

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

Niigata Sangyo University



| Basic Information of the Institution | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Ownership: Private | Location: Niigata, 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 Niigata Sangyo University

Overview

Niigata Sangyo University, founded on the spirit of “fostering young individuals who support local communities with the aim of reconstructing and developing postwar Japan and shaping a peaceful, happy society,” sets forth the educational philosophy of “cultivating individuals who can improve their character traits to establish an independent self and can contribute to society with a new sense of the times.” The University defines its purpose as “teaching and researching arts and sciences, and imparting advanced specialized knowledge and applied abilities, while fostering individuals with broad perspectives, abundant knowledge, and high moral standards as resourceful members of the community.” The University is revamping its management with the Management Reform Promotion Office as the executive body under the School Corporation Hakusen Gakuin Management Improvement Plan AY2019-AY2023 (hereafter “Management Improvement Plan”) as a five-year medium-term plan to achieve its founding spirit, purpose, and other objectives. To strengthen student recruitment efforts, the University has revised the curricula of the Faculty of Economics and newly established the Distance Education Course.

Regarding internal quality assurance, the Internal Quality Assurance Policy specifies the President, Vice President, and Other Executives Meeting (hereafter “President/Vice President Meeting”) as an organization responsible for promoting university-wide internal quality assurance, under which the University-Wide Self-Study Committee is formed to triennially conduct inspections and assessments on the items related to the University’s mission, purpose, and management. Specifically, the committee sets up a Self-Study Subcommittee for each faculty and graduate school, as well as activities and organizations for education and research, student support, community cooperation, and other initiatives, and compiles the issues and other matters identified from inspections and assessments into the Improvement Activity Check Sheet. Instructions for improvement are issued to each division and other sections through the University-Wide Self-Study Committee. Although they undertake improvement activities based on the university-wide inspection and assessment results, it is unclear whether the President/Vice President Meeting provides feedback for reviews and improvement. With improvement instructions actually issued by the University-Wide Self-Study Committee,

this situation highlights the President/Vice President Meeting's inadequate operation of the internal quality assurance system. In terms of university management, the meeting bodies keep no records of their deliberations, which makes it difficult to review their roles. The University needs to appropriately record and manage the two key meeting bodies' deliberations to ensure the transparency of its management, and to clarify the roles of the President/Vice President Meeting and the University-Wide Self-Study Committee in internal quality assurance to make improvements based on the inspection and assessment results, thereby effectively operating the internal quality assurance system.

As for education, the University has established the diploma policy for each degree to be awarded, formulated the curriculum policies based on the diploma policies, and systematically structured the curricula. The Faculty of Economics provides a number of distinctive lessons encouraging students' active participation, such as a program aimed at resolving regional challenges in cooperation with local communities. The faculty has also developed a system for providing specifically designed support to respond to the various needs of new students; it launched a student support initiative for the first-year basic seminar course for which faculty members in charge of the class, Campus Life Adviser (CLA) staff, and student assistants provide support. The Distance Education Course offers personalized student support by assigning teaching assistants (TAs) for all subjects to encourage students' active, self-directed learning, while arranging interactions among students and between students and faculty members through a hybrid of online and offline formats. With the dropout rate trending upward over the years, these forms of student support are expected to effectively help prevent dropouts.

Among the distinctive initiatives are the University's community contribution activities. The Community Cooperation Center, established in AY2016 to promote university-wide social cooperation, monitors and utilizes regional activity achievements and outcomes to enhance the University's community contribution activities. Notably, the Regional Practical Education Program provides education that combines theory learned in lectures with hands-on practice through fieldwork. These activities contribute to student career development with employment offered by companies and organizations closely tied to regional revitalization. It is highly commendable that the University embodies the slogan of "learning from and revitalizing a region," with the center playing a central role in linking curricular and extracurricular educational activities to regional cooperation.

