

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

Akita International University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Akita, 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 Akita International University

Overview

Akita International University (hereafter, the University), whose mission is to practice “International Liberal Arts for fostering individuals who will contribute significantly to the international community,” was established in 2004 as a college with a single faculty, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts in Yuwa Town (presently, part of Akita City), Akita Prefecture. The University’s founding was based on the policy of Akita Prefecture that “For future development, adaptation to globalization is indispensable.” Since then, the University established the Graduate School of Global Communication and Language, a professional graduate school, and has developed its education and research activities based on the mission the University has held since its foundation.

The University was reviewed and accredited by the National Institution for Academic Degrees in 2008. In the current review by Japan University Accreditation Association (hereafter, JUAA), which is the second accreditation review for the University, it is recognized that the University has made efforts to improve the curriculum and faculty and staff organization by comparing and analyzing its education and research at an international level. All classes at the University have been conducted in English, and all students have been required to study abroad for a year. Moreover, one of the notable features of the University is that it offers a learning environment in the dormitory as well as the library, where students’ sense of independence is respected, and the University makes use of these facilities for its education and research.

However, the University still has several issues to address. It is expected that the University will formulate a policy on degree award and a curriculum design policy in the graduate school.

Prior to this accreditation review, the Graduate School of Global Communication and Language had already underwent an outside evaluation equivalent to a professional graduate school accreditation in 2012. Thus, JUAA reviewed the School this time by examining the improvements from 2012 onward from the standpoint of University Accreditation (institutional certified evaluation and accreditation).

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has clearly placed students’ active language learning and study abroad as a foundation for its mission to cultivate persons of talent. The Faculty of International Liberal Arts offers the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program, in which students are required to take English classes according to their level of proficiency, to participate in writing workshops, and are obliged to read more than three hours a week. After mastering academic English, students are required to study abroad for a year, focusing on content the student has studied up to that point. After returning from abroad, students take the Capstone Seminar, in which most of students choose the topic they have studied abroad as the subject of their research.
- It is commendable that, from the perspective of quality assurance in education, the University has built a generous individual guidance system that takes place before, during, and after education abroad, and has built a system in which many faculty members are involved in the education of individual students. In particular, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts has thoroughly engaged in small-group education, assigning a full-time faculty member to each student as their adviser

while the student is studying abroad as part of the Academic Advising System.

Education and Research Environment

- It is commendable that the University has actively made use of dormitories in its education by having students manage and direct them, which cultivates their sense of independence. The University has built dormitories on its campus, and requires all first-year students to reside in them. Students from Japan sharing rooms with international students has facilitated cross-cultural interactions.
- It is commendable that the University has built a learning environment that values students' sense of independence, and makes use of the College environment for its education and research. For example, the Learning Commons in the library and the IT Lab are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and many students use these spaces to study. Students can independently choose to receive the support they need from the following facilities: the Active Learning Support Center, which consists of the Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center, where materials for language learning are offered; the Academic Achievement Center, which helps students with their individual learning of English, mathematics, statistics and other subjects through students' peer support; and the Academic Career Support Center, which supports students in continuing their education in graduate school.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In the Graduate School of Global Communication and Language, the policy on degree award and the curriculum design policy have not been defined. This should be improved.