

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

**Yamagata Prefectural Yonezawa University of Nutrition Sciences**



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Yamagata, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2020	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.1.2021 – March.31.2028)	

## **Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Yamagata Prefectural Yonezawa University of Nutrition Sciences**

### **Overview**

Aiming to “contribute to healthy and affluent lives for Yamagata’s residents”, Yamagata Prefectural Yonezawa University of Nutrition Sciences opened in 2014 by developing the Department of Health and Nutrition of Yamagata Prefectural Yonezawa Women’s Junior College, which is part the same educational corporation, into a four-year university. It consists of a Department of Health and Nutrition, a Faculty of Health and Nutrition, and a graduate school master’s program based on that. In order to realize its objectives, the University has drawn up a mid-term plan under its establishing body, the Yamagata Prefecture Public University Corporation, and is working to further enhance the education and research that it conducts.

With respect to education, both the undergraduate and graduate divisions have designed their curricula appropriately in line with the degree award policy and curriculum design and implementation policy. At the undergraduate level, the curriculum focuses on the training of dietitians, and efforts are made to teach students about the food and history of Yamagata Prefecture through lectures and practical training. At the graduate level, the aim is to develop nutrition professionals with advanced specialized knowledge, practical skills, and research and survey skills. To this end, in addition to course work in the form of “Advanced Nutrition Science” (divided into basic and advanced courses) and supervised research work, an emphasis is placed on the inclusion of internship courses in the curriculum.

The University runs the only training course for registered dietitians in Yamagata Prefecture, and conducts advanced research on nutritional science in its graduate program. Taking advantage of these features, the University is actively engaged in social contribution activities under its Community Outreach and Research Promotion Center, to which all full-time faculty members belong. Specifically, the University provides learning opportunities for those involved in nutrition and related professions in cooperation with the prefectural Dietitians’ Association and other related organizations. It also contributes to the health of the prefecture’s residents via activities such as the “Salt Reduction Project”, in which students and faculty participate. This is highly commendable because it is expected to contribute to the realization of the University’s mission and purpose, and to the development in Yamagata prefecture of both “a think tank role for research on health and nutrition” and “a center for lifelong learning for

those involved in nutrition” .

However, there are several issues that should be addressed. Firstly, with respect to the measurement of learning outcomes at the undergraduate level, although the pass rate for the relevant national examination is used as the primary indicator, there is a need to develop, measure, and apply more multifaceted indicators in order to understand the abilities, as stipulated in the University’s degree award policy, that are expected of students when they graduate from the undergraduate program. In addition, there are no university-specific faculty development (referred to below as “FD”) activities at the graduate school. Therefore, there is a need to conduct systematic training to improve the quality of education, such as approaches to research supervision.

In terms of internal quality assurance to guarantee and improve the quality of education on a constant and ongoing basis, although the University’s mid-term plan includes goals relating to internal quality assurance, the University has not clearly stated its policies and procedures for implementing such. In addition, although the “Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee” conducts annual reviews of the yearly plans that are based on the mid-term plan, these only ascertain the expected achievements of the mid-term plan, and there is nothing to suggest that substantial checks and reviews to identify strengths and challenges are being conducted. In addition, although the Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee is designated as the organization responsible for conducting internal quality assurance, the authority and division of roles among the main bodies involved in internal quality assurance, such as the “Education and Research Advisory Council” and the “Management Advisory Council”, are not clearly defined, and the Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee is not structured to fulfill its role as an organization for cooperating with the relevant bodies to facilitate internal quality assurance. It is essential that these points be rectified, and the internal quality assurance process that leads to improvements based on the results of checks and reviews be made to function under the management of the internal quality assurance implementation organizations.

Going forward, we hope that the University will solve these issues through internal quality assurance efforts and further develop highly distinctive educational activities and initiatives.

## **Notable Strengths**

### *Social Cooperation and Contribution*

- In terms of social cooperation and contribution, the University's Community Outreach and Research Promotion Center serves as a base for promoting research and social activities, including participation in prefectural policies and projects relating to health promotion and seminars for certified nutritionists. These activities are conducted from two perspectives that represent the universities distinctive features: performing a think tank role for research on health and nutrition and a providing a center for lifelong learning for those involved in nutrition. All full-time faculty members belong to this center, and the center not only publicizes the research and social activities it is conducting, but also engages proactively in regional collaboration-based research and activities that reflect social trends and policies, such as by proposing research and social activities for which there will be a pressing need in the future. The activities and features of this center are commendable because, as a center for research and social activities in the local area, it can be expected to return the University's research outcomes to society.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

#### *Educational Program and Learning Outcomes*

- At the undergraduate level, GPA and the results of the national dieticians' examination are used as indicators to measure learning outcomes. However, from the perspective of ascertaining learning outcomes, as indicated in the degree award policy, this is not sufficient. Improvements are required accordingly.

#### *Faculty and Faculty Organization*

- No graduate school-specific FD activities relating to educational improvement are conducted, so improvements should be made to ensure that they are implemented appropriately.

### **Recommendation**

#### *Internal Quality Assurance*

- Although the University's mid-term plan includes goals relating to internal quality assurance, the University has not drawn up policies and procedures for

implementing such, and its approach to internal quality assurance remains unclear. In addition, although the “Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee” conducts annual reviews of the yearly plans that are based on the mid-term plan, these only ascertain the expected achievements of the mid-term plan, and no substantial checks and reviews to identify strengths and challenges are being conducted. In addition, although the “Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee” is designated as the organization responsible for conducting internal quality assurance, the powers and division of roles among the main bodies involved in internal quality assurance, such as the “Education and Research Advisory Council” and the “Management Advisory Council,” are not clearly defined, and the Mid-term Plan Implementation Committee is not structured to fulfill its role as an organization for cooperating with the relevant bodies to facilitate internal quality assurance. In light of the above, the University should establish policies and procedures for internal quality assurance, clearly specify the powers and division of roles among the bodies involved in the University regulations, identify strengths and issues through checks and reviews in an appropriate manner, and make the internal quality assurance process that leads to improvements based on the results of these checks and reviews function under the management of the internal quality assurance implementation organizations.