There are several areas of improvement the University should address, however, in addition to the above need to improve the internal quality assurance structure and to appropriately maintain records of the key meeting bodies' deliberations. In terms of

education, the curriculum policy requires improvement, and the Graduate School of Economics and Business Administration should formulate appropriate research guidance plans. No program has established the methods and indicators to monitor and evaluate the student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy, and appropriate steps must be taken to review the educational effects. Moreover, the University faces the serious challenge of fulfilling the student quota in the Faculty of Economics, excluding the Distance Education Course. This situation is negatively impacting the University's finances, resulting in the school being unable to establish a solid financial base to carry out its educational and research activities. Prompt action is required to strengthen the student recruitment efforts.

In the years ahead, the University is expected to resolve these issues through internal quality assurance efforts, and to advance its distinctive initiatives, such as community cooperation and specifically designed student support that includes the Distance Education Course, to ensure further improvements.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The Community Cooperation Center, established to promote university-wide social cooperation, monitors and utilizes regional activity achievements and outcomes to enhance the University's community contribution activities. Specifically, the Regional Practical Education Program provides education that combines theory learned in lectures with hands-on practice through fieldwork. These activities have increased opportunities for a number of faculty, staff, and students to take part in the activities, and contributed to students' career development with a rising number of students working for companies and organizations closely tied to regional revitalization. It is commendable that the University embodies the school motto/slogan of "learning from and revitalizing a region" by advancing its regional cooperation based on partnership agreements, and by linking curricular and extracurricular educational activities to community outreach.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The President/Vice President Meeting, positioned as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, plays a role in summarizing inspections and assessments, reviewing the progress and outcomes of improvements, and providing feedback, but instructions for improvement are actually issued through the University-Wide Self-Study Committee. This situation highlights the inadequate functioning of the meeting as an organization promoting internal quality assurance. In addition, there are no records of the deliberations by these meeting bodies, making their roles and functions in internal quality assurance unclear. These issues should be addressed by clarifying the roles of the two organizations in the internal quality assurance system to undertake improvement efforts based on inspections and assessments under the university-wide structure.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Faculty of Economics and the Distance Education Course inadequately specify the basic concept of curriculum implementation in their curriculum policies. The Graduate School of Economics and Business Administration fails to specify the basic concepts of curriculum design and implementation. Improvements should be made across campus to establish an appropriate policy specifying these basic concepts in the curriculum policy.
- The Faculty of Economics uses external assessment tests to measure and monitor student learning outcomes, but only measures certain skills stated in the diploma policy. The Distance Education Course measures the learning outcomes through student surveys on satisfaction, while the Graduate School of Economics and Business Administration uses class evaluation surveys, interim dissertation report sessions, and final screening results. The connection between the evaluation indicators and the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy is vague, however, and university-wide efforts should be made to appropriately measure and monitor the learning outcomes.

University Management

- The President/Vice President Meeting is positioned as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, and discusses important measures pertaining to teaching, learning, and administration. No records of the meeting's

deliberations are kept, however, and improvements should be made to properly record and manage the meeting's deliberations and decisions to clarify its role and ensure the transparency of the decision-making process.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Graduate School of Economics and Business Administration specifies the research guidance methods, but fails to state the schedules from enrollment to degree completion. This situation must be corrected with more appropriate research guidance plans formulated and clarified to students beforehand.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are low at 0.81 in the Faculty of Economics, excluding the Distance Education Course, and 0.60 in the Department of Cultural Economics in the same faculty. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are also low at 0.64 in the Faculty of Economics, 0.75 in the Department of Economics and Business Administration, and 0.50 in the Department of Cultural Economics. These ratios must be improved with the faculty's student quotas thoroughly managed.

University Management

- The ratio of next fiscal year's excess of carry-over expenditures to operating income has been remarkably high over the years, while the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund is markedly low. This situation highlights that the University is far from establishing a solid financial base to sustainably carry out its educational and research activities. The University has presented plans to stabilize its income by securing the enrollment quotas and taking other steps while implementing cost reduction measures in the School Corporation Hakusen Gakuin Medium-Term Plan AY2024-AY2028 and the School Corporation Hakusen Gakuin Management Improvement Plan AY2024-AY2028. The University is recommended to promptly establish a sound financial base by steadily implementing these measures to improve its financial balance, and by analyzing in detail the numbers of enrolled, repeat-year,

and dropout students to strictly manage its student quotas.