

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

Koyasan University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Wakayama, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2025	
Accreditation Status: unaccredited	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Koyasan University

Overview

Koyasan University undertakes education and research based on the spirit of Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism as one of the oldest traditional universities in Japan, but JUAA's evaluation results based on the University Standards revealed multiple serious issues.

First, in terms of internal quality assurance, the University has established the Koyasan University Internal Quality Assurance Policy (hereinafter, the “Internal Quality Assurance Policy”), under which the Executive Council is responsible for promoting inspections and assessments, and the University Assessment Committee is in charge of inspections and assessments, with committees and divisions tasked with implementing plans. The Internal Quality Assurance Policy stipulates that inspections and assessments are conducted annually, but these tasks are disregarded and the implementation structure inadequately operated. The University Assessment Committee conducts inspections and assessments only to confirm the reports and minutes submitted by the committees and divisions, and no assessment activities are carried out for verification and improvement. Moreover, the Executive Council responsible for promoting internal quality assurance fails to fulfill its teaching and learning management responsibilities for each division. This situation highlights the failure to effectively operate the internal quality assurance system. It is recommended that the University overhaul its internal quality assurance structure and to urgently establish and operate a practical and feasible system based on its size and organizational structure.

As for teaching and learning, the Esoteric Buddhist Culture Course (for third-year transfers) in the Department of Esoteric Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Literature, established in AY2023, awards degrees to students who earn the required number of credits through remote classes alone. This practice violates the Standards for Establishment of Universities and the school code stipulating that students are allowed to earn up to 60 of the total number of credits required for graduation through remote classes. This issue must be addressed promptly.

Given the above serious issues, JUAA concluded that Koyasan University is “unaccredited” for its University Standards.

The faculty and graduate school continue to face unfulfilled student quotas despite a series of department reorganizations, causing the University's balance sheet ratio for

operating activities to remain remarkably low. Steps must be taken to establish a solid financial base. Moreover, the graduate school does not conduct its own faculty development (FD) activities, and should urgently address this issue.

Regarding teaching and learning, the graduate school's assessment policy uses the same indicators as the faculty, and makes insufficient efforts to utilize the evaluation results of learning outcomes for educational improvement. The learning outcomes are reviewed based on three diploma, curriculum, and admission policies, and discussed within the departments, but the University Assessment Committee, faculty, and graduate school make subjective reviews without effectively verifying the learning outcomes based on the assessment policy.

In the face of severe financial difficulties, the University offers financial support to undergraduate and graduate students through a variety of its own grant-based scholarships while providing tuition reductions or exemptions for international students and working adults. These effective student support initiatives are commendable as a meaningful step toward realizing its mission and purpose.

The University offers a unique educational and research environment as it takes advantage of the valuable collection of tangible and intangible documents preserved in Koyasan as educational resources. Recent years have seen positive changes, such as the growing student quota fulfillment after accepting working students. With AY2025 positioned as an opportunity for renewal, the University has expressed its determination to advance reforms in line with the launch of the Second Medium-Term Plan, and is expected to progress further while establishing a sound management base and promoting improvements in its education and research.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- The University has established a variety of its own grant-based scholarships to offer financial aid to graduate and undergraduate students who aspire to become monks, including high-achievers, temple apprentices, and successors. The University also provides tuition reductions or exemptions for international students and working adults, making many graduate and undergraduate students eligible for these benefits. It is commendable that these types of assistance effectively help students facing financial difficulties to pursue studies at the undergraduate and graduate schools.

Suggestions for Improvement

Teaching and Learning

- The assessment policy applies to both undergraduate and graduate programs using the same indicators, but it is not appropriate when all programs stipulate different learning outcomes in their diploma policies. Efforts to utilize the evaluation results of learning outcomes for educational improvement are also insufficient. These issues should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.31 in the master's course in the Graduate School of Literature. The graduate school will significantly reduce the enrollment cap for the master's course starting in AY2026, while the Major in Buddhist Studies has dropped the Buddhist Priesthood Training Course and the Course for Working Adults. Efforts should be made to appropriately manage the student quotas through these measures.

Recommendation

Internal Quality Assurance

- The AY2022 Progress Report Review Results confirmed improvements in the President's Plan prepared by the Executive Council and the inspection and assessment mechanism based on the University Standards, but annual inspections and assessments are not carried out as stated in the Internal Quality Assurance Policy. The University Assessment Committee's inspections and assessments are conducted merely in response to the certified evaluation and to confirm the reports and minutes submitted by the committees and divisions, while the Executive Council, which serves as a body promoting internal quality assurance, inadequately manages the divisions' teaching and learning. This situation highlights the failure to properly operate the internal quality assurance system. It is recommended that the University overhaul its internal quality assurance structure and urgently establish and operate a practical and feasible system in light of its size and organizational structure.

Teaching and Learning

- In AY2023, the University established the Esoteric Buddhist Culture Course in the Department of Esoteric Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Literature, designed for third-year transfers. The school code stipulates that up to 60 credits earned through remote classes are allowed to be counted for graduation requirements in accordance with the Standards for Establishment of Universities, but the University's website and brochures show that graduation is permitted through remote classes alone. The course provides in-person classes, but degrees in AY2024 were awarded to students whose required number of credits exceeded 60 through remote classes. As this practice violates the Standards for Establishment of Universities, the University is recommended to promptly correct the course's method of awarding degrees.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are low at 0.47 in the entire Faculty of Literature and 0.85 in the faculty's Department of Esoteric Buddhist Studies. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are also low at 0.82 in the entire Faculty of Literature and 0.21 in the faculty's Department of Education, while the ratio is high at 1.83 in the faculty's Department of Esoteric Buddhist Studies with the number of transfer students far exceeding the enrollment cap. The University has decided to raise the enrollment cap in the Department of Esoteric Buddhist Studies and reduce the cap in the Department of Education from AY2025, and to stop accepting new students in the Department of Education starting in AY2026. It is recommended that the University ensure the appropriate management of its student quotas.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The graduate school does not conduct its own FD activities. These activities must be appropriately implemented.

Management and Finance

- The University's balance sheet ratio for operating activities remains remarkably low as pointed out in JUAA's 2022 Progress Report Review Results, while the ratio of

financial assets to the required reserve fund has trended downward. This situation highlights that the University is far from establishing the financial base necessary to carry out its educational and research activities. It is recommended that the University formulate a medium- to long-term financial plan that specifies the rationale for numerical targets and implement concrete measures to improve its financial balance with the aim of establishing a sound financial base.