University Accreditation Results

(Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for university)

Sophia University

Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, 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 Sophia University

Overview

Sophia University defines its educational spirit as "For Others, With Others" and its founding philosophy as follows: "Following the tradition of Catholicism, founded on Christian humanism and as a center of academic excellence, the University shall pursue fundamental truths, impart broad knowledge and advanced expertise in the arts and sciences, and build character through the development of intellectual, moral, and applied capabilities, with the objectives of cultivating talented leaders for society and contributing to the advancement of culture and the welfare of humankind." To achieve these principles and objectives, the Sophia School Corporation Grand Layout was formulated as an medium- to long-term plan with the five main goals of "Promotion of educational, research and academic exchange," "Enhancement of Support for Student and Pupil Life," "Strengthening of Management and Operational Foundations," "Promotion of management reform of Sophia University Junior College Division and Sophia School of Social Welfare," and "Further Development of Educational Foundations of Four Junior and Senior High Schools." Under this plan, the University strives to enhance its educational and research activities.

Regarding internal quality assurance, the University has established an internal quality assurance system consisting of five meeting bodies working together to operate the university-wide PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. Meeting sets out the educational and research activities, and the Deans' Meeting and the Graduate School Committee examine the plans before the faculties, graduate schools, and centers carry out the activities. The Self-Assessment Committee reviews the initiatives, and the Quality Assurance Steering Committee verifies the results and discusses improvement measures. This PDCA cycle has been in operation since AY2021, and the system is overseen by the president, who chairs the University Planning Meeting. As for the faculties and graduate schools, the Individual Self-Assessment Organization conducts inspections and assessments based on the Sophia University Self-Assessment Implementation Outlinde (hereafter "Self-Assessment Implementation Outline") drawn up by the Self Assessment Basic Plan Formulating Subcommittee (hereafter "Formulating Subcommittee") formed under the Self-Assessment Committee. The committee verifies the results, and presents proposals for improvement and other comments to each division after checks by the

Quality Assurance Steering Committee and the University Planning Meeting. The University makes efforts for university-wide internal quality assurance as each organization works to conduct a self-study based on unified evaluation standards, and cross-sectional inspections are conducted among the faculties, graduate schools, and other organizations, with the inspection and assessment results evaluated externally to enhance the objectivity and validity of the self-studies.

In terms of education, the University has established the university-wide diploma policy that specifies its principles and goals. Based on this policy, each degree program has formulated diploma and curriculum policies and designed its curriculum in a systematic way. As part of the efforts to monitor and evaluate the student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy, the University created the Assessment List that outlines university-wide common items as well as assessment items specified by each department and graduate program. Various approaches are adopted to monitor and evaluate the learning outcomes according to the characteristics of each degree program. The Self Learning Portfolio System has also been introduced for students to reflect on their learning outcomes. It is highly commendable that the University measures student learning outcomes in a multifaceted way.

There are other commendable distinctive features in addition to monitoring and visualizing student learning outcomes as mentioned above. First, the University has launched the departmental collaborative Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures (SPSF) and the Graduate Degree Program of Applied Data Sciences. The University has also newly established the Institute of Inclusive Community and other research organizations to conduct educational and research activities responsive to the next-generation society, and is continuously working to restructure its organizations with future prospects in mind. Second, the Health and Wellbeing Center was established as an organization overseeing multilingual student counseling services, and provides more systematic and specific responses to the needs of students with disabilities or other mental and physical health issues. The Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion, in charge of promoting the University's efforts to fulfill its social responsibility, recruits students as staff. It is highly commendable that these initiatives help create new values. Moreover, the University has launched the Collaborative Research on Innovation by Faculty and Staff to reform its education and research projects beyond the existing framework. Faculty and staff members who share the same problem awareness conduct collaborative research, and present proposals for improvement and other comments regarding university management based on the research results. These efforts have led to concrete improvements and reforms, such as establishing university startups and reviewing the

staff's work style, and are notable as distinctive initiatives contributing to enhancing the University's organizational capabilities beyond sections and job types.

There are several areas of improvement the University should address, however. First, some graduate schools do not specify the research guidance methods as research guidance plans, and their research guidance schedules are inadequate as well. These issues must be corrected with the items specified and clarified to students beforehand. Certain faculties and graduate schools do not state the basic concepts of curriculum implementation, including lesson formats and specific teaching methods, in their curriculum policies. Some graduate schools have low ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap, and the graduate schools' student quotas should be thoroughly managed.

