

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

Sophia University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2016	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2017 – March.31.2024)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Sophia University

Overview

The founding philosophy of Sophia University (hereafter, the University) goes back to the spirit and action of Saint Francisco Xavier, who visited Japan in 1549. In 1906, Pope Pius X asked the Society of Jesus to found a higher education institution in Japan. Jesuit priests responded to this request and opened the University in 1913 in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, according to the Vocational Training School Ordinance. The University was reestablished under the new university system in 1948, faculties and graduate schools were added and reorganized, and in 2015 it had nine faculties (the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Human Sciences, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Foreign Studies, the Faculty of Global Studies, the Faculty of Liberal Arts, and the Faculty of Science and Technology), and 10 graduate schools (the Graduate School of Theology, the Graduate School of Philosophy, the Graduate School of Humanities, the Graduate School of Human Sciences, the Graduate School of Law (including the Law School), the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Language and Linguistics, the Graduate School of Global Studies, the Graduate School of Science and Technology, and the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies), and has been developing as a comprehensive university. Beginning in 2016, the Graduate School of Philosophy was integrated with the Graduate School of Humanities and became the philosophy major in the Graduate School of Humanities. In 2016, the University also established the Graduate School of Applied Religious Studies. It has six campuses, including the Yotsuya campus (Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo), the Ichigaya campus (Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo), the Shakuji campus (Nerima Ward, Tokyo), the Mejiro Seibo campus (Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo), the Hadano campus (Hadano City, Kanagawa Prefecture), and the Osaka satellite campus (Osaka City, Osaka), and has engaged in education and research activities based on the philosophy of educational ideas and educational spirit of foundation.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2009, the University submitted an Improvement Report in 2013 as a response to the suggested items in the accreditation. In 2013, the centenary of foundation, the School Corporation of the University published the Grand Layout 2.0, a mid- to long-term plan for its education plan, education and academic exchange, learning support, and student support, and each special review committee defined the action plan. It developed a system to review the implementation status of its plan by use of the PDCA cycle. In regards to the self-assessment, the University set up the Self-Assessment Committee of the entire university, which is headed by the president, to formulate a basic plan to implement self-assessment. It also set up the Self-Assessment Basic Plan Formulating Subcommittee and the Self-Assessment Plan Implementation Subcommittee under the Self-Assessment Committee. In addition, each faculty, graduate school, institute, and administrative section set up its own self-assessment mechanism (individual evaluation mechanism). However, while the system has been developed, the review required by the University Standards is not sufficient, and it is expected that the University should build a more systematic review system. Three legally mandated policies are currently in the process of review for redefinition. In regards to faculty development (FD) activities, besides the fact that information is not shared by the entire University, FD activities in the graduate schools are not very numerous. JUAA expects FD activities will be improved in the future. The University also set up the Office of Institutional Research in 2015 as a mechanism under the direct control of the board of administration, in order to promote smooth implementation of IR. It promotes the sharing and analysis of issues based on data across the University, and these should be used for future administration and operation.

The University has a number of distinct features noted in this accreditation

review. For example, university-wide common courses, “Studies in Christian Humanism,” work as the University Identity subject courses, and several graduate schools are expecting to include external reviewers on the doctoral examination committee to assure the quality of dissertations. In regards to the acceptance of students, based on the philosophy and purpose of the University, various efforts are made to accept a large number of international students from all over world, including those from schools with whom the University shares exchange agreements. It is commendable that the University has made efforts for social collaboration and social contribution by engaging in various important activities as a Catholic university such as Extension Programs which is called “Sophia Community College” and the Lectures of Theology. However, several faculties and graduate schools have issues in terms of enrollment management. Also, several graduate schools have issues with the policy on degree award, the curriculum design policy, and the curriculum of the doctoral program. These issues should be improved.

The Law School was reviewed and accredited as a professional graduate school by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (currently, National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education) in 2012, and this time Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) examined the improvements made after that time from the standpoint of university accreditation (institutional certified evaluation accreditation).

