

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

Ryukoku University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kyoto, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2013	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2014 – March.31.2021)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Ryukoku University

Notable Strengths

Education and research organization

- It is commendable that Ryukoku University (hereafter, the University) has made efforts to realize its founding spirit of “co-existence.” For example, a project conducted by the Corrections and Rehabilitation Center is a materialization of the University’s founding spirit. The project is developed from practices of chaplains and prison visitors that are rooted in the history and tradition of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (the Hongwanji denomination of Shin Buddhism) . As an educational activity, the Center offers a “Corrections and Rehabilitation Course” which aims at “fostering correction officers who work in prisons, juvenile training schools, and juvenile classification homes as well as professionals such as probation officers and volunteers who help those who have committed crimes and offences return to and be re-integrated into society.” Furthermore, the Center promotes research projects such as the Criminal Law Project, holds Correction Studies Seminars, and publishes an annual report.

Educational content, methods, and outcome

- It is commendable that the Faculty of Letters, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Business Administration, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Policy Science have instituted a system of “grade numbers,” which succinctly indicate the level of each class. These faculties offer classes according to the grade numbers indicated by the system, and, as a reference, the system aids students in creating their learning plan.
- It is commendable that the University has made efforts to offer unique classes. In particular, within the Faculty of Science and Technology, the “Field Training,” offered to third-year students, is counted as a regular subject, which allows students to do internships at businesses in or outside Japan (i.e., California in the United States). The overseas training has the purpose of “cultivating global perspectives by way of experiencing a real workplace abroad,” and has sent students to Japanese businesses in California for two weeks during the summer break since the 2011 Academic Year. This has made huge contributions to the cultivation of students’ social and international perspectives.
- It is commendable that the University has made efforts to offer various educational programs with mutually beneficial effects. For example, the Graduate School of Law and the Graduate School of Policy Science have developed a joint “Non Profit Organization/Regional Administration Study Course” that crosses the boundaries of these two graduate schools. The course offers classes such as “Regional Leadership Studies” and “Advanced Regional Policy Studies,” in which professionals employed by non-profit organizations and municipal governments, and students entering the program straight from their undergraduate education, participate and engage together in educational and research activities.
- It is commendable that the University has made active efforts to undertake various initiatives to enrich undergraduate and graduate education and to assure the quality of such education by establishing the Center of Educational Development as the unit that promotes university-wide educational improvement activities. In particular, the Designated Research Project is regarded as a faculty development/project for research, development, and examination of educational materials. This project conducts research necessary for developing undergraduate and graduate education, with the goal of building a model of highly effective educational practice. The University holds public events to present reports at the end of project, and as such the project has had an impact upon improving education throughout the University.

- It is commendable that the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Policy Science effective instructional methods have been used for first-year students. In particular, “Project Seminar I” and “Project Seminar II” are offered to first-year students. In these seminars, upper-class students assist faculty members’ teaching work as class aides to guide first-year students through their learning and campus experiences. Faculty members also offer instruction, and their teaching methods further enhance small size class instruction, while making the class a site of learning for upper-class students as well.
- It is commendable that the Faculty of Policy Science has offered a site of learning through practice. Specifically, the faculty has joined forces with the Kyoto NPO (non-profit organization) Center and taken various initiatives, including Ryu-SEI GAP (a globally-focused local action program of the Faculty of Policy Science at Ryukoku University), in which students take the lead in efforts to solve problems in the local community. This offers students a learning site where they can develop abilities to investigate, coordinate, and disseminate information.

Social cooperation and contribution

- It is commendable that the University has made efforts to contribute to society, as it regards extension education as one of its missions. In particular, the REC (Ryukoku Extension Center) is at the center of extension efforts to offer services to the local community, including the Ryukoku Lectures (lectures open to the public) and REC Community College (which offers fee-based classes). These services have provided a site for lifelong education that meets the wide-ranging needs of local communities. In addition, the REC conducts welfare forum projects, including “Specialized Seminars” that offer practice-oriented lectures for welfare professionals, a “Co-existence School” that offers a series of lectures to enhance local residents’ understanding of welfare issues, and other lectures widely open to the general public, along with the annual symposium, “Welfare Forum.” The University is commended for its active efforts to deepen interest in and understanding of social welfare.

