

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

**Sapporo Gakuin University**



<b>Basic Information of the Institution</b>	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hokkaido, Japan
<b>Accreditation Status</b>	
Year of the Review: 2021	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.1.2022 – March 31, 2029)	

## **Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Sapporo Gakuin University**

### **Overview**

With “Autonomy, Human Rights, Coexistence, and Cooperation,” as its philosophy, Sapporo Gakuin University (hereinafter “the University”) defines its purpose as “to develop a rich sense of humanity, and by conducting in-depth teaching and research in specialized arts and sciences, to develop individuals who can contribute broadly to the welfare of human society, and in particular to the development of industry in Hokkaido, the social culture of Hokkaido, and the welfare of the people of Hokkaido.” In addition, the University has drawn up “SGU Vision 2026” and “Financial Restructuring Plan 2017” as medium- and long-term plans to achieve its objectives, and is working to enhance its educational and research activities.

For internal quality assurance, the University Assessment Committee has been established as the organization responsible for conducting university-wide self-study and promoting internal quality assurance, and this committee is in charge of overseeing the “Self-Assessment Implementation Subcommittees” in faculties, graduate schools, and other committees. However, there is insufficient coordination among organizations for internal quality assurance, and the University Assessment Committee’s management with respect to the PDCA cycles of the Self-Assessment Implementation Subcommittees is inadequate. In the future, to ensure that each organization steadily implements improvement and enhancement initiatives based on the check and review results and in accordance with the “Policy, System and Procedures for Internal Quality Assurance” (hereinafter the “Policy for Internal Quality Assurance”), close collaboration among organizations is required, and the University Assessment Committee must make improvements to provide support for each organization.

Regarding education, the University has established “Regulations on the Three Policies,” and a degree award policy (diploma policy) and curriculum design and implementation policy (curriculum policy) has been drawn up for each department and graduate school. Curricula are organized in accordance with the policy and in line with the expertise of each department and graduate school. However, although there is an upper limit to the number of credits students can register for in a year, the measures taken to substantiate credits are not sufficient. For example, students can, upon request, register for courses relating to graduation requirements and the

acquisition of qualifications beyond the upper limit. Regarding the measurement of learning outcomes, the school is not sufficiently monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes stipulated in the degree award policy, and the visualization of learning outcomes is inadequate. This should be improved immediately.

Outstanding efforts include the introduction of the “Scholarship Entrance Examination System,” which proactively targets students with a strong desire to learn and contribute to the improvement of academic motivation within the University, and the support for students with disabilities, which includes university-wide, consistent support from entrance examinations to graduation, and the establishment of a peer support system provided by fellow students. In addition, as part of university-wide faculty development (hereinafter “FD”) activities, examples of faculty members’ practices for improving classes and teaching methods are widely shared within the University, contributing to raising faculty members’ awareness, which is commendable. Also commendable are the university-wide efforts to contribute to the local communities in which each campus is located, as well as unique initiatives such as the “Collaboration Center” based on cooperative principles and various activities as a “Fair Trade University.”

However, there are also a number of issues. In addition to the aforementioned measures for internal quality assurance, substantiation of credits in curricula, and measurement of learning outcomes, quota management must be improved, as some faculties, departments, and graduate schools are significantly under capacity.

Going forward, the JUAA hopes that the University will resolve these issues through internal quality assurance efforts and further develop its many distinctive initiatives to make greater progress.

## **Notable Strengths**

### *Student Enrollment*

- In recent years, the University has adopted a variety of admission methods and systems, one of which is the Scholarship Entrance Examination System, which was introduced for the AY2018 entrance examination. Students who pass this examination are granted a full tuition waiver not only for the first year, but also for up to four years depending on their subsequent academic performance, which has been effective in attracting students who are highly motivated to learn. Those who pass the examination generally maintain good grades after enrollment. As such, this system does not only lend financial support to the students, but it also contributes to the improvement of academic motivation

among the students, which is commendable.

#### *Faculty and Faculty Organization*

- In order to improve the teaching ability of faculty members, the University has established a university-wide “FD Study Group” and a forum for exchanging opinions with student FD group, as well as providing budget support for class improvement measures proposed by faculty members. In addition, the results of a “Student Class Evaluation Questionnaire” are tabulated and analyzed by department, graduate school, and faculty member. These, as well as interviews with faculty members based on said results are systematically compiled into reports, which are made public on an ongoing basis. This series of proactive efforts to improve classes and teaching methods has resulted in the wide sharing of examples of excellent faculty practices within the University, which is commendable.

