

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

Bunsei University of Art



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tochigi, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2024	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2032)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Bunsei University of Art

Overview

Bunsei University of Art (hereafter “University”), grounded in its founding spirit, the “Spirit of Three Respects”, and in accordance with its educational philosophy, has established the educational purposes of “fostering specialists supported by a good education and sound personal development; cultivating individuals with exceptional aesthetic sensibilities rooted in both tradition and cutting-edge approaches; and nurturing internationally minded people who understand and influence both Japanese and other cultures as well as individuals who can contribute broadly to cultural advancement.” To realize its mission and purposes, and the purposes of its undergraduate and graduate divisions, the University has formulated the “Management Improvement Plan of the Incorporated School of Utsunomiya Gakuen AY2023–AY2027 (Five-Year Plan)” and implements various initiatives based on this plan.

In line with its educational philosophy and educational purposes, the University has established a degree award policy (diploma policy), curriculum design and implementation policy (curriculum policy), and student enrollment policy (admissions policy), and develops structured curricula based on these policies. In addition, centered on the Bunsei Art and Culture Regional Cooperation Center, the University engages in social contribution activities and promotes social cooperation initiatives that leverage its areas of academic expertise. As part of these efforts, the University has signed partnership agreements with municipalities across Tochigi Prefecture to cooperate with the discovery of local resources and the promotion of community development, under which it carries out initiatives such as restoring cultural properties and designing product packaging, logos, and mascot characters at the request of local governments and companies. These initiatives not only serve as opportunities for students to enhance their skills and career readiness, but also contribute to regional revitalization through the arts, and are highly commendable efforts that embody the University’s educational philosophy.

There are serious issues the University needs to address, however. In the certified evaluation and accreditation results in 2017, the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) recognized issues in the areas of student enrollment, finances, and internal quality assurance, and granted accreditation for only a limited three-year period. In the review results in 2020, the need to thoroughly manage the faculties’ student quotas

and to ensure effective functioning of its internal quality assurance system remained under Areas of Serious Concern. Although four additional suggestions for improvement were also indicated, the University was deemed to meet the University Standards based on the recognition that the three areas identified above were likely to be improved in the future.

In the current evaluation and accreditation, certain progress in student enrollment was observed compared with the certified evaluation and accreditation results in 2017 and the re-review results in 2020 through such efforts as revising the open campus programs and systematically visiting high schools inside and outside the prefecture as part of its student recruitment activities. On the other hand, the University's financial situation remains severe due to ongoing under-enrollment. It is essential that the University work to establish a stable financial foundation by implementing the revenue and expenditure improvement measures outlined in the latest Management Improvement Plan of the Incorporated School of Utsunomiya Gakuen AY2023-AY2027 (Five-Year Plan) with regard to the financial condition of each school under the school corporation.

With respect to faculty development (hereafter "FD"), although the certified evaluation and accreditation results in 2017 pointed to the need for more structured FD training, as improvements to classes based on course evaluation surveys were left to the discretion of individual faculty members, the University has still not implemented structured FD based on the survey results, nor has it undertaken FD activities aimed at enhancing the quality of education or improving the competencies of faculty members in areas beyond educational improvement. Since improving the competencies of faculty members responsible for the curriculum also leads to assuring and enhancing the quality of educational and research activities, the prompt implementation of FD activities is required. As for staff development (hereafter "SD"), although SD workshops were held annually at the time of the certified evaluation and accreditation in 2017, the University no longer conducts these activities and does not provide opportunities for faculty and staff to receive training in the knowledge and skills necessary for university management through faculty-staff collaboration. In light of the growing complexity and sophistication of university management, faculty and staff development is becoming ever more important, and the prompt implementation of SD activities is required. The Standards for Establishment of Universities and the Standards for Establishment of Graduate Schools stipulate systematic FD and SD training to enhance student education and to ensure the appropriate and effective management of the University, including its educational and research activities. In light of their importance, the University should promptly formulate and implement plans to carry out this training.

