

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

Tohoku Fukushi University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Miyagi, 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 Tohoku Fukushi University

Overview

Tohoku Fukushi University, founded on the spirit of “integration of learning and practice,” defines the educational philosophy of the undergraduate and graduate schools as “the harmony of self-interest and altruism” to undertake educational and research activities. To achieve its founding spirit and educational philosophy, the University draws up an annual activity plan and has laid out the Medium-Term Activity Plan AY2020-AY2024 (hereafter “Midterm Activity Plan”) with seven items that include “education” and “student recruitment.” The University formulated TFU Vision 2025 (hereafter “University Vision”) as a future plan for the year 2025, marking the 150th anniversary of its founding, and engages in various initiatives aimed at “cultivating human resources who can contribute to the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an inclusive community” and achieving “the principle of ‘well-being’ that realizes the happiness of the whole society as well as diverse forms of individual happiness through collaboration with various fields, including welfare, education, medical care, public administration, and industry.”

To achieve the University Vision, the University has developed an internal quality assurance system with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee positioned as a core body. Each division inspects and assesses various issues and development measures in line with the University’s annual activity plan and policies, while using opinions and comments from students and other parties outside the school to carry out the inspections and assessments of educational and research organizations so as to increase the objectivity and validity. The divisions’ inspections and assessments are discussed across divisions by the seven Internal Quality Assurance Subcommittees formed in the faculties, graduate schools, and administrative departments. The subcommittees confirm the contents of each division’s inspections and assessment, as well as share good practices, advice for improvement, and other matters. Moreover, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee issues specific instructions for improvement from a university-wide perspective to each division, and the divisions accordingly take steps for further improvements. The University is promoting a better understanding of its internal quality assurance activities by creating a detailed manual and schedule to describe the series of procedures, interviewing the divisions, and constantly streamlining the internal quality assurance

system. It is highly commendable that various approaches are adopted to improve and enhance the University's internal quality assurance through not only instructions from the Internal Quality Assurance Committee but also by sharing advice and information among the divisions.

The above internal quality assurance activities have generated distinctive initiatives. For example, the Liaison Education Program grants the eligibility to apply for the University's School Recommendation-Based Admissions (High School-University Cooperation) to students who complete certain requirements that include lessons and reports related to the University's principles and its departments' specialized fields. This initiative enables the University to select applicants in line with its admission policy, while developing a mechanism for measuring and improving the program's effectiveness. It is commendable that an increasing number of students are applying for the above type of admissions. Moreover, a number of student volunteer groups engage in various activities as university-recognized organizations. The University provides appropriate information and helps match these student groups with volunteer opportunities; it also recognizes the outstanding self-directed activities as "Community Revitalization Projects" and offers assistance that includes the use of university facilities and financial support. It is commendable that the University actively provides different support measures through relevant departments based on the types of activities while continuously making improvements, resulting in a large number of students gaining volunteer experience.

As for education, all faculties and graduate schools have appropriately designed their curricula based on the diploma and curriculum policies, and adopted various cross-faculty, cross-departmental educational programs, such as using artificial intelligence in the welfare field with the aim of realizing an inclusive community, and upgrading interprofessional education and lifelong learning. To measure and monitor these learning outcomes, the Assessment Policy was established to conduct assessments at the institutional (university) level as well as curriculum (faculties and departments) and subject (lessons and subjects) levels. A portfolio-based rubric is used for the method of assessment in the faculties, while the graduate schools make evaluations by connecting the screening criteria for dissertations and their diploma policies, with the results utilized to improve their curricula, lesson contents, and other items.

There are several areas of improvement the University should address, however, in terms of educational activities. The University approves course credits for subjects that incorporate club activities into lessons to enhance its extracurricular activities, but the practice of recognizing club activities as lessons for credits is inappropriate. The University needs to reconsider the handling of credits in light of the purpose of the credit

system stipulated in the Standards for Establishment of Universities. All graduate schools fail to publicize the screening criteria for themed research or to create research guidance schedules, excluding distance learning courses. Urgent measures are needed to address this situation. Some departments and graduate schools lack specific descriptions in their curriculum policies, while certain graduate schools have insufficient quota fulfillment in student enrollment, and inadequately conduct faculty development (FD) activities. These issues should be addressed.

