

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

The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo



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 the University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo

Overview

The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo (hereafter the University), originated as a private Sacred Heart *Senmon* School, which was established in 1916, and is the first Catholic institution for higher education for women in Japan. In 1948, with the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a Catholic educational order for women, as the parent body, the University was established as an educational institution under the new system with a single Faculty of Liberal Arts in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. After establishing the undergraduate and graduate schools, in 2014, the University reorganized into eight departments and two majors in the Faculty of Liberal Arts: the departments of English Language and Literature, Japanese Language and Literature, History, Human Relations, International Studies, Philosophy, Education (majors in Education and Primary Education), and Psychology. The Graduate School has six majors for the master's program, and three majors for the doctoral program.

Rooted in the Sacred Heart mission, "Learning from the Heart of Christ that unique love which he shows to each person; inspired by this love, students will seriously pursue the studies which they have chosen, and will deepen their involvement with the world as a result of their learning," the University has set three educational goals to educate the students: "developing a deep respect for intellectual values" "fostering a sense of duty to serve others," and "empowering the students toward effective communication and action." In 2014, the Graduate School has revised their standard of its ideal students, from what was defined in 2006, along with its educational and research missions.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2009, the University has worked for improvements in the issues that were pointed out in the accreditation. However, in regards to faculty development (FD) activities in the Graduate School and the insufficiency of the transfer student admission cap, some issues have been pointed out again in this accreditation review. JUAA expects that hereafter, the University will work for further improvements in these issues.

While the University has regularly encouraged self-study, and has made some achievements, it has rebuilt the review system by taking advantage of departmental reforms implemented in 2014. The University has also aimed at ensuring proper function of the PDCA cycle. Since the University, compared with other institutions with a single faculty, has a relatively larger number of education and research organizations, many committees and working groups have been established for each issue. Because of this, the review system is not yet at the stage where each of the committees or working groups clarifies its responsibility. Rather, the attitude toward respecting each individual student based on the founding spirit has been consistent across the University. This attitude has enabled the committees and working groups to have dialogues and cooperate with each other to create a balanced system. However, since such an attitude tends to focus on experiences and customs, some issues requiring improvements have been difficult to address by contemporary standards. These issues include the formulation of regulations on the acceptance of pre-acquired credits before admission, restrictions on the maximum number of credits students are allowed to register for per year, and improving the quality of the syllabus. On the other hand, the founding spirit has been soundly realized through student volunteers who support disaster victims and refugees, and the University support system has been consolidated to respect the will of the students. The University has also offered generous guidance to first-year students who do not yet belong to any department, in cooperation with faculty members, as well as each office and center, and has produced effective results in preventing students from taking leaves of absence or withdrawing.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- It is commendable that the University has made efforts in student support to improve students' satisfaction. For example, the University has built an especially generous system to support first-year students who do not yet belong to any department. Led by the First-Year Student Center and through close cooperation among departments, majors, and each office in charge, the University has made efforts for early detection and tackling of problems. Also, for second- to fourth-year students, the University has implemented generous student support while organically promoting cooperation between faculty members in each department and major, office, and center. As a result of these efforts, the percentages of students repeating another year, taking leaves of absence, or withdrawing have been maintained at quite low levels.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The University has proactively and systematically worked to establish and maintain volunteer services and activities based on the Catholic spirit, and more than 80 percent of the students have participated in some volunteer activities. It is commendable that the University has developed these extracurricular activities in accordance with the University's mission, including activities in which students interact with children with disabilities and especially efforts to support refugees and activities for reconstruction from the huge earthquakes, in a way that connects these activities to their learning in the University.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- While the Faculty of Liberal Arts has set a limit on the maximum number of credits students are allowed to register for per year, it has not been strictly applied. This issue should be improved considering the purpose of a credit system.
- In the Faculty of Liberal Arts, in regards to accepting pre-acquired credits prior to admission, the regulation on the number of credits to be accepted has not been formulated. This should be improved.
- In the Faculty of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School of Liberal Arts, the quality of description of evaluation methods and out-of-class learning in the syllabus varies depending on subjects. This should be improved.
- In the Graduate School of Liberal Arts, no systematic training or opportunities for research are provided as faculty development (FD) activities. This should be improved.

Enrollment

- The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is low at 0.50 in the Department of Japanese Language and Literature, 0.58 in the Department of History, and 0.42 in the Department of Philosophy. These numbers should be improved.
- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.41 in the master's program in the Graduate School of Arts. This number should be improved.