

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

Akita International University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Akita, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2021	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2029)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Akita International University

Overview

Akita International University defines its purpose as “to educate students so that they may use their fluency and practical skills in foreign languages, especially in English, and broader knowledge of global issues to contribute to the prosperity of both the international and local community.” To this end, the University has established a Faculty of International Liberal Arts and a Graduate School of Global Communication and Language (professional degree program). Both the undergraduate and graduate programs have their own mission statements, with the undergraduate program’s mission being “to prepare students to be leaders in global society” based on the philosophy of “international liberal arts education” of ‘international liberal arts education’” and the graduate program’s mission being “to prepare students for careers in professional communication fields that make positive contributions to today’s global society.” These are based on the objectives of the public university corporation, and in order to realize them, the University has established a medium-term plan based on the medium-term goals set out by Akita Prefecture. Furthermore, in 2014, the University drew up the “Akita International University Long-Term Vision,” which takes a general 10-year view of the institution’s future status and direction, and is striving to develop talented personnel who will be useful to society.

In terms of internal quality assurance, the “Academic Affairs Executive Committee” is positioned as the central body for promoting internal quality assurance, while the “Self-Evaluation Committee” and “Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committee” conduct checks and reviews for the undergraduate and graduate schools, respectively, in accordance with annual plans. Initiatives for improvement are discussed by the “Academic Affairs Executive Committee” for matters relating to the undergraduate division and by the “Graduate School Management Committee” under the Education and Research Council for matters relating to the graduate school. Finally, the “University Management Committee” deliberates on measures related to the intake of students, budgets, etc. necessary for the implementation of these initiatives. As such, the JUAA can conclude that PDCA cycle management and the internal quality assurance system are functioning, as each organization has assigned roles of their own and are working in cooperation with each other to comprehensively

consider and implement internal quality assurance. Furthermore, it is commendable that as part of this system, the University has implemented multiple assessments adopting a global perspective, such as evaluations by an External Evaluation Committee, acquisition of international joint accreditation including overseas accreditation agencies, and benchmark assessments based on information from overseas liberal arts colleges, thereby ensuring objectivity in assessment and proactively addressing assessment from external perspectives in line with the University's objectives.

Regarding education, three policies (degree award policy, curriculum design and implementation policy, and student admission policy) have been developed to set out a sequential curriculum in which students pursue their own assignments in preparation for the "Capstone Seminar," which is the culmination of their studies. In particular, all students are required to study abroad for one year during their enrollment, and for this reason, the University has established a generous system that includes an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program and Special Advising Care (SAC) in the first year of study. These efforts are worthy of special mention in that they provide education that enables students to acquire advanced language skills through education and support, and to independently identify and solve problems from an interdisciplinary perspective by integrating field-specific learning and study abroad experience. In terms of measurement of learning outcomes, the undergraduate division has made GPA a requirement for graduation, study abroad, etc., and is working on visualizing outcomes by creating a new rubric for the four components of language proficiency, as well as implementing multifaceted measurement and evaluation based on the Collegiate Learning Assessment used at US universities, while the graduate division is working on measurement and evaluation based on degree award policies through strict grade management and teaching surveys. In addition, since AY2021, the University has advocated "Applied International Liberal Arts (AILA)," a development of the traditional liberal arts education, and has been undertaking new forms of education by establishing three study areas (Global Business, Global Studies, and Global Connectivity) under the Department of International Liberal Arts. It is commendable that, by integrating these three study areas, the University is implementing effective education that cultivates the ability to discuss issues from multiple perspectives beyond students' own areas of specialization. In addition, as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19, an "IT Task Force" was launched to coincide with the introduction of online education. In addition to making efforts to manage operations so that there is no disruption to

education, the establishment of the “Student Online Class Supporters” system is a distinctive feature of the initiative.

The University promotes autonomous learning through student life in conjunction with education, and has created an environment conducive to such learning. Specifically, it is highly commendable that the University has enhanced its educational impact by providing student dormitories, a library with 24-hour access, and various centers that promote autonomous and passive learning, thereby ensuring a seamless relationship between learning at the University and interacting and living with students. In addition, the development of student dormitories into “Themed Houses” is intended to deepen the understanding of and exchange with different cultures through daily life.

Furthermore, in order to fulfill its role as a public university, the University is also committed to social cooperation and social contribution. It is highly commendable that the University is making efforts to improve the language skills necessary for the internationalization of the region by holding “Teachers’ Seminars” for English teachers at elementary and junior high schools in and outside the prefecture as well as various seminars for children and students.

As mentioned above, the University has been promoting advanced and ambitious educational activities to contribute to the local community by cultivating talented individuals who can play an active role in global society, and is constantly experimenting with new educational methods. Going forward, the JUAA hopes that the President’s leadership and university-wide academic management will be thoroughly implemented from the perspective of global standards, and that the objectives and mission statement of the corporation and the university will be fulfilled through the effective operation and testing of the internal quality assurance system.

Notable Strengths

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- All students are required to study abroad for one year during their enrollment, and in their first year, students undergo the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in proficiency level-based classes to acquire the skills necessary to study abroad. The program uses a rubric to visualize ability, and students who require supplementary instruction are given guidance under the Special Advising Care (SAC) system. Expanding on these existing efforts, the University has launched “Applied International Liberal Arts (AILA),” which integrates the four skills of

English with field-specific learning and study abroad experience, yielding an educational method that allows students to independently discover and solve tasks from an interdisciplinary perspective. This is commendable for its effectiveness in cultivating the ability to discuss issues from multiple perspectives beyond students' own areas of specialization.

Education and Research Environment

- A multicultural campus that seamlessly provides opportunities for students to learn and interact with each other has been established through learning facilities such as student dormitories, a library with 24-hour access, the Active Learning and Assessment Center (ALAC), which encourages students to study independently, and the Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center (LDIC), which provides support for self-directed foreign language study. In addition, Themed Houses, where students live in dormitories based on themes of their own interest will be established, providing opportunities for Japanese and international students to deepen their understanding of the culture of Japan and Akita Prefecture, as well as the languages and cultures of other countries. It is commendable that through global exchange and the discovery of local values, as well as the multicultural environment that contributes to the local community, the university cultivates an understanding of the importance of harmony in daily life and the ability to achieve it.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The university has set out support for school education in its medium-term goals and medium-term plan. This includes support for improving the English communication skills of junior and senior high school students in and outside of the prefecture through the “English Village,” “Teachers’ Seminars” for English teachers at elementary and junior high schools in and outside of the prefecture, exchange of students including international students to elementary and junior high schools, and various seminars for high school students to improve their English language skills. It is commendable that the program has led to the improvement of language skills necessary for the internationalization of Akita Prefecture and other parts of the region while involving students and foreign exchange students.