
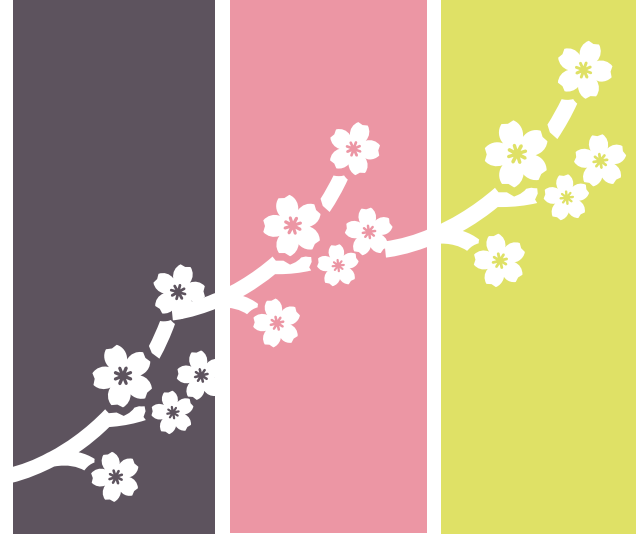


Newsletter

March 2024

 Japan University Accreditation Association



Our New President

Dr. Yuko Takahashi was appointed as the 25th President of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in June 2023, succeeding Dr. Kyosuke Nagata.

Dr. Takahashi is the President of Tsuda University and the Chairperson of the Council for University Chartering and School Juridical Person.

Her research areas include the humanities and social sciences, and gender studies, with a particular focus on women and higher education, and Umeko Tsuda, the founder of Tsuda University.



Dr. Yuko Takahashi
25th President of JUAA

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Message From Managing Trustee and Executive Director

Missions Expected of the Japan University Accreditation Association

The Japan University Accreditation Association, or JUAA, is a voluntary and self-governing organization of higher education institutions established in 1947 by national, public, and private universities of the time. JUAA's purpose set forth at the time of establishment – “to promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan through the voluntary efforts and mutual assistance by member institutions and to contribute to international cooperation such as educational and research activities at universities” – remains essentially unchanged for over 70 years to this day.



To achieve the purpose described above, JUAA undertakes two main activities. The first is to define the characteristics of excellence for universities and translate them into a set of standards, and the second is to conduct accreditation based on the established and revised standards. JUAA's primary mission is to contribute to the qualitative improvement of universities through these activities.

JUAA launched its university accreditation program, mentioned as the second main activity above, in 1951, and overhauled its evaluation practices in 1996 to develop the basis for the system of accreditation that is currently in use today.

In 2004, the Japanese government introduced the certified evaluation and accreditation system, mandating all universities and junior colleges to undergo evaluation by accreditation agencies certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Of the five accreditation agencies certified to conduct institutional accreditation in Japan today, JUAA was the first to be awarded this certification on account of its experience and proven track record in university accreditation. Since receiving the certification, JUAA has played an integral role as a government-sanctioned accreditation agency by introducing, for example, the concept of internal quality assurance into the process of certified evaluation and accreditation during one of the many rounds of revisions of its evaluation standards.

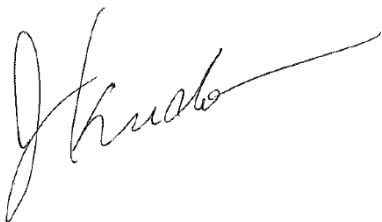
In recent years, significant changes are taking place in the environment surrounding higher education institutions, generating new challenges for university accreditation. The first is the impact of the rapidly declining birth rate. While the youth population is shrinking, the percentage of people going to university is rising. This trend has intensified the competition among institutions to attract students while creating the challenge of dealing with the diverse academic backgrounds of the incoming students. Universities are expected to continuously review their approach to education and strive for improvement to meet diverse student needs in an appropriate manner.

The second is the spread of online education induced by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption of teaching modes free from restrictions of time and location engendered the need for institutions to develop and offer innovative instruction methods that ensure effective student learning, student learning support programs, and

opportunities for building relationships between teaching staff and students as well as between students. It is the responsibility of accreditation agencies to assess through university evaluations whether institutions are responding appropriately to these fresh demands.

