

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

Hakuoh University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tochigi, 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 Hakuoh University

Overview

Hakuoh University, founded on the spirit of “Plus Ultra” (Latin for “Further Beyond”) advocated by its first president, outlines four founding principles that include “contributing to the advancement of the 21st society and the enhancement of regional industries, economies, and cultures as an eternally new and young as well as passionate higher education institution.” To embody these principles, the University has established four university-wide educational objectives, one of which includes “nurturing language and communication skills for adapting, actively cooperating, and contributing to Japan and other countries during turbulent times.” However, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee has yet to formulate a medium- to long-term plan to achieve these principles and objectives. More efforts are needed in this area.

Regarding the University’s internal quality assurance, the faculties, graduate schools, centers, and other divisions review their daily activities as necessary and improve their educational initiatives and other tasks. However, these activities are not positioned as regular and systematic inspections and assessments under the internal quality assurance structure. The University conducts inspections and assessments only in response to JUAA’s certified evaluation and accreditation. The University has stated it will address the issues identified in these evaluation results by including them in its medium- to long-term plan under preparation, but the plan has not been drawn up, highlighting a lack of specifics in terms of effectiveness. The University needs to overhaul its self-study process. In addition, the University is far from inspecting and assessing the appropriateness of its internal quality assurance system and implementing improvement measures. This situation should be addressed.

As for education, the University has established a diploma policy for each degree to be awarded in accordance with the common diploma policy for the undergraduate and graduate programs formulated based on its founding principles and educational objectives. To provide education more practically in line with these diploma policies, course charts were created in AY2021 for the faculties and majors to ensure systematic and sequential curricula, and course numbering was introduced to all lesson subjects in AY2022. To encourage students’ social and professional independence, the University adopts practical subjects, such as Internship I-III in the Faculty of Business

Administration, Seminar of Legal Professionals in the Faculty of Law, and Training After Teaching Practicum in the Faculty of Education. Student learning outcomes are monitored using the grade point average (GPA) system and class evaluation surveys. The graduate schools also monitor the learning outcomes through research presentations, interviews to confirm educational outcomes, and other means. However, the connection between the measurement methods and the diploma policies is unclear both in the faculties and graduate schools, and concrete measures should be adopted to monitor the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies. Other issues the University should address include one graduate school's inadequate descriptions in its diploma policy and research guidance plans, and one faculty's failure to ensure credit validity.

The University has undertaken a distinctive initiative in establishing the Language Commons as a space where English is studied. Student staff plan and organize various activities while serving as facilitators, with the University providing support and assistance through relevant faculty members while offering facilities and equipment for the activities. It is commendable that the University has created an educational and research environment that encourages active learning with students themselves providing learning support.

The University, however, needs to thoroughly manage the student quotas of one of the graduate schools and work to establish a sound financial base.

In the years ahead, the University is expected to review the inspection and assessment process to conduct inspections and assessments under the management of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee and make improvements based on the results, thereby enhancing its various educational initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Environment

- The University has created an environment that promotes active student learning. Notably, the Daigyoji library provides the Language Commons as a space where English is studied, with student staff, mainly English education majors, serving as facilitators to plan and conduct various activities in English, including the Lunchtime Chat English conversation activity. The University offers a space and facilities for students' self-directed activities, and faculty members advise student staff and hold English conversation classes. It is commendable that the University provides an educational and research environment to promote the active and effective use of its

space and facilities and encourage independent learning outside the classroom through interactions among students.

Suggestions for Improvement

Mission and Purpose

- The University has not formulated a medium- to long-term plan to achieve its principles and objectives as well as the purposes of the faculties and graduate schools. This issue should be addressed with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee playing a central role in swiftly drawing up a feasible medium- to long-term plan reflecting the certified evaluation and accreditation results.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Graduate School of Law does not state the learning outcomes appropriate for its degrees, including the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be acquired, in its diploma policy. This issue should be addressed.
- The University establishes the maximum number of credits students can register for in a year, but permits students to register for credits exceeding the upper limit when taking electives as well as lesson subjects not included in the credits required for graduation among the subjects related to teaching licenses and other qualifications specified by the faculties. Consequently, a considerable number of students in the Faculty of Education register for a high number of credits, but no measures are adopted to ensure credit validity for these students. These inadequacies should be addressed in light of the purpose of the credit system.
- The faculties use various surveys and other means to monitor student learning outcomes, while the graduate schools conduct monitoring based on research presentations and other items. However, the connection between these methods and the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies is unclear. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.05 in the Graduate School of Business Administration. This ratio should be improved with the graduate school's student quota thoroughly managed.

University Management

- The University's finances have been improving in recent years, but the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund remains insufficient due in part to the increase in depreciation arising from large-scale facility and equipment improvement projects since AY2017. This indicates that the University has failed to establish the solid financial base necessary to sustainably conduct its educational and research activities. The University should formulate a medium- to long-term financial plan that includes specific target values with consideration given to the financial impacts of various projects, and examine the progress based on its actual financial status to establish a sound financial base.

Recommendation

Internal Quality Assurance

- A range of faculty and graduate school activities, including reviewing various initiatives, are not positioned as regular and systematic inspections and assessments under the internal quality assurance structure, with the roles of the organizations not clarified with regard to implementing improvement measures based on the inspection and assessment results of the faculties and graduate schools under the internal quality assurance system. The University's inspections and assessments are carried out by university-wide organizations only in response to JUAA's certified evaluation and accreditation, indicating that the faculties and graduate schools do not conduct regular and systematic inspections and assessments. Moreover, the University is far from inspecting and assessing the appropriateness of its internal quality assurance system and implementing improvement measures. This situation must be corrected with the University's self-study process reviewed to conduct regular and systematic inspections and assessment, thereby making improvements under the internal quality assurance system.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Graduate School of Law does not specify the research guidance schedules as research guidance plans. This issue must be addressed with the schedules specified and clarified to students beforehand.