In the years ahead, the University is expected to resolve the above issues by fully operating its elaborately designed internal quality assurance system led by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, and to make consistent efforts to progress further by utilizing its distinctive features.

Notable Strengths

Internal Quality Assurance

- The Internal Quality Assurance Subcommittees are formed in the faculties, graduate schools, and administrative departments under the Internal Quality Assurance Committee tasked with promoting university-wide internal quality assurance. The subcommittees share each division's inspection and assessment results, and exchange their findings and advice for improvement in an effort to implement their own improvements in a multifaceted way. Based on the subcommittees' efforts, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee undertakes evaluations and management from a university-wide perspective based on the University Vision and activity and other plans. It is commendable that internal quality assurance developed in this way has resulted in the subcommittees actively sharing improvement advice, with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee's instructions for improvement leading to the creation of many distinctive educational activities.

Student Enrollment

- The Liaison Education Program offers lectures and other sessions related to the University's principles and its departments' specialized fields to high school students during the summer break, with the aim of increasing their interest in welfare-related fields. The program grants students who complete the requirements the eligibility to apply for the University's School Recommendation-Based Admissions (High

School-University Cooperation). It is commendable that this distinctive program has helped raise the number of applicants and attract students interested not only in welfare but relevant industries and the healthcare field as well.

Student Support

- The University's lifelong learning and volunteer support division supports a wide variety of university-recognized student volunteer groups by gathering and providing appropriate information, and helping to match these groups with volunteer opportunities. The University also recognizes outstanding self-directed activities as "Community Revitalization Projects" and uses its resources to offer assistance. It is commendable that the University's active support and continued improvement efforts have led to a large number of students gaining volunteer experience, and that this student support initiative embodies the University's founding spirit of "integration of learning and practice."

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In terms of curriculum policy, all undergraduate courses and the graduate school's distance learning courses fail to specify the basic concept of curriculum design, while the basic concept of curriculum implementation is not clarified in the Department of Education, Faculty of Education, and the Department of Nursing and Department of Healthcare Management, Faculty of Health Science. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.30 in the Master's Program in Social Welfare (excluding distance learning courses) in the Graduate School of Comprehensive Welfare, 0.38 in the Master's Program in Psychology for Human Well-Being (excluding distance learning courses) in the Graduate School of Comprehensive Welfare, and 0.30 in the Master's Program in Education in the Graduate School of Education. These ratios should be improved with the graduate schools' student quotas thoroughly managed.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The undergraduate school conducts its own FD activities for educational improvements in each department, but no such activities are implemented in the Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Comprehensive Welfare; Department of Industrial Welfare Management, Faculty of Comprehensive Management; Department of Welfare Informatics Management, Faculty of Comprehensive Management; Department of Rehabilitation, Faculty of Health Science; and Department of Healthcare Management, Faculty of Health Science. Neither the master's and doctoral programs as a whole nor the graduate schools conduct their own FD activities for educational improvements. Moreover, other FD activities aimed at enhancing research activities and promoting social contribution and other activities are implemented, but the participation rates are low. These issues should be addressed.

University Management

- The ratio of next fiscal year's excess of carry-over expenditures to operating income is trending upward, while the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund remains low despite its yearly rise. In the coming years, specific measures to achieve the numerical targets indicated in simulations should be reflected in the University's medium-term financial plan to establish a sound financial base.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- All graduate schools (excluding distance learning courses) fail to state the research guidance schedules as research guidance plans. This issue must be corrected with the schedules specified and clarified to students beforehand.
- No graduate schools publicize the screening criteria for themed research. This issue must be corrected.
- The University offers Practical Sports Activity (four or eight credits for each subject with a maximum of 32 credits over four years) and Practical Support Activities for

Cultural, Educational, Research, and Social Contributions (two or four credits for each subject with a maximum of 16 credits over four years) as basic education subjects, with lessons involving the participation of club and student group activities. However, it is inappropriate to approve credits for club and other such activities positioned as extracurricular activities with no systematic prior and follow-up learning. The purpose of these subjects needs to be reviewed and corrected.