The University has implemented numerous pioneering initiatives swiftly and actively, and also plans to verify the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system. The University is expected to progress further by making more specifically designed efforts for internal quality assurance to overcome various challenges, while creating and enhancing many more distinctive initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Educational and Research Structure

● Based on Grand Layout 2.1, the University has established the SPSF English-taught program themed on sustainable futures, and the Graduate Degree Program of Applied Data Sciences, designed to train professionals to apply and deploy data sciences in business settings and acquire practical skills for returning the outcomes to society. The University has also newly established the Institute of Inclusive Community, Sophia Institute for Human Security, and Sophia Island Sustainability Institute to conduct educational and research activities responsive to the next-generation society. It is commendable that the University is continuously working to restructure its organizations with future prospects in mind, and that these initiatives are contributing to the University's development.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

● The Assessment List designed to monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes

features the university-wide common measurement methods as well as assessment items created by the departments and graduate programs based on their curricula. After monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes for degree programs, the faculties and graduate programs use the assessment results to make concrete improvements, such as reviewing lesson design and management plans. The Self-Study Portfolio has also been introduced for students to reflect on their learning outcomes. It is commendable that the University measures student learning outcomes in a multifaceted way.

Student Support

- To upgrade campus life support set forth in Grand Layout 2.1, the University established the Health and Wellbeing Center as an organization that integrates and oversees student counseling and other services. The center has organized a system for counselors, physicians, other medical professionals, faculty, and staff members to collaboratively work to provide individual students with consultation and assistance according to their circumstances, with services also available in English and Chinese. In addition, the Student Information Service was set up in the center to serve as the first point of contact to connect students seeking help with the appropriate counseling offices according to their needs. It is commendable that the establishment of the Wellness Center enables the University to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities or other mental and physical health issues in a more systematic way.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion has been established to promote the University's efforts to fulfill its social responsibility, and adopts the Student Staff System with students working in three teams: the Campus Team in charge of promoting campus renovations and facility improvements; the Planning Team responsible for promoting awareness-raising, training, and community contribution of students, faculty, and staff members; and the Communications Team tasked with disseminating information on the headquarters' initiatives. Student staff members engage in various activities, such as participating in the campus environment improvement project, with students creating an image map of a new campus and soliciting a name for the

plaza, co-hosting sustainability promotion events with businesses and other organizations, and establishing the Sophia University SDGs & Sustainability website. It is commendable that not only faculty and staff members but students as well are involved in these activities, with ideas exchanged across various fields leading to the creation of new values.

University Management

- The Collaborative Research on Innovation by Faculty and Staff aims to reform the University's education and research projects beyond the existing framework. Faculty and staff members sharing the same problem awareness conduct joint research on themes they develop, and present to the Office Directors' Meeting proposals and other comments based on the results to improve university management. In response, a project team has been set up within the University to resolve the issues, resulting in concrete improvements and reforms, such as launching university startups and reviewing the work styles of staff. It is commendable that these initiatives contribute to enhancing the University's organizational capabilities beyond sections and job types.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The basic concepts of curriculum implementation, including lesson formats and specific teaching methods, are not specified in the curriculum policies of the Faculty of Theology; Faculty of Liberal Arts; Master's Program in the Graduate School of Theology; Doctoral Program in Japanese Literature in the Graduate School of Humanities; Master's Program in Cultural Interaction in the Graduate School of Humanities; Master's Program in Law in the Graduate School of Law; Doctoral Program in Law in the Graduate School of Law; Master's Program in Linguistics in the Graduate School of Languages and Linguistics; and Master's Program in Area Studies in the Graduate School of Global Studies. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are high at 2.07 in the

Doctoral Program in the Graduate School of Languages and Linguistics, and low at 0.35 in the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Theology, 0.48 in the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Humanities, 0.40 in the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Law, and 0.08 in the Doctoral Program in the Graduate School of Law. This ratio imbalance should be addressed with the graduate schools' student quotas thoroughly managed.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Doctoral Program in Cultural Interaction in the Graduate School of Humanities does not specify the research guidance methods as research guidance plans, and its research guidance schedules are inadequate. These issues must be corrected with these items specified and clarified to students beforehand.