

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

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Oita, 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 Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Overview

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University proclaims “freedom, peace and humanity,” “international mutual understanding,” and “the future shape of the Asia-Pacific region” as its basic ideals in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Opening of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Based on this declaration, the University defines its purpose as “offering a wide range of knowledge as an academic center in accordance with the general principles and methods of education stipulated in the Basic Act on Education, as well as teaching and researching in-depth specialized knowledge pertaining to the Asia-Pacific region to develop students’ intellectual, moral and practical abilities.” To achieve its mission and purpose, the University laid out the APU 2030 Vision in 2015 as a medium- to long-term vision based on a wide range of opinions from not only students, faculty, and staff, but alumni, company officials, and local citizens as well. To attain this vision, the University has formulated the APU 2020 Second-half Plan and the Gakuen Vision R 2030 APU Challenge Design (APU Challenge Design) as medium- to long-term plans to enhance its educational and research activities.

Regarding the University’s internal quality assurance, the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Internal Quality Assurance Policy, Self-Assessment Implementation Policy, and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Assessment Policy specify the university-wide policies and procedures, with the University Senate Meeting, Self-Assessment Committee, University Evaluation Committee, and Administrative Committee formed to operate the university-wide system. The University’s internal quality assurance system is functioning effectively as a mechanism used to conduct annual self-studies, reflect the results in the following academic year’s plan and other programs, and adopt measures for educational improvements. In addition, the University earned international accreditations from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in 2015 and the Association of MBAs (AMBA) in 2020. The University was also granted UNWTO. TedQual (Tourism Education Quality) recertification in 2021 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. Through these international certifications, the University is enhancing the credibility and international compatibility of its internal quality assurance.

As for the University's education, all faculties and graduate schools have systematically designed their curricula based on the diploma and curriculum policies. To enhance the quality of education, the University is promoting multicultural collaborative learning throughout the university, with students taking full advantage of the multicultural educational environment to acquire diverse ideas and perspectives, overcome mutual differences, work together, and actively learn from each other. It is particularly notable that the University has adopted multicultural collaborative learning to embody its mission and purpose with this educational methodology taking root.

The University has appropriately established a student support system based on its policy. The University has developed a systematic peer learning mechanism for students to help and learn from each other, created the regular Peer Leader Training subject to promote this mechanism, and adopted a teaching assistant (TA) system to actively support the management of multicultural collaborative learning lessons. The learning support centers also operate based on the peer learning mechanism with trained students participating as support staff. These are outstanding initiatives that combine student support and education to encourage multicultural collaborative learning with peer learning active in various settings.

In terms of student enrollment, the University is upgrading various initiatives based on its policy by appropriately operating the systems for student recruitment, applicant selection, and management. The University has set enrollment goals and recruited students from many countries to achieve a high ratio of international students, with the aim of realizing a multicultural and multilingual campus unique worldwide in line with its mission and purpose. While accepting international students makes the University highly vulnerable to external factors, including international affairs, economic conditions, and natural disasters, the University continues to pursue campus diversity by introducing digitalization and online education, carrying out inspections and assessments from a marketing perspective, and undertaking improvement and enhancement efforts based on the findings. These approaches are highly commendable.

There are issues the University needs to address, however. In the diploma policy of the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, the Asia Pacific Studies and International Cooperation Policy majors established in the same master's program award their respective degrees, but the student learning outcomes stated in their diploma policies are identical. This issue should be addressed.

In the coming years, the University is expected to advance its numerous outstanding initiatives through internal quality assurance efforts, and progress further by stepping up its efforts to establish a new faculty and to enhance its international compatibility.

Notable Strengths

Mission and Purpose

- The APU 2030 Vision was formulated through a year-long exchange of views with students, faculty, staff, and local community members to realize the University's basic ideals of "freedom, peace and humanity," "international mutual understanding," and "the future shape of the Asia-Pacific region." The future vision specifies four types of human resources to be developed as "APU graduates possess the power to change our world," with specific initiatives for the aims outlined to conduct educational and research activities. It is commendable that the University is working with its school members and stakeholders to further clarify the basic principles, and that these principles have spread and taken root both on campus and off, and are contributing to the development of multicultural collaborative learning and other distinctive initiatives.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Multicultural Cooperative Workshop is a required subject for first-year students, with small mixed groups of international and Japanese students discussing and giving presentations on given themes. The workshop helps students acquire language skills, understand different cultures, and study with diverse people. It is commendable that the University encourages students from various backgrounds to work together based on the skills acquired in the first-year subject, thereby cultivating individuals who can collaborate with others, resolve conflicts through dialogue, and make a positive impact on society.

Student Enrollment

- The University is actively accepting international students and promoting

digitalization of online application and admissions processes in stages. The University was the first school in Japan to introduce an international mainstream student recruitment and application system for its entrance examinations in AY2021. This system allows prospective students to participate in student recruitment events, file applications, hold interviews, receive announcements of successful applicants, and enroll on the same platform. With the system also facilitating contact with applicants, the University was able to steadily accept international students amid the coronavirus pandemic. It is commendable that the University has successfully attracted students from various countries in an effort to realize a multicultural educational environment based on its principles.

Student Support

- The University positions peer learning as part of its education, and provides opportunities for many students to serve as support staff in various settings, such as resident assistants (RA) in the AP House dormitories, assistants for new students at the Library Commons and Self-Access Learning Center, and student staff for community exchange support events. To create an environment for students to help and learn from each other, the Introduction to Peer Leader Training subject is provided for first-year students to develop interpersonal skills, discussion techniques using Japanese and English, and other abilities, with the aim of fostering and enhancing the skills required of student staff. It is commendable that these efforts are contributing to the independence and growth of both students giving and receiving support while evaluating each other for improvements.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In the diploma policy of the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, the Asia Pacific Studies and International Cooperation Policy majors specify identical student learning outcomes despite different degrees being awarded. This issue should be addressed.