese. This is a commendable learning support initiative to embody the College's mission of "training researchers able to become actively involved in Buddhist studies in the international arena."

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The Self-Study Committee is tasked with formulating improvement plans based on the self-study results and providing support for each division's improvement efforts, but members of the committee work individually on improvements in different

committees and other bodies. This situation indicates that the Self-Study Committee's planning and support for improvements is insufficient. With the committee and other organizations inevitably composed of overlapping members, the College is considering a swifter, more flexible internal quality assurance system. This issue should be addressed with a new system clarifying the roles and coordination of the divisions and internal quality assurance promotion organizations to make improvements based on the self-study results.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Postgraduate Division of Buddhist Studies, Programme of Buddhist Studies (Five-Year Doctorate Course), fails to specify the research guidance methods and schedules as research guidance plans. This issue must be addressed with the methods and schedules specified and clarified to students beforehand.