#### *Student Support*

- The Collaboration Center is equipped with facilities and equipment to meet diverse learning needs. Students, faculty, and staff from different faculties and year groups come together to collaborate in a variety of activities, including not only regular education, but also extracurricular activities and volunteer activities. The center also supports students’ independent learning through a project support program called the “Student-Initiated Project.” Furthermore, the center has systematized the assignment of student staff, which is commendable as an effort to make the “collaboration” emphasized in the University’s philosophy and objectives a reality.
- A support system has been established to train “accessibility staff” to assist students with disabilities, and students are providing support to each other while knowledge and skills are passed on among the staff. The number of staff members has increased over time, leading to increasingly substantial support. In recent years, the “Pre-Employment Support Program (TOSS-Program)” has been implemented as a part of job placement support for students with disabilities, and the University is considering implementing its own program from AY2022. In addition to these efforts, it is commendable that the University is making ongoing efforts to improve support for students with disabilities on a university-wide and multifaceted basis, such as by

appointing a Coordinator for supporting students with disabilities and holding training sessions for faculty and staff.

### *Social Cooperation and Contribution*

- In order to achieve the “coexistence” set forth in its philosophy, the University is actively engaged in social contribution activities rooted in the community where each campus is located. These initiatives include student participation in the Japanese version of CCRC, a welfare initiative for the elderly in the Ebetsu area, university-wide participation in the urban development of the Shin-Sapporo area following the opening of Shin-Sapporo Campus, and various initiatives triggered by the “Sapporo Gakuin University Seeds of Social Contribution” The relocation of the Sapporo Gakuin University Social Engagement Center to the Shin-Sapporo campus to serve as a liaison office for industry-government-academia-industry collaboration is expected to lead to further development in collaboration with companies, local governments, and other universities in the surrounding area, and is commendable as such.
- Students, faculty, and staff in various faculties are collaborating in a variety of initiatives as part of its Fair-Trade University initiative. In addition to promoting and selling fair trade products on campus, the University has expanded its activities to include product development and sales in collaboration with companies, as well as initiatives in cooperation with other universities and the local community. Gaining knowledge and practical experience of the SDGs in this way is positioned not only as social contribution on the part of the University, but is also meaningful from an educational perspective as graduates become active in society. Further development can be expected in the future through collaboration with the local community and other universities, etc., which is commendable.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

#### *Internal Quality Assurance*

- Although it may be acknowledged that a body for promoting internal quality assurance promotion is in place, the powers and roles of the University Assessment Committee and the University Executive are partially unclear. In addition, although the University Assessment Committee gives instructions for

improvement to each of the Self-Assessment Implementation Subcommittees, this initiative is not implemented on an ongoing basis, and support for improvement and enhancement, such as checking the subsequent progress, is insufficient. Improvements are required to clarify the powers and roles of related organizations, strengthen cooperation, and ensure that the internal quality assurance system functions on an ongoing basis.

#### *Educational Program and Learning Outcomes*

- Although a limit has been set on the number of credits for which students can register in a year, courses relating to graduation requirements and the acquisition of qualifications can be taken in excess of the limit without clear criteria. As a result of this, particularly in the Faculty of Humanities, there are a considerable number of students who actually take a large number of credits. Although individual guidance on taking courses is provided, this is not sufficient as a measure to substantiate credits. Therefore, this should be improved in light of the purpose of the credit system.
- To measure learning outcomes, undergraduate faculties use methods such as GPA, graduation questionnaires, and graduation papers, while graduate schools use graduation questionnaires and dissertation examinations. However, this is not sufficient as a visualization of learning outcomes, and it is difficult to say that the learning outcomes indicated in the degree award policy are being fully monitored and evaluated. This should be improved accordingly.

#### *Student Enrollment*

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap for the Graduate School of Regional Management is low at 0.18. This should be improved to ensure proper graduate student quota management.

#### *University Management and Finance*

- Although the Financial Restructuring Plan 2017 has shown some positive results, the operational income and expenditure balance ratio continues to be significantly negative, and the ratio of the financial assets to the required reserve fund is on a declining trend, making it difficult to say that the financial base necessary for the stable provision of educational and research activities

is sufficient at this point in time. Moving forward, the University must continue to establish its financial base by appropriately reviewing the Financial Restructuring Plan 2017 in light of social circumstances and the state of student admission, while steadily implementing the plan and achieving the goals it has set.

## **Recommendation**

### *Student Enrollment*

- Average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap for the past five years are low at 0.81 for the Faculty of Humanities, 0.68 and 0.84 for that faculty's Department of Human Sciences and Department of Child Development respectively, and 0.84 for the Faculty of Law's Department of Jurisprudence. Moreover, ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.83 for the Faculty of Humanities, 0.72 and 0.87 for that faculty's Department of Human Sciences and Department of Child Development respectively, and 0.86 for the Faculty of Law's Department of Jurisprudence. This should be corrected to ensure proper undergraduate student quota management.