

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

Iwate Prefectural University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Iwate, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2015	
Accreditation Status: Accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016 – March.31.2023)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Iwate Prefectural University

Overview

Iwate Prefectural University (hereafter, the University), founded as a public university with four faculties in 1998, opened a graduate school and became a public corporation in 2005. The University provides education on the Takizawa Campus in Takizawa City and the Aiina Campus in Morioka City based on the founding spirit of fostering rich culture and respecting people.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2008, the University has established two major objectives: educating from a student perspective, focusing on the growth of students; and tackling activities from a local perspective to support the local community in this difficult age. The University has worked on assuring the quality of education and has improved its internal quality assurance system based on self-study. Furthermore, the University has introduced an integrated database that has resulted in innovation within the system and has produced positive results.

In addition to the development of the internal quality assessment system, a notable feature is, the establishment of the Center for the Advancement of Higher Education, which is intended to reinforce the University's teaching system and to enhance the common basic subjects across all faculties in order to cultivate students' education and fundamental skills. It is commendable that the University has made a variety of efforts to connect with local populations, such as strengthening competencies as working person through career education, collaborating with external organizations for research in an effort to make local contributions, and promoting research in collaborative settings of local-academia and/or business-academia for local issues (such as earthquake disaster restoration).

However, with regard to educational issues, the maximum number of credits a student can register for in a year is high in some of the faculties. Also, several doctoral programs in the graduate schools have not adopted the credit-based system, and course work is not offered. This practice raises questions regarding the substance of graduate education. Furthermore, enrollment management to fulfill the transfer student admission cap is another area of concern. The University should improve the internal quality assurance system to enhance three policies—namely, the policy on degree award, the curriculum design policy and the admission policy—and should improve the quality of education.

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has set a group of common basic subjects across four faculties as the basic education subjects. In particular, liberal arts subjects aim to examine the area of expertise from a relative point of view and encourage students to think by themselves. In an attempt to help students use their knowledge and experiences for the betterment of society, the University also offers area-based, theme-based, and project-based subjects to create opportunities to study basic education. It is commendable that these efforts result in helping students gain various perspectives and thoughts across several areas of expertise.
- It is commendable that study groups have been formed that invite graduates working in public policy or officials from other prefectural municipalities to gain an education

in public-academia collaboration and to promote effective and practical research. For example, in the Special Course on Public Policy in the Graduate School of Policy Studies, study groups focusing on policy, legal work, and asset management have been organized because the course's main students are municipality officials. As a result, the course has accessed information from core subjects, such as the study of policy and legal work, the study of public policy, and a study guide of public policy.

Student Support

- It is commendable that the University has collaborated with numerous companies to provide students with internships that improve employment ratios and help each student actively develop competencies as working person and other basic business skills. By adopting the policy to develop such competencies, the Faculty of Policy Studies and the Faculty of Software and Information Science have worked on making career-development subjects a requirement for students, along with an “E-project” where students work in teams to create projects that help them develop basic business skills.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the Regional Policy Research Center has promoted collaborative research with external organizations, solicited for local collaborative research based on the proposals by faculty or by the local community, and carried out several projects. These projects have helped resolve local issues, such as health care and welfare and the reconstruction effort from the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster. In addition, it is commendable that the Iwate Monozukuri and Software Integration Technology Center (i-Mos) has contributed to society by making suggestions about the productivity of manufacturing industries and adding enhanced values to products. These suggestions have led to product development and patent applications.

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University has established the University Evaluation Committee to lead the development of the self-study system across the University, and has reviewed measures for more efficient implementation to achieve goals based on the second midterm plan. The committee has categorized the midterm plan's 50 measures into six core plans and produced unique evaluation indicators that reflect the accreditation standards. It is commendable that the University can evaluate achievement with objective data and improve teaching by sharing information among all faculty members and staff by introducing a system to allow analysis that uses the indicators.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The policy on degree award is defined for each degree program in the Graduate School of Policy Studies and the types of persons to foster are clear. However, the abilities that students are required to develop before degree completion are the same for the master's and doctoral programs. The University should revise the policies, to clearly state the specific learning outcomes required for the completion in each degree program.

- The doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Social Welfare and the Graduate School of Policy Studies do not provide a curriculum with research work and course work properly combined. Considering the objectives of the credit-based degree-granting system, the doctoral program should offer appropriate educational content.
- In the Faculty of Social Welfare, the maximum number of credits students can register for a year has been set high at 56 in the first and second years, 64 in the third year, and no limit for the fourth year and transfer students. Also, the number is set high at 50 in the first and second years and 60 in the third and fourth years in the Faculty of Policy Studies. These numbers should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having the credit system.
- In the doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Nursing, the Graduate School of Social Welfare, and the Graduate School of Software and Information Science, some students complete all the requirements except the dissertation, and leave the university before completing their dissertation requirement within the time limit set by the University. Later, when these students submit their dissertations, even though they do not have enrollment status, they are granted doctoral degrees in the same manner as those students continuously enrolled. This is an inappropriate use of the system that should be corrected. In accordance with the purpose of having doctoral programs, the University should create measures to enhance the degree completion within the required time frame.

Enrollment

- The master's programs and the doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Social Welfare and in the Graduate School of Software and Information Science identify the target persons but not the target students in the admission policy. This should be improved. The master's programs and the doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Nursing and the Graduate School of Policy Studies do not have separate admission policies. This should also be improved.
- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.13 in the master's program and 0.27 in the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Policy Studies. These numbers should be improved. The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is low at 0.20 and 0.55 in the Faculty of Nursing and the Faculty of Software and Information Science, respectively. These numbers should be improved.