

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

The Tottori University of Environmental Studies



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Tottori, 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 the Tottori University of Environmental Studies

Notable Strengths

Faculty and faculty organization

- It is commendable that as a public university, the Tottori University of Environmental Studies (hereafter, the University) has systematically developed education and research closely related to the local community. The Sustainability Research Institute focuses on the “study of establishing the 3Rs (reduce-reuse-recycle) by utilizing the waste-related biomass system deployed from Japan to greater Asia,” and has promoted the installation of a community-based biomass circulation system. Also, in the Regional Innovation Institute, full-time faculty have conducted many studies and surveys at the request of communities from Tottori Prefecture and Tottori City. The results of the research conducted by these institutions have been widely published on the web and in symposiums.

Educational content, methods, and outcome

- It is commendable that the University has implemented a curriculum and educational content that focus on communication and presentation skills. “Project Research 1 to 4” are required courses for first and second year students. In these courses, students choose the topic they want to study from the themes set by the instructor. The themes are derived from environmental problems or issues closely related to the region. The University organizes students into small groups and places emphasis on field seminars to achieve the mission and purpose of the University, which is to foster persons of talent who can think and act by themselves.

Student support

- It is commendable that the Follow-up Student System is a detailed study support system with aftercare measures, and it has worked effectively in reducing attrition rates. Targeted at freshmen, the system has been instituted to prevent early withdrawal since 2007. Members of the Student Life and Career Service Committee consult with those students who frequently miss required classes, and, while keeping in contact with tutors appointed for each student, take actions to respond to each individual situation. When the student advances to the second year, the Educational Affairs Division transfers the student to the next tutor.
- It is commendable that as a study support for students with disabilities, the University has instituted the “computer-assisted summary scribe support system.” The system not only enables students with visual and hearing disabilities to take the classes, but it also contributes significantly to students’ understanding of class content. Students who take the summary scribe workshop sponsored by Tottori Prefecture record their summary of the class by computer.
- It is commendable that the English Village began to produce positive results, such as an increase in the number of applicants for an English study tour overseas in New Zealand and the cultivation of international understanding. The English Village was established in 2012 to improve English conversational skills and

communication skills, and the Village has facilitated practical English language learning through conversation with multiple non-Japanese staff.

Social cooperation and contribution

- It is commendable that the lecture series offered by the University contributes to society by using the intellectual property of the University. As the University became publically funded, the frequency and types of lectures offered have grown, and the series has been highly appreciated by those who have attended the lectures. The University has held the lecture series open to the general public since 2004, and since 2012 it has held various lecture series according to the needs of the local community. Examples of these include a business seminar series targeted to working people who are seeking to advance their careers, a culture seminar series including craft-making, childrearing, and human rights issues, and a science related seminar series targeted to grade school students during the summer or winter vacations.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational content, methods, and outcome

- The Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies does not define the required knowledge and competencies for completing its programs in the degree-granting policies. This should be improved.
- The web page of the Department of Social Environments in the Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies indicates that the department implements education based on “accounting” and “business administration,” and it lists “chartered accountant” and “certified tax accountant” as future careers, but no courses related to these academic disciplines or professions are offered in the curriculum.
- In the Department of Environmental Design in the Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies, syllabi are created using the same format as the undergraduate department; however, the contents of the syllabi vary in their specificities. This should be improved. Also, while the syllabi of the Department of Social Environment and the Department of Information Systems use original formats, they offer only the course contents and do not include major information such as attainment objectives, the course schedule, and the method of evaluation. This should be improved.
- Regarding the improvement of educational content and methods, the Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies does not institute any mechanism for ongoing improvement, such as systematic FD (Faculty Development) activities. This should be improved.
- The Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies has not clarified the criteria for examining degree-seeking theses. These criteria should be clarified to students in advance and stated in a publication such as the Campus Guide.

Enrollment

- In the Graduate School of Environmental and Information Studies, the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.23. This should be

improved.

Education and Research Environment

- The library does not subscribe to online academic journals. From the standpoint of research support for faculty and students, the situation should be improved.
- The teaching load of each faculty member is heavy, and varies among faculties and positions. From the standpoint of securing time for research, there should be proper time allocated to teaching and research.