Given that these statutory requirements are not being fulfilled, the University should conduct periodic self-studies to address various issues and challenges and to further advance its distinctive initiatives. Moreover, as the primary responsibility for assuring the quality of education lies with the University itself, it is essential to ensure that the internal quality assurance system is functioning fully, and that ongoing and sustained efforts are underway to ensure and improve the quality of education. The University has formulated the Policy for Internal Quality Assurance with the Self-Study Committee set as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, while the structure for promoting internal quality assurance is defined in the Bunsei University of Art Self-Study Regulations. The review results in 2020 pointed out the failure to clarify the frequency of self-studies, define the division of roles among the organizations involved in internal quality assurance, and prepare and publish self-study reports, nor have any periodic and independent self-studies been carried out apart from self-studies conducted when applying for certified evaluation and accreditation. The University should design and establish an internal quality assurance system suited to its actual circumstances, clearly setting out the purpose, frequency, and division of roles for carrying out self-studies; it should then periodically conduct self-studies and engage in efforts aimed at continuous improvement and enhancement. In addition, as the prompt disclosure of self-study results is mandated by law, the University must take corrective measures to ensure that such disclosures are carried out appropriately.

As another area of improvement, although the University has established an assessment policy and introduced tools such as the Learning Portfolio and the Graduation Survey to monitor and evaluate the student learning outcomes stated in its degree award policies, the relationship between assessment methods and learning outcomes is unclear in the undergraduate and graduate divisions, and the current practices cannot be considered sufficiently multifaceted or appropriate. These areas require improvement.

Going forward, the University's faculty and staff are expected to work together to design and implement a framework for promoting internal quality assurance, through which periodic self-studies will be steadily conducted and the university-wide PDCA cycle made to function effectively, thereby promoting the improvement and enhancement of the quality of its educational and research activities and leading to further institutional development.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- To foster individuals with rich humanity who can act creatively and independently and contribute to enriching the cultural life in society, the Bunsei Art and Culture Regional Cooperation Center has worked to expand its partnerships and promote social cooperation initiatives that leverage the University's areas of academic expertise. As part of these efforts, partnership agreements have been signed with municipalities across Tochigi Prefecture to cooperate with the discovery of local resources and the promotion of community development, under which it carries out initiatives such as restoring cultural properties and designing product packaging, logos, and mascot characters at the request of local governments and companies. The University's strong track record has raised its visibility in the local community and its initiatives have evolved into diverse forms of collaboration. These efforts are commendable for their contributions to regional revitalization through the arts, while serving as opportunities for participating students to enhance their skills and career readiness.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The University uses tools such as the Learning Portfolio, Course Evaluation Surveys, and Graduation Surveys to evaluate the student learning outcomes set forth in the degree award policies in the undergraduate and graduate divisions. The relationship between these methods and specified learning outcomes is unclear, however, and the current practices cannot be considered sufficiently multifaceted or appropriate. These areas require improvement.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratio of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap in the last five years is low at 0.86 in the School of Fine Arts, and the ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is also low at 0.85. Measures should be taken to ensure the School's student quota is thoroughly managed.
- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.07 in the Doctor's Course of Arts in the Graduate School of Arts. The student quota of the

graduate school should be thoroughly managed.

Recommendation

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University does not implement periodic self-studies except in response to certified evaluation and accreditation, even though the Policy for Internal Quality Assurance calls for periodic self-studies. As a result, the Self-Study Committee is unable to provide support for improvements based on self-study results or establish a collaborative role sharing framework with other relevant committees. To ensure that the internal quality assurance system functions effectively, the University should promptly conduct periodic self-studies in accordance with the Policy for Internal Quality Assurance and implement improvements and enhancements based on the results.
- The University should rectify its failure to make public its self-study reports, which summarize the self-study results, through such media as publications or its website.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The University has not carried out FD activities aimed at improving education in the undergraduate and graduate divisions, nor has it implemented FD activities aimed at enhancing the competencies of faculty members in areas other than education, such as research activities and social contribution. The University should promptly conduct these activities.

University Management

- The University has failed to carry out SD activities and should take prompt action to address this issue.
- The corporation-wide balance between operational revenue and expenditure has shown a negative trend over the years. The rate of the carried-over expenditures for next year to operational revenue has increased to a seriously high level. Furthermore, the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund has declined to a very low

level. These trends indicate that the University has not established the stable financial foundation necessary to sustain its educational and research activities. The University should urgently improve its financial condition by annually reviewing its Management Improvement Plan in light of the current circumstances and steadily implement effective measures in accordance with the plan.