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the groups of “Studies in Christian Humanism” subjects are regarded as the University Identity subject courses, reflecting the University’s founding philosophy, educational ideas, and educational spirit, and are required electives for all undergraduate students so that they cultivate the perspectives necessary for realization of the University’s educational ideas and spirit.
- It is commendable that the Education Program in the Graduate School of Human Sciences and the Area Studies Program in the Graduate School of Global Studies are expecting to include external reviewers on all dissertation examination committees for transparency, and make efforts to assure the quality of dissertations.

Enrollment

- The University intends to realize the creation of the global campus under the spirit of “Sophia - Bringing the World Together,” and aims to increase international competitiveness and improve international competencies. It has expanded the number of foreign exchange agreements with universities overseas since the 1970s. It is commendable that the University accepts a large number of international students and enhances the necessary environment, such as improving accommodations to accept international students, career support, and financial aid. This is consistent with the founding philosophy of the University.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University has made efforts for social contributions through the lecture series held by “Sophia Community College,” where many classes have been offered to a large number of participants for the last 10 years, and has provided new opportunities for learning by offering classes at the Osaka Satellite campus since 2011. Also, the Lectures of Theology not only provide

opportunities for meaningful lifelong learning, but also may be counted as an open class for teacher certification for religious studies in the secondary education program, with certification awarded every year by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). In addition, it is commendable that the University has continuously engaged in important activities as a Catholic university, including returning information to the region in response to requests from mission schools and the Archdiocese of Osaka through a live broadcast from Osaka to Tokyo.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In the Faculty of Global Studies, all doctoral programs and all master's programs except the nursing program in the Graduate School of Human Sciences, and in the professional degree programs, the policy on degree award does not indicate the learning outcomes required for completion of the program. This should be improved.
- In all master's programs and doctoral programs in the graduate schools except the master's programs in the social welfare program and the nursing program in the Graduate School of Human Sciences, and in the professional degree programs, the curriculum design policy does not indicate the basic ideas on educational content and methods. This should be improved.
- In the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Humanities (Japanese Literature program, French Literature program, and Cultural Interaction program), the Graduate School of Human Sciences (Sociology program and Social Services program), the Law program in the Graduate School of Law, the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Language and Linguistics, the Graduate School of Global Studies, and the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, the curriculum does not properly combine research work with coursework. The graduate schools should provide appropriate educational content in the doctoral programs considering the purpose of a course-based graduate school.
- In the doctoral program in the Systematic Theology program in the Graduate School of Theology, the Graduate School of Philosophy (the master's and doctoral programs), the History program (the master's and doctoral programs), the Japanese Literature program (doctoral programs), the German Literature program (the master's and doctoral programs), the Journalism program (the master's and doctoral programs), and the Cultural Interaction program (the doctoral programs) in the Graduate School of Humanities, the master's program in the Education program, the Psychology program (the master's and doctoral programs), the Sociology program (the master's and doctoral programs), the Social Services program (the master's and doctoral programs) in the Graduate School of Human Studies, the Economics program (the master's and doctoral programs) and the Management program (the master's and doctoral programs) in the Graduate School of Economics, the Linguistics program in the Graduate School of Language and Linguistics (the master's and doctoral programs), the master's program in the International Relations program in the Graduate School of Global Studies, and the Science and Technology program (the master's and doctoral programs) in the Graduate School of Science and Technology, while the research guidance plan is indicated in the Research Guidance section in the Bulletin of Information, the plan is not sufficiently communicated to students;

for example, the annual schedule including interim reporting is not preliminarily communicated. This should be improved.

Enrollment

- The average of the ratios of the last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap is high at 1.21 in the Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology. The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.29 in the Department of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, 1.21 in the Department of Psychology, 1.24 in the Department of Social Services in the Faculty of Human Sciences, and 1.24 in the Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology. The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.10 in the master's program in the Graduate School of Law. This number should be improved.
- The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is high at 1.56 in the Department of Theology in the Faculty of Theology.

Area of Serious Concern

Enrollment

- In the Faculty of Foreign Studies, the average of the ratios of the last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap is high at 1.31 in the Department of Luso-Brazilian Studies. Also, the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.30 in the Department of German Studies, 1.27 in the Department of French Studies, 1.33 in the Department of Russian Studies, and 1.43 in the Department of Luso-Brazilian Studies.