The third challenge is the growing demand for globally-recognized quality assurance, arising from the increasingly intense international competition that globalization entails. In light of this trend, JUAA launched its International Joint Accreditation Standards (IJAS) program with an accreditation agency in Taiwan in 2018. What started as a two-country initiative has now grown to a four-country network with the addition of accreditation agencies from Thailand and Mongolia. With the inflow of evaluation applications from institutions in countries other than the IJAS member countries anticipated in the near future, the international accreditation alliance is on track for steady expansion. Going forward, in order to ensure its quality assurance is recognized and accepted globally, JUAA must make clear the essence of international standards by defining accreditation standards that conform to international requirements and finding ways to reconcile any differences between international and domestic accreditation standards.

Conducting university evaluation is tantamount to striving to understand the role of the university. As it moves forward, JUAA needs to continue to explore the universal value of universities while contributing to the qualitative improvement of universities by setting and upholding accreditation standards that reflect public expectations for universities and ensuring these standards are being met by universities through evaluation activities. Furthermore, JUAA should aim to create new value in university accreditation just as it did by integrating the practice of internal quality assurance into the certified evaluation and accreditation procedure. Leading the certified evaluation and accreditation system through such initiatives is another important mission of JUAA.



Mr. Jun Kudo
Managing Trustee and Executive Director

Accreditation

1. Our Accreditation System

JUAA was established in 1947 as a voluntary (non-profit) organization, taking several U.S. accreditation organizations as a model. The 46 initial member universities gathered and approved the University Standards, which we have been using for implementing accreditation since 1951.

The certified evaluation and accreditation scheme started in Japan in 2004 as a national quality assurance framework to assure and enhance the quality of higher education institutions (HEIs). In this scheme, all HEIs must undergo external evaluation once every seven years, and all professional graduate schools every five years.

In 2004, JUAA became the first Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agency for universities certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). We currently perform institutional accreditation (for universities and junior colleges), program accreditation for professional graduate schools in nine fields, and program accreditation for veterinary medicine and dental education.

Through our accreditation system, we aim to assure society of the quality of HEIs, continuously support the improvement and enhancement of HEIs, and support the fulfillment of the HEIs' accountability to society. To this end, JUAA provides evaluations that focus on the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance (IQA) system, and works to highlight the good practices of each HEI.

2. FY2023 Accreditation Results

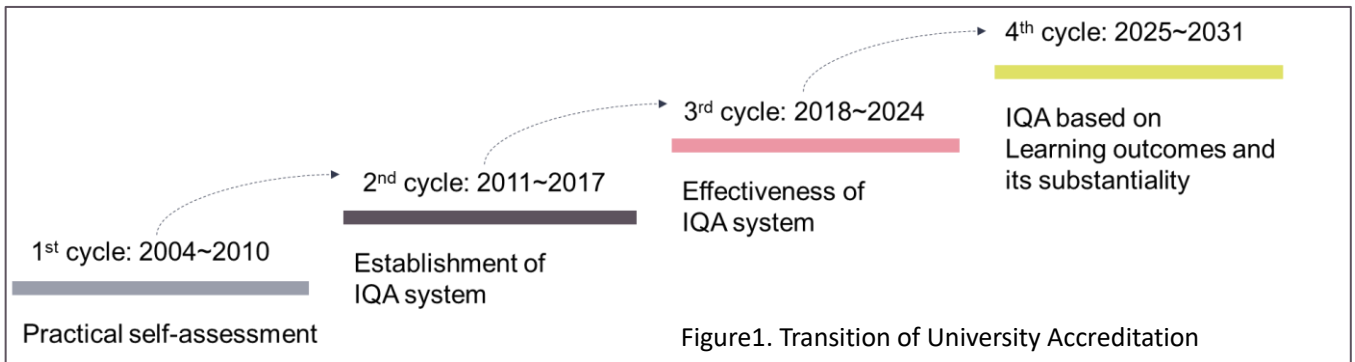
In FY2023, JUAA accredited 42 universities, 3 junior colleges, 19 professional graduate schools (4 law schools, 10 business schools, 2 public policy schools, 2 public health schools, and 1 intellectual property school), 4 veterinary schools, and 5 dental education schools.

