

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

Okinawa University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Okinawa, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2013	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2014 – March.31.2021)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Okinawa University

Notable Strengths

Mission and purpose

- It is commendable that Okayama University (hereafter, the University) has re-examined its mission and purposes and succeeded them with new developments. In 1978, the University adopted the mission of being an “open university rooted in, learning from, and living with the local communities.” In 2008, at the fifty year anniversary of its founding, the University published the “New Okinawa University Manifesto,” a document to succeed and renew the previous mission and purposes, and pronounced a new mission, “Toward a University that Co-creates the Future and Local Communities.” In 2012, based on earlier missions, it set up an action code called the “Charter of Okinawa University.”

Social cooperation and contribution

- It is commendable that the University has made various efforts for social cooperation and contribution. For example, the long-lasting Saturday Culture Lectures take up topics broadly related to Okinawa region, such as the Battle of Okinawa, the problems caused by U.S. military bases, and cultures of Ryukyu. “The Mobile Citizens’ College” has targeted isolated islands that lack institutions of higher learning and attracted many local citizens, helping to disseminate the value of the creation of peaceful society, of self-governance, and of human rights. Cosponsored by the board of education or the town office of each island, the University holds lectures on such topics as environmental protection, local education, and revitalization of the local communities. It is also commendable that the Junior Scholar Research Support program offered by the “Regional Research Institute” helps the research efforts of elementary, junior high, and high school students of the Nansei Islands including Okinawa, by awarding grants and offering advice through teachers who work with students on site.
- It is commendable that the mission of “Co-creation of the Future and Local Communities” has come to be widely known throughout the region. Since 2008, in order to foster key persons who would tackle problem solving in the region, the University has launched the “Research and Practice Project for Isolated Islands.” The themes students explore include: facilitating self-support groups for junior high and high school students who live on isolated islands without higher education institutions, environmental education, and opinion polls on the protection of wildlife. The students involved have built rapport with local residents, and more students have chosen to work on isolated islands after graduation.

Administration and finance

- It is commendable that the University has constructed an environment for all faculty and staff members to voice their opinions, and has taken the stance that faculty and staff members are jointly involved in university management. The faculty and staff members share information and awareness about the unified operation of the University through the “Joint Workshop of Faculty and Staff,” which is intended for the entire University. More than eighty percent of faculty and staff participate in the workshop, and occasionally students participate and make suggestions. The results are published as the “Report of the Joint Workshop of Faculty and Staff” or as the result of opinion polls taken at the workshop occasions. The suggestions are put together by the president’s executive committee, then examined by each department, and finally taken up as part of the “Med- and Long-Term Management Plan.”

Internal quality assurance

- It is commendable that faculty and staff members, led by the president, share existing problems to carry out self-study and evaluation processes in order to improve the University. At the summary meeting, held prior to the election of a new president, faculty and staff members examine the current situation of the university management and its problems, following its future mission, “Co-creation of the Future,” based on the summary report presented by the president. The results of this process are reflected in the “Mid- and Long-Term Management Plan,” drawn up by the administrative unit in charge and completed by the “Mid- and Long-Term Management Plan and Self-study Administration Committee” within the first year of each new president’s term.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational content, methods, and outcome

- At the University, the contents of the syllabi vary in their specificities. Specifically, there are several imperfections in the syllabi of the Graduate School of Contemporary Okinawan Studies. For example, some lack lesson plans. This should be improved.
- In the Department of Law and Economics, the department-specific faculty development opportunities to improve the content and methods of education have not been implemented. This should be improved.
- Student attrition is high in undergraduate programs, and the ratio of students awarded degrees to fourth year students who are expected to graduate is low. This should be improved by considering and formulating a plan for systematic learning and study support.

Enrollment

- The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is low at 0.30 in the Department of Law and Economics in the Faculty of Law and Economics, and at 0.43 in the Department of International Communication and at 0.25 in the Department of Child Studies in the Faculty of Humanities. These numbers should be improved.

Education and research environment

- A full-time librarian with professional knowledge of library science has not been hired for the library. This should be improved.

Administration and finance

- Accounting documents of 2012 listed a title two endowment that was based on an aborted plan. It is said that, within the school year of 2013, the executive board and the board of trustees would plan to break into the title two endowment’s fund, and would begin to set aside money for a new title two endowment in order to purchase an alternate site. However, a title two endowment is supposed to be systematically incorporated into the account when a future plan approved by the executive board and board of trustees exits to acquire a fixed property. This should be improved immediately.

Areas of Serious Concern

Faculty and faculty organization

- The University as a whole is short of three professors in order to satisfy the Standard for the Establishment of Universities. This must be corrected.

Enrollment

- The average of the ratios of last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshmen admission cap is low at 0.82 and the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.70 in the Department of International Communication in the Faculty of Humanities. This situation must be corrected.