

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

Hokusei Gakuen University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hokkaido, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Hokusei Gakuen University

Overview

Hokusei Gakuen University, founded on the spirit of Protestantism, defines its fundamental principle of “educating independent people who have informed opinions and a sense of responsibility, and who contribute to society” based on “intellectual integrity,” and cites the goal of becoming a “an educational institution that is open to the local community, society, and the world..” The University also sets forth the purpose of “fostering a broad range of knowledge based on Christian character education, conducting in-depth specialized academic teaching and research, and developing students’ intellectual and applied abilities” To realize its founding spirit, fundamental principle, and purpose, the University strives to maintain and enhance the quality of its educational and research activities through the aspiration to become a new university of the humanities and social sciences with a focus on Christian character education and fostering humanity, social skills, and an international mindset, in addition to teaching informatics, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This ambition is laid out in the Hokusei Gakuen Medium- to Long-term Plan –Grand Design 2020-2040 (hereafter, the “Medium- to Long-term Plan”) formulated as an action plan of the corporation that established the University.

Regarding the University’s internal quality assurance, the body in charge was reorganized as the University Evaluation and Quality Assurance Committee in 2019 to develop a new internal quality assurance system, and self-studies have been carried out since AY2021 to monitor the progress of the Medium- to Long-term Plan. However, the new system does not clarify the roles of neither the Departmental Chairperson Committee tasked with deliberating and deciding on the medium- to long-term issues nor the University Evaluation and Quality Assurance Committee serving as a body promoting internal quality assurance. Their roles also overlap those of other meeting bodies involved in internal quality assurance. This situation indicates that the roles and coordination of the internal quality assurance system are inadequate. Reorganization is necessary to develop an internal quality assurance system that conducts more effective self-studies, but the meeting bodies in charge should be restructured once again for this purpose. Moreover, the undergraduate and graduate schools have failed to conduct systematic self-studies. This issue should be addressed with inspections and assessments undertaken in an appropriate way.

As for the University's education, all undergraduate and graduate schools have established curriculum policies in line with the diploma policies, with their curricula properly designed. All undergraduate schools have created curriculum maps to clarify the curriculum structure and the connections among the subjects, and a course numbering system has been introduced to encourage students to take subjects in a systematic and sequential way. In addition, each department adopts active learning methods in specialized education subjects to help students independently put what they learn in lectures to practical use. To monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes, the School of Humanities has designed a rubric articulating each department's diploma policy by item and level for students to reflect on their studies. The other undergraduate and graduate schools are still in the process of developing methods to monitor and evaluate the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies. Efforts should be made to measure student learning outcomes after informing the trial results university-wide, and to visualize the knowledge and skills students have acquired.

The University has undertaken notable initiatives to implement character education stipulated in its purpose. The University has created an environment for students to help and learn from each other through the Hokusei Peer Supporter system, along with a note-taking support mechanism for students with disabilities. It is highly commendable that the University promotes the growth of student supporters while contributing to its mission statement of educating independent people who can contribute to society.

However, there are issues described above that the University needs to address regarding the internal quality assurance system, systematic self-study, and monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy. In addition, some programs of the graduate schools have low ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap that should be improved with the graduate schools stepping up their student recruitment activities.

The University is striving to improve and enhance the quality of its education while connecting with society by regularly soliciting opinions and evaluations from government agencies, the local business community, and other entities to ensure the objectivity and validity of its overall self-study activities. In the coming years, the University is expected to progress further by streamlining its internal quality assurance system to address the above issues, enhancing its distinctive initiatives that include student support services, and promoting educational and social contribution activities, thereby realizing its fundamental

principle, purpose, and mission statement.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- The Hokusei Peer Supporter system was established to encourage students to help and learn from each other. Upper-year students and graduates as peer supporters hold orientation and course guidance sessions for new students, and offer consultation and other services in the Learning Commons. In addition, note-taking assistance is provided to the hearing impaired by students who have completed the University's training course. These support services help both students giving and receiving assistance to grow. It is commendable that these student activities are conducive to the University's mission statement of educating independent people who can contribute to society.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- Progress management of the University's self-study and Medium- to Long-term Plan has been integrated since AY2021, but the roles of the University Evaluation and Quality Assurance Committee serving as an organization promoting internal quality assurance and the Departmental Chairperson Committee tasked with formulating medium- to long-term plans are inadequate. In fact, the University Management Board and the University Education Board are positioned as university-wide teaching and learning management organizations participating in the activities. This situation indicates that the roles and coordination of the meeting bodies involved in internal quality assurance are not functioning properly. Moreover, the undergraduate and graduate schools have failed to carry out systematic self-studies. The University should address these issues by reviewing the internal quality assurance policy, procedures, and relevant regulations before implementing self-study activities, and by developing a mechanism to manage improvement and support measures based on the self-study results.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- All undergraduate schools, excluding the School of Humanities, and graduate schools gather information on career development based on the departments' specialized fields of study to monitor student learning outcomes, but their efforts are inadequately linked to the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.38 in the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Literature and 0.46 in the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Social Welfare. These ratios should be improved with the graduate schools' student quotas thoroughly managed.