Internal quality assurance

- It is commendable that the University has determined university-wide policies for self-study and evaluation and has developed a system to conduct such studies and evaluations. Since the 2011 Academic Year, the University has annually conducted self-studies on academic and administrative units as well as on faculty members’ activities. Through these efforts, the self-study and evaluation results from each unit are evaluated by the University-wide Evaluation Committee, and systematically used for the improvement of each unit. In addition, in order to build a firm and solid system of self-study and evaluation, the University has established a unit called Legal Affairs Section and actively promoted the use of external evaluations. These measures have helped to improve various activities at the University.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational content, methods, and outcome

- The Graduate School of Letters, the Graduate School of Law, the Graduate School of Science and Technology, and the Graduate School of Policy Science offer several classes taken by both undergraduate and graduate students; however, these schools do not clearly differentiate the methods of grading and evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students, which is problematic in the light of educational quality assurance. This should be improved.
- The maximum number of credits which students can register for per year has been set high in the following academic units: at fifty in the Faculty of Science and Technology;

at sixty for third-year transfer students and at fifty for fourth-year students in the Department of Sociology and the Department of Community Management in the Faculty of Sociology; at sixty for third-year transfer students and at sixty for fourth-year students in the Department of Community Social Work and the Department of Clinical Social Work in the Faculty of Sociology; and at fifty-two for third-year transfer students in the Faculty of Intercultural Communication. This situation should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having a credit system. In addition, each faculty at the University deals differently with the issue of upper limit of maximum number of credits for which students can register; however, there are many exceptions to the rules. Moreover, the maximum credit number does not include those credits for the project and/or thesis required for graduation as well as credits for some special subjects. This should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having a credit system.

- The content included in the syllabi of the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Business Administration, the Graduate School of Sociology, and the Law School varies depending on each faculty member. This should be improved. In addition, the syllabi for doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Law, the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Sociology, the Graduate School of Business Administration, and the Graduate School of Science and Technology are not written in a uniform format and style. It is desirable that these Graduate Schools should develop and implement a uniform format and style.
- In the doctoral programs of the Graduate School of Law and the Graduate School of Economics, the criteria for examining degree-seeking dissertations have not been clearly written. This should be improved by having each graduate school clarify the criteria and state them in its student handbook (and other handbooks).
- In the doctoral programs of all the graduate schools at the University, some students complete all the requirements except the dissertation, and leave the university before completing their dissertation requirement within the University-designated time limit. Later, when these students submit their dissertations, even though they do not have enrollment status, they are granted doctoral degrees in the same manner as those students. This is not an appropriate use of the system and should be corrected. It is expected that the University will reconsider ways to deal with this problem, and that, in accordance with the purpose of having course-based doctoral programs, the University will create measures to ensure degree completion within the required time frame.

Enrollment

- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.22 in the Department of Media Informatics in the Faculty of Science and Technology. Conversely, the ratio is low at 0.25 in the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Science and Technology. This situation should be improved.
- The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student enrollment cap is high in several academic units: at 1.43 in the Department of Contemporary Economics; at 1.40 in the Department of International Economics in the Faculty of Economics; at 2.10 in the Department of Business Administration in the Faculty of Business Administration; and at 1.50 in the Department of Law in the Faculty of Law. Conversely, the ratio is low in several Departments in the Faculty of Science and Technology: at 0.25 in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Informatics; at 0.25 in the Department of Electronics and Informatics, at 0.00 in the Department of Materials Chemistry; and at 0.00 in the Department of Environmental Solutions Technology. The ratio is also low at 0.50 in the Department of Community Management in the Faculty of Sociology. This situation should be improved.