

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

Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Gifu, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2031)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University

Overview

Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University, founded on the Mahayana Buddhist spirit of “equality,” “tolerance,” and “altruism,” sets out the mission of “fully developing an individual’s character by fostering rich humanity and solid ethics,” thereby “cultivating individuals with high ambitions, independence, social skills, and creativity, who will pave the way for a future society using their adaptability to rapidly changing times and play their role as next-generation leaders with intellectual and moral virtues and a creative global mindset.” To achieve its founding spirit and purpose, the 60th Gifu Shotoku Gakuen Grand Future Design (hereafter “Grand Design”) was formulated in 2018, specifying the three pillars of “establishing a new Shotoku brand,” “fostering creative individuals (individuals of high integrity with high principles),” and “global and career education based on religious education.”

Regarding the University’s education, the university-wide diploma policy outlines six items of “basic education,” “specialized knowledge,” “understanding others,” “contribution to community and society,” “self-formation and self-development,” and “attitude,” and the faculties clarify the diploma policies for their specialized departments based on these items. The curricula are systematically designed based on the curriculum policy, and curriculum maps illustrate the connection between the diploma policy and each subject, with syllabuses clearly stating the goals and abilities to be acquired so that students can monitor their learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are also measured using external assessment tests and other methods based on each faculty’s area of specialization. As distinctive educational approaches, the University has designed curricula over a long period of time with a focus on practical education in cooperation with the local community, and offers many practical learning opportunities for qualifications and other job-related abilities. For example, the Faculty of Education has introduced Crystal Plan as a community-based, hands-on teacher training project to develop students’ practical leadership skills. The faculty cooperates with local boards of education and schools with the aim of training and producing teachers who can demonstrate these skills. In recent years, the University has actively expanded the areas of regional cooperation, and adopted numerous approaches, such as upgrading Comprehending Childhood to Comprehending Childhood Activities as programs open to

all students, incorporating volunteer activities, internships, and other projects involving children. With many students enrolling in the University to participate in this program, the teacher training project is a highly commendable initiative that responds to social and community needs.

To enhance the quality of these educational activities, the internal quality assurance system is operated with the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee set up in each faculty and graduate school to periodically conduct inspections and assessments. The results are compiled by the University-Wide Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee and reported to the Teaching and Learning Management Meeting. However, the University-Wide Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee and the Teaching and Learning Management Meeting overlap in making improvements based on the inspections and assessments, indicating unclear roles of the two meeting bodies in internal quality assurance. In addition, there is confusion between the improvement items handled by the president-chaired Teaching and Learning Management Meeting based on its decision and the items involving the University-Wide Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee. The University should address these issues by clarifying the structure that promotes university-wide internal quality assurance and streamlining the internal quality assurance system to improve and enhance its education based on the inspection and assessment results.

There are other areas of improvement the University should address. The maximum number of credits students can register for in a year is specified to ensure credit validity, but excludes subjects related to practical training and other areas. The Faculty of Education has introduced its own practical leadership training program, resulting in a tendency for many second-year students to register for credits exceeding the cap as some aim to obtain multiple licenses. Discussions are underway to address this issue pointed out in JUAA's previous certified evaluation and accreditation results, and the University is expected to make steady progress. The connection between the student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy and the measurement methods is vague in the graduate schools' master's and doctoral courses. This issue should be addressed with the connection clarified and the learning outcomes measured in an appropriate, multifaceted way. Moreover, some faculties and graduate schools have insufficient quota fulfillment in student enrollment, and should improve the management of their student quotas.

The University plans to reorganize its faculties and educational programs starting in 2025. It will be important to advance ongoing practical education initiatives, including hands-on teaching sessions in cooperation with the local community, overseas training, and practical education in AI technology, while assuring the quality of these

activities. The University is therefore expected to streamline its internal quality assurance structure to examine the functions of the internal quality assurance system, and to address various issues with the university-wide PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle to ensure that it operates effectively.

Notable Strengths

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Faculty of Education operates Crystal Plan, a unique hands-on teacher training project, with the aim of training and producing teachers who can demonstrate practical leadership skills in increasingly diverse and complex educational settings. In cooperation with boards of education, the faculty has secured various training sites, including elementary and junior high schools, kindergartens, and special needs schools, to offer education with a focus on students building up teaching experience from their first year. With this program conducted over a long period of time, the University has actively expanded the areas of regional cooperation and adopted numerous approaches, such as upgrading Comprehending Childhood to Comprehending Childhood Activities as programs open to all students, incorporating volunteer activities, internships, and other projects related to children. With many students enrolling in the University to participate in this program, the teacher training project is a commendable initiative that responds to social and community needs.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- When making improvements based on the results of inspections and assessments, the University-Wide Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee is specified as the responsible body for preparing Self-Inspection and Evaluation reports and formulating reform and improvement measures, and at the same time the Teaching and Learning Management Meeting is tasked with linking Self-Inspection and Evaluation to reforms and improvements. This situation indicates the overlapping roles of the two meeting bodies in the internal quality assurance process, with each task obscure. In addition, while the president-chaired Teaching and Learning

Management Meeting proceeds with improvement items based on its decision, the University-Wide Self-Inspection and Evaluation Committee is also involved in these items, which indicates an unclear structure for promoting university-wide internal quality assurance. These issues should be addressed with the internal quality assurance structure streamlined to improve and enhance the University's education based on the inspection and assessment results.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The University specifies the maximum number of credits students can register for in a year, but the Faculty of Education excludes certain subjects related to qualifications, resulting in a considerable number of students registering for credits that exceed the cap. In addition, there are no measures other than setting the upper limit to ensure credit validity. With this issue pointed out in JUAA's previous certified evaluation and accreditation results, the University is expected to examine the appropriateness of its initiatives and to make improvements in light of the purpose of the credit system.
- The connection between the student learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy and the measurement methods are vague in the graduate schools' master's and doctoral courses. This situation should be addressed with the connection clarified and the learning outcomes appropriately measured.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of freshman quota fulfillment over the past five years and student quota fulfillment are low at 0.89 and 0.87, respectively, in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. These ratios should be improved with the faculty's student quotas thoroughly managed.
- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.08 in the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies and 0.15 in the Graduate School of Economics and Information (Master's Course). No students are enrolled in the Graduate School of Economics and Information (Doctoral Course). These figures should be improved with the graduate schools' student quotas thoroughly managed.