

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

Hokusei Gakuen University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hokkaido, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2015	
Accreditation Status: Accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016 – March.31.2023)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Hokusei Gakuen University

Overview

Hokusei Gakuin University has its origin in the Smith School for Girls, founded by Sarah C. Smith, a Protestant Christian missionary, in 1887. In later years, Hokusei Gakuen Women's Junior College was established. Finally, in 1962, Hokusei Gakuin University (hereafter, the University) was established as a four-year university with the School of Humanities. Currently, the University has three undergraduate schools: the School of Humanities, the School of Economics, and the School of Social Welfare. The University also has three graduate schools: the Graduate School of Literature, the Graduate School of Economics, and the Graduate School of Social Welfare. Its campus is located in Sapporo City, Hokkaido Prefecture, and the University has developed its educational and research activities based on its educational mission.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2008, the University has regularly conducted self-studies on university-wide matters through the University Evaluation Committee. In 2013, the University pronounced a new basic direction for university administration, titled "The Future Direction of the University," which consists of four points: "a reconfirmation and realization of the founding mission," "reorganization of admission policies and departments," "curriculum reform and enrichment," and "fiscal soundness."

The University has made several efforts to meet its educational purposes. For example, the Department of Psychology and Applied Communications in the School of Humanities offers a subject called "Field Practicum," in which students choose one practical site from three fields—industry, outdoor, or education—and participate in activities in that field. This subject contributes to meeting the department's purpose of "cultivating a high communication competency." Moreover, the University has made unique contributions to the local community. For example, it has held "Kuriyama Local University," an outreach program offered in the town of Kuriyama and it has been involved in research on local communities including the field survey in Utashinai-shi and formulating local welfare plans. However, the University has several issues to address. These issues include: defining the curriculum design policies for each schools and graduate schools; setting (and applying rigorously) the maximum number of credits that transfer students in its three schools are allowed to register for per year; setting (and applying rigorously) the maximum number of credits that regular students in some schools are allowed to register for per year; improving the clear dissemination of research instruction plans by every master's program in the graduate schools; improving the clear dissemination of the criteria for examination of theses for degree-seeking students in some graduate schools; rectifying an inappropriate procedure in the course-based doctoral program; and improving enrollment management. JUAA expect the University to make improvements on these issues.

Notable Strength

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has made efforts to meet its educational purposes. For example, the Department of Psychology and Applied Communications in the School of Humanities offers a subject called Field Practicum, a requirement for second year students. In this program, students can experience clinical activities at a practicum site. They can choose one site from among three: an industry site, where they can engage in construction or agricultural work; an outdoor site, where they can serve as leaders for outdoor camps for

children; and an education site, where they can work as staff members for free (alternative) schools and/or children's museums. Students engage in pre-program learning, practicum, post-program learning, presentations, and report writing, through which they develop skills in communication, teamwork, and cooperation. This subject has made a solid contribution to meet the department's purposes.

Suggestions for Improvements

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- Throughout the University, each school has defined its policy on degree award and to admission policy. However, it has not clearly defined its curriculum design policy. This should be improved.
- In the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Social Welfare and master's programs in the Graduate School of Literature, the Graduate School of Economics, and the Graduate School of Social Welfare, the stated curriculum design policy remains only descriptive of the current situation and do not define basic ideas for educational content and methods. This should be improved.
- In the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Welfare, the maximum number of credits that students can register for a year is set at fifty for second- and third-year students. This should be improved. Moreover, there is an issue concerning the maximum number of credits for transfer students. In particular, transfer students have been allowed to register for more credits per year than the maximum number that students are generally allowed to register for, depending on special circumstances, such as the need to meet requirements to take state certification exams. The department chairs in all three schools have conducted interviews with each student to determine these special circumstances. However, this situation should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having a credit system.
- None the master's programs have sufficiently and clearly informed students about research instruction plans. This should be improved.
- The doctoral program in the Graduate School of Social Welfare has not clearly informed students of the criteria for examining dissertations. This should be improved by clearly stating the criteria in student handbooks such as "Graduate School Handbook."
- In the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Social Welfare, some students complete all the requirements except the dissertation, and leave the program before completing their dissertation requirement within the time limit set by the University. 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 continuously enrolled. This is an inappropriate use of the system that should be corrected. In accordance with the purpose of having doctoral program, the University should create measure to enhance the degree completion within the required time frame.

Enrollment

- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.44 in the Graduate School of Literature and at 0.30 in the Graduate School of Economics.

This situation should be improved.

- The ratio of transfer students to the transfer student admission cap is low at 0.67 in the Department of Management Information in the School of Economics, at 0.25 in the Department of Law and Economics in the School of Economics, at 0.40 in the Department of Social Policy in the School of Social Welfare, at 0.00 in the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Welfare, and at 0.14 in the Department of Psychology for Well-Being in the School of Social Welfare. This situation should be improved.