

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

The University of Shiga Prefecture



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Shiga, 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 Shiga Prefecture

Overview

The University of Shiga Prefecture (hereafter, the University), which was originally Shiga Prefectural College, was established with three faculties in 1995 with the motto “Our campus is Lake Biwa... and our text is Humanity...” The University eventually opened graduate schools, reorganized, and added faculties and departments. Currently, the University has four undergraduate schools (the School of Environmental Science, the School of Engineering, the School of Human Cultures, and the School of Human Nursing) and four graduate schools (the Graduate School of Environmental Science, the Graduate School of Engineering, the Graduate School of Human Cultures, and the Graduate School of Human Nursing). The University’s campus is in Hikone City, Shiga Prefecture and has engaged in education and research activities based on the fundamental plan at the time of its establishment.

The University has actively engaged in internal quality assurance and established the Self-Study Committee to address the self-study of overall activities across the university. The University underwent an accreditation review by the National Institute for Academic Degrees and University Education (currently the National Institute for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education) in 2010. That review pointed out the low sufficiency rates of the doctoral programs’ admission caps, which the University improved by revising the admission caps beginning in 2013. The University also developed “Future Vision of the University of Shiga Prefecture—USP VISION 2020” in 2010 to demonstrate the mid-term and long-term goals that the University will pursue. Based on this plan, the University devised its second mid-term plan, which began in 2012. During implementation of the second mid-term plan, the University underwent a public university corporation evaluation in 2014, in addition to the annual evaluations by Shiga Prefecture (a founder of the University) for continuous self-study.

In regards to undergraduate education, in order to make local contributions, the University offers courses in human studies, which address the University’s special focus on the environment and human culture, as common core courses. The University instituted “Ohmi Gakushi” (Regional Studies) as a minor course of study available to students in all schools in 2011 and introduced regional basic subjects in 2015. In addition, the graduate schools established the “Ohmi-Kanjin Regional Redevelopment Course” in 2006 to enhance regional studies and match its undergraduates with counter parts. The University’s efforts to strengthen regional studies helped students develop skills to make effective use of the expertise gained in their major fields of study.

As a local contribution, the University initiated the Student’s Firm program, or “Ohmi Rakuza” in 2004. In this program, the University solicited student-centered projects for regional revitalization and provided financial support for selected projects. As a result, faculty members and students from all faculties have been actively involved in local activities while using the expertise in their fields to establish the “Ohmi-Kanjin Regional Redevelopment Course.” Graduates of the course have established NPOs to launch regional revitalization projects. It is commendable that the University has worked to systematically and sustainably enhance collaboration between the university and the community.

However, several issues must be addressed. First, the maximum number of credits a student is allowed to register for per year is not set in the School of Environmental Science, the School of Engineering, and the School of Human Cultures, and this should be improved from the standpoint of a credit system. Second, the Graduate School of Engineering, the Graduate School of Human Cultures, and the Graduate School of Human Nursing do not stipulate the criteria for examining degree-seeking theses. Third, research guidance plans are not formulated in the 2nd

term of doctoral programs. Lastly, the criteria for granting doctoral degrees in course-based graduate programs should be reconsidered. These issues should be improved urgently.

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University offers systematic programs for students to be exposed to issues and attractions in the community and fosters human the talents of students as they develop the skills required to solve local problems. In particular, the University offers “Ohmi Gakushi” in the faculties and “Ohmi-Kanjin Regional Redevelopment Course” as a minor course of study in the graduate schools to help students develop the skills to effectively use the expertise and skills they gain in their majors to solve local problems. “Ohmi Gakushi” in the undergraduate programs provides two kinds of courses: lecture courses that develop communication skills, the ability to take action, and problem-solving skills that form the basis for learning; and work in communities and workshop courses that develop practical creativity. “Ohmi-Kanjin Regional Redevelopment Course” in the graduate schools offers lecture courses and field workshops to foster human talents that can lead regional revitalization.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University has contributed to the local community through continuous, student-initiated efforts in a number of fields, including activation of local industry, restoration and reuse of old houses, support with medical services, and preservation and inheritance of cultures in the community. In particular, the University administers a program, named “Ohmi akuza”(Student Farm), that promotes student-initiated contributions to local communities. In the program, the University solicits projects that contribute to local revitalization and provides selected projects with support that may include activity costs, as well as instructions and advice from faculty members, including arrangements with administrators and professional experts as necessary.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The maximum number of credits a student is allowed to register for per year is not set in the School of Environmental Science, the School of Engineering, and the School of Human Cultures. This should be improved from the standpoint of a credit system.
- The Graduate School of Engineering, the 1st term of doctoral program in the Graduate School of Human Cultures, the 2nd term of doctoral program of Lifestyle Studies in the Graduate School of Human Cultures, and the Graduate School of Human Nursing fail to indicate the criteria for examining degree-seeking theses. These criteria should be stated clearly in the graduate student handbook for each program.
- In the 2nd term of doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Environmental Science, the Graduate School of Engineering, and the Graduate School of Human Cultures, some students complete all the requirements except the dissertations but leave the university before completing their dissertation requirement within the

time limit. It is stipulated that 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 who have been continuously enrolled. This is not an appropriate use of the system. The criteria for granting doctoral degrees should be reconsidered, and in accordance with the purpose of a course-based graduate school, measures to facilitate degree completion within the required time frame should be taken.

Area of Serious Concern

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In the Graduate School of Environmental Science, the Graduate School of Engineering, and the Graduate School of Human Cultures, research guidance plans have not been formulated for each 2nd term of doctoral program. A research guidance plan must be developed for each program to ensure that research guidance and thesis (dissertation) writing guidance are implemented properly.