As we enter the final stage of the third cycle of accreditation, evaluations focusing on the effectiveness of the IQA system has taken hold, but at the same time, some challenges have emerged concerning IQA at HEIs and its evaluation. That is, although HEIs have established IQA policies and procedures, the actual situation does not conform to them, and the IQA is not leading to enhanced teaching and learning outcomes. The challenge for the evaluation is to focus more on the functionality of the IQA system, in addition to its establishment.

3. Fourth Cycle of Institutional Accreditation Starting in 2025

The fourth cycle of institutional accreditation in Japan will start in 2025, and we have revised the JUAA accreditation standards and procedures based on the aforementioned challenges from the third cycle. On November 20, 2023, we held a briefing seminar on the new accreditation standards and procedures for universities and junior colleges.

One of our principle policies for institutional accreditation in the fourth cycle is to focus on and evaluate "IQA based on learning outcomes and its substantiality" (Figure 1).



In particular, we aim to conduct efficient evaluations by organizing evaluation items and focusing on the effectiveness and performance of university education. As a new approach in the evaluation process, we will collect student opinions through a web form and conduct interviews with external stakeholders such as industry toward carrying out evaluations from multiple perspectives. These hearings with students and external stakeholders are in response to the recommendation for improvement of "student and industry involvement in the evaluation" in the external review results of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

Student engagement in QA is a major challenge. In Japan, student associations have not matured due to historical reasons, and as in other Asian countries, students have a strong sense of being learners.

For the first time, we attempted to solicit opinions from students in public comments on the proposed revised evaluation standards and procedures, and as a result, received feedback that was targeted and useful.

Although this is not enough to enhance the quality of education at universities, hearing the students' voices in itself is an important part of the evaluation process, and we will actively address this issue in the fourth cycle of institutional accreditation.



Briefing on the 4th cycle of institutional accreditation on November 20

Research Projects

In 2018, JUAA established the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (RIQAHE) to contribute to the improvement of the quality of higher education in Japan and international cooperation in education and research activities in higher education institutions. RIQAHE is engaged in research and studies on higher education in Japan and internationally (see Table 1). The research findings are used to improve JUAA's evaluation system, and reports are published on the JUAA website for the benefit of university stakeholders and the public. RIQAHE also organizes conferences and open seminars for member universities.

Table 1. List of Research Projects

Title	Period
Survey for Promoting Quality Assurance and Enhancement Initiatives in Teaching Programs	July 2018-March 2019
Survey on the Expected Role of Achievement Level Evaluation	August 2019-July 2021
Survey on Effective Online Education and Evaluation Criteria and Perspectives	July 2019-March 2022
Survey on Teaching and Learning Management	October 2021-March 2023
Survey on Developing Skills in Bachelor's Degree Education to Meet the Challenges of Contemporary Society	October 2021-September 2023
* Survey on Today's Phase of Credit System and Substantiation of Credit System	April 2023 - September 2024 (scheduled)
* Survey on Student Engagement in Quality Assurance	April 2023 - September 2024 (scheduled)

*Ongoing Surveys



RIQAHE Open Seminar on July 28, 2023

1. Research Project Results for FY2023

This section provides an overview of two projects conducted in FY2023.

1) Survey on Teaching and Learning Management

Survey period: November 2021 - March 2023

Project members: Fujio OHMORI (Tohoku University) *Project Leader

Masayuki FUJIMURA (Sophia University)

Tomoko MORI (Toin University of Yokohama)

Akiko MOROZUMI (The University of Tokyo)

Hisao SUZUKI (Hokkaido University)

Junichiro YASUDA (Yamagata University)

The establishment of "teaching and learning management" as a policy has been required of universities in Japan for more than a decade, but it has not fully penetrated the field of university education, and substantiation has been an issue. This project, therefore, conducted a fact-finding survey on the effectiveness of teaching and learning management in educational fields and compiled suggestions on how to substantiate teaching and learning management that would lead to better understanding among faculty and students.

The fact-finding survey*1 consisted of a questionnaire about faculty awareness of teaching and learning management policies and their impact on educational behavior, as well as interviews*2 with faculty and students. The survey results were as follows.

