

**Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for  
Professional Graduate Business School**

The System Safety Program, Graduate School of Management  
of Technology, Nagaoka University of Technology



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: National	Location: Niigata, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2014	
Accreditation Status: Unaccredited	

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for the System Safety Program, Graduate School of Management of Technology,  
Nagaoka University of Technology**

The System Safety Program, Graduate School of Management of Technology, Nagaoka University of Technology (hereafter, the Program), defines its objective as developing professionals through practical education on system safety that integrates safety technology and management skills and applies its outcome in the analysis of the disaster, risk, and safety of systems while complying with national and international safety standards and regulations under the university motto of Vitality, Originality and Services (VOS).

The objective, while concise and clear, is, in reality, difficult to understand. In addition, the manner in which how the integration of safety technology and management skills contributes to the mission, as a professional graduate school of management, whose aim is “to develop specialists with professional management expertise for business or other organizations” is ambiguous. This has resulted in a difficulty, in deciding immediately whether or not its objective meets the requirements of a professional management graduate school. However, the Program clearly stated in the on-site interview with Japan University Accreditation Association (hereafter, JUAA) that the program is aimed not at addressing safety issues in specific areas, but at developing professionals capable of planning safety measures that could be part of the basic concepts of business management. Thus, the Program needs to explicitly state its objective as such.

It is commendable that the program curriculum provides a number of practical subjects on safety technology, making the program outstanding and unique among professional graduate schools across Japan. In an effort to secure such practical aspects of the program, it is fortunate to have members of its faculty serve on notable committees, including a chairperson of international standards committees such as ISO and IEC and committee members at the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism; the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare; the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry; and others. The faculty is therefore highly pragmatic, reinforcing the Program’s objective to develop professionals through practical education. In addition, it is commendable that the Program has made efforts to hold special lectures in collaboration with the University’s Research Center for Safe and Secure Society, and has set up a booth at the Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association’s Midori-Jyuji Safety Exhibition to facilitate the dissemination of information relevant to the Program’s objective.

While the Program maintains a distinctive curriculum and faculty, it has not sufficiently developed quality assurance and improvement of education in such a way as to direct the skills and efforts of each full-time faculty member toward the improvement of the organization. Taking these points into account, several important challenges must be considered:

First, the Program’s efforts are not yet sufficient to have produced a midterm and long-term vision for the Program and its strategy to navigate resource allocation, organizational capability, and value creation for the vision. The Program must, therefore, develop a midterm and long-term vision and produce and implement its strategy to make the vision a reality.

Second, a major part of the policy on degree award that is set in place shares the same content with all other master’s degree programs, yet the policy does not include the development of certain skills, such as management skills, which constitutes part of the Program’s objectives. Therefore, the Program must explicitly state the policy on degree award in accordance with its objective.

Third, the program offers only a very limited number of subjects designed to help students develop expertise in areas such as strategy, organization, marketing,

financing, and accounting, and in other skills such as thinking ability, analysis, and communication. As a result, the Program is significantly deficient in curriculum as compared to other professional management graduate schools. While the school is reportedly planning to launch a new subject, Practical Management Theory, to deal with the concerns noted above, the Program must set a curriculum that meets the expectations of professional management graduate schools not just by introducing a new subject, but by meeting the objectives and the policy on degree award mentioned above.

Fourth, students in Practical System Safety A (Research Project) are scheduled to meet their teacher in person only once a month for 90 minutes. While they may receive comments and advice at midterm and end-of-term presentations and in email communications, the system of crediting four units after one year of study is not reasonable, according to the regulation of the University, and must be improved.

Fifth, students are required to attend “fifteen hours, half of the total class hours, or more” to earn credit according to Chapter 1, Class Methods, in the Graduate Program Guide. The Program responded to our concern on this matter and replied that students with poor attendance will receive sufficient care from the Program. Yet this attendance requirement can hardly be considered sufficient and must be amended.

Sixth, evaluation criteria for applicants to the Program are stipulated in “Evaluation Criteria of Entrance Examinations of the System Safety Program,” but the assessment rules for essays and interviews are highly abstract, and do not satisfy the admission policy and the Program objective. In addition, no clear criterion for point ratings is available. It is therefore highly recommended that the Program make efforts to meet the policy and the objective and to produce appropriate assessment rules for each item as well as unambiguous criteria for point ratings. Additionally, the qualification review for non-university graduate applicants does not contain concrete assessment standards, including the required length of business experience and the treatment of credentials and certification examinations. The Program should therefore clarify the assessment standard for qualification of those applicants.

Seventh, issues that have been pointed out include many areas that would have been improved if the Program had implemented self-study in line with its objective, and if it had followed that evaluations as well as previous comments by JUAA to take actions for improvement. Therefore, the Program is requested to properly carry out self-study and also to enhance the ways in which it systematically incorporates results of the evaluations and comments forwarded by JUAA to help improve the Program.

There are a number of issues that must be addressed urgently, yet many of them are largely superficial and the school has already started its efforts to make changes. Therefore, it is concluded that the Program shall further its development as a unique professional management graduate school specializing in safety by planning and taking prompt specific actions to eliminate issues.