- Perceptions of learning and management policy vary widely across disciplines, and policy guidance and incentives are needed to enhance internal discussion and practice in line with their respective disciplines.
- The Executive Office should play a role in providing appropriate information to departments and faculty to enable them to work on their initiative.
- Awareness of the diploma policy is low among students, who are the subjects of its learning.

Based on these survey results, we compiled a proposal for "Teaching and Learning Management 2.0" to realize a transformation toward learner-centered university education.

The report suggested that we should aim for teaching and learning management that has an impact on the educational field, that is, on faculty teaching and student learning. "Teaching and Learning Management 2.0" also refers to strategies for implementation, including the need for open and intensive communication at all levels of university administration, and measures for student engagement to promote their understanding of the relationship between the abilities they are expected to acquire and the curriculum and teaching.

* 1 The questionnaire survey was sent to 3,360 randomly selected faculty members from 560 departments nationwide (6 faculty members including 1 dean from each university), and 1,721 valid responses were received.

* 2 The interview survey was conducted with 6 departments in 6 universities (including 2 faculty members and 1 student in each university) that responded to the questionnaire.

2) Survey on Developing Skills in Bachelor's Degree Education to Meet the Challenges of Contemporary Society

Survey period: November 2021 - March 2023

Project members: Reiko YAMADA (Doshisha University) *Project Leader

Yusuke HORII (Kanazawa University)

Yojiro ISHII (Chubu University)

Hiroshi KOBAYASHI (College Management, Editor)

Hidetoshi SEIWA (Formerly at Hiroshima University)

Kimikazu SUGIMORI (Hokuriku University)

*Affiliations are as of the time of the research

With the progress in various university reforms, liberal arts education for the 21st century is attracting attention. Although there is no clear definition of this concept, it includes terms such as "data science," "STEAM," "fusion of arts and sciences," and "DX," and is considered content that students should master and utilize in the 21st century, and many universities are focusing on enhancing these curricula and programs. The concept is also emphasized by companies, and it is important to cultivate skills related to the above contents in bachelor's degree programs and incorporate them into the curricula. The purpose of this project was to investigate how each university approaches the development of new skills in its bachelor's programs and explore society's expectations and perceptions of the development of these skills.

The survey was conducted through a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire survey consisted of a questionnaire for 787 universities (82 national, 94 public, and 611 private) and a monitoring survey for 750 corporate human resource managers (corporate employees, civil servants, and employees of nonprofit organizations). The questionnaire survey for universities received responses from 374 universities (47.5% response rate), and the monitoring survey for corporate HR managers received 750 responses (100% response rate). Interviews were conducted with five universities that responded to the questionnaire, with different initiatives and different types of institutions (national and private), as well as with two industry-related organizations.

The survey results revealed that although various educational efforts are being made at each university, the efforts are not fully communicated to companies, and there are differences in their understanding of education. This suggests the importance of continuous communication between universities and companies to share their efforts and ideas.

2. Introduction of New Research Projects

RIQAHE has two research projects focusing on quality assurance in higher education today.

1) Survey on Today's Phase of Credit System and Substantiation of Credit System

Survey period: April 2023 - September 2024 (scheduled)

Project members: Motohisa KANEKO (University of Tsukuba) *Project Leader

Ryokichi CHIDA (Meiji University)

Satoko FUKAHORI (Kyushu University)

Akinori MATSUZAKA (Japan University Accreditation Association)

Rie MORI (National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education)

Shunta MORI (Shizuoka University of Art and Culture)

Kuniyoshi NAKAI (Ritsumeikan University)

Shinji TATEISHI (University of Tsukuba)

After the COVID-19 pandemic, online education made significant progress, and the experience has provided an opportunity to rethink what it means to “learn” in university education. The standards for university establishment in Japan were revised in 2022 to allow for more flexibility in the calculation of credits and the academic calendar. The revision has increased the responsibility of each university to properly design student learning and provide evidence of learning activities. This project focuses on how the credit system should be operated and substantiated. We are conducting questionnaires and interviews with universities in Japan to understand the actual situation, collect case studies, and organize the theoretical basis of the project. Through this, we aim to support the efforts of universities in substantive learning activities and improve our evaluations.

2) Survey on Student Engagement in Quality Assurance

Survey period: April 2023 - September 2024 (scheduled)

Project members: Yusuke HORII (Osaka University) *Project Leader

Tadashige KAWAKAMI (Hosei University)

Hiroko TAKE (Nagoya University) (Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)

Masahiro TANAKA (University of Tsukuba)

Tomoko TORII (Ritsumeikan University)

Tsutomu YAMADA (Nagoya City University)

The leaders of quality assurance activities, whether internal or external, for higher education in Japan have been the education providers (i.e., academic staff and admin staff). Calls for "learner-centered" education, however, have brought to light the need to position the students in QA activities. The results of INQAAHE's external review also highlighted this issue. This project, therefore, is a first step in exploring approaches to student engagement in quality assurance that are appropriate for Japan. The survey consists of questionnaires

and interviews (in person and online) with universities in Japan and interviews (in person and online) with universities and related institutions abroad. It should be noted that the ultimate purpose of the survey is to involve the students in the process of third-party evaluation that we are conducting. Since it is difficult to realize student engagement in external quality assurance without first establishing the position of students in IQA, however, we are starting by understanding the status of student engagement in universities and identifying issues.

3. Publications

RIQAHE’s research outcomes are published as needed for use by member institutions and Japanese universities in general. In addition to publishing research project reports on the JUAA website, we publish (1) the research journal "University Evaluation Review," (2) "University Staff Journal" for improving the skills and abilities of staff members and for other practical purposes (Table 2), and (3) the results of surveys and research in book form in the "JUAA Library."



"University Evaluation Review" No. 22



"JUAA Library" No. 16, No. 17

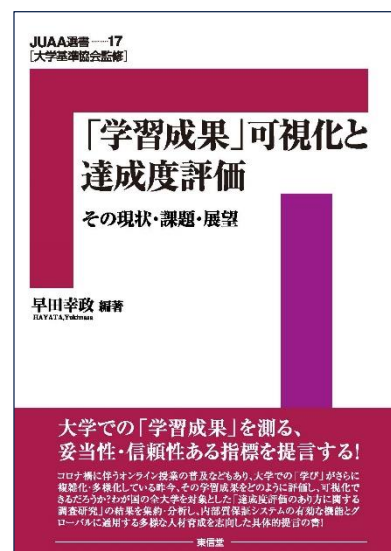


Table 2

No.	List of Themes in the University Staff Journal* (Published annually in March)
7	University Community Collaboration and Community Contribution and Staff Initiatives (2019)
8	Collaboration between Teachers and Faculty: Past and Future (2020)
9	ICT Applications in Universities (2021)
10	Current Trends Surrounding University Staff and Changes in the Role of University Staff (2022)
11	Diversity of University Staff and Its Realization (2023)

* Listings for the most recent 5 years

Global Network and Engagement

JUAA is a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) to collect and disseminate information on higher education and quality assurance. We are also a supporting member of the Association of Asia-Pacific Business Schools (AAPBS) to keep up with the rapid changes in business education brought about by globalization. In addition, we currently have nine international partners around the world and continue to strive to develop as an internationally trusted quality assurance agency.

In order to prove our quality as an international quality assurance agency, JUAA received an external review by the INQAAHE and was certified as an alignment agency in March 2023. In the review results, we were commended for our contribution to improving the quality of higher education in Japan and for the high confidence we have earned as a quality assurance agency from relevant organizations in Japan and abroad.

The results also pointed out the need for us to improve the engagement of students and alumni in the revision of standards and evaluation activities. As mentioned earlier (see Research Projects), RIQAHE has already started a research project on student engagement in QA from April 2023. The Standards Committee will also lead discussions on standards related to the quality of cross-border education, which was recommended as an outstanding challenge.

In addition to working on the issue suggested by INQAAHE, we intend to be more proactive in collaborating with other agencies to enhance our international competitiveness.



1. MOU Renewed

JUAA and the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA) signed an initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2013, with renewals in 2017 and 2020. To continue and strengthen future collaboration, JUAA and TWAEA renewed the MOU in October 2023, with the signatures of Dr. Yuko Takahashi, President of JUAA, and Dr. Chi-Yeh Yung, Chairman of TWAEA.



2. 2023 International Symposium Co-hosted by TWAEA, ONESQA and JUAA

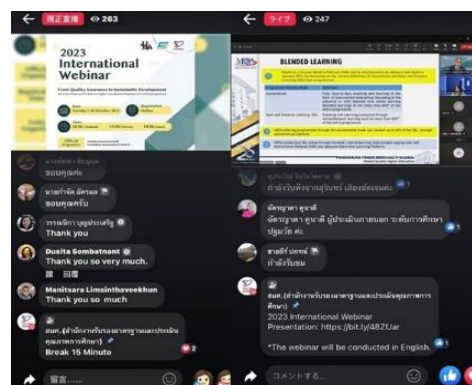
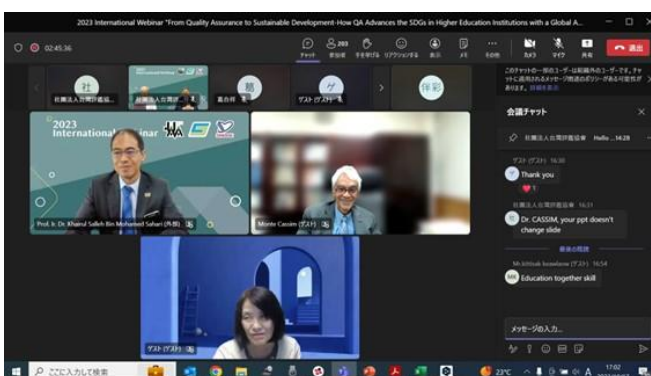
Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has changed dramatically, with striking advances in ICT and the use of digital transformation, and these changes have affected the development of higher education. Governments and educational institutions are striving to find ways for sustainable development to cope with the effects of the disparity between rich and poor, international disruption, and trends such as COVID-19 and AI.

To discuss how quality assurance can aid higher education institutions realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amidst global trends, JUAA, in collaboration with the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA) and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) in Thailand, co-hosted the online international symposium "From Quality Assurance to Sustainable Development - How QA Advances the SDGs in Higher Education Institutions with a Global Approach," on October 17, 2023.

The symposium invited scholars and education practitioners in Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and other regions to participate in the event and discuss in depth the key developments in the field of higher education around three major topics: "Cross-Border Communication," "Crises and Opportunities in the Digital and Pandemic Era," and "Strategies for Sustainable Development in Education," sharing experiences and innovative practical outcomes.

JUAA hosted Topic 2, "Crises and Opportunities in the Digital and Pandemic Era," moderated by Dr. Reiko Yamada of Doshisha University, with Dr. Khairul Salleh Mohamed Sahari of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and Dr. Monte Cassim, President of Akita International University, as presenters. Dr. Sahari gave a detailed report on the promotion and reform of quality assurance activities in Malaysia after the COVID-19 pandemic, including micro-credentials and transnational education. Dr. Monte Cassim presented a case study on value creation in human society through the use of digital technology at Akita International University. Both presentations provided useful insights to the participating higher education professionals.

Approximately 650 participants representing 15 countries in Europe and Asia attended the symposium. Through the discussions in each session, it was concluded that QA agencies that professionally address the quality of higher education play an essential role in achieving quality education in higher education institutions.



3. Global Engagement with Other Agencies

JUAA actively holds meetings with quality assurance agencies in other countries to develop global cooperation.

On June 8, 2023, the CEO and Deputy CEO (Quality Assurance) of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) visited the JUAA office. We discussed the importance of staff development and agreed to jointly conduct staff training programs.



At the request of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), the CEO of the NZQA and a representative of Education New Zealand in Japan visited JUAA for the first time on October 6, 2023. We exchanged information on the systems of higher education and QA, as well as the role of the organizations in both countries. We also discussed the possibility of introducing AI in QA activities, QA for micro-credentials, and student support. Both parties agreed to continue creating opportunities for further exchanges in the future.



On October 19, 2023, the Director of the Evaluation Research Department and the Assistant Director of the International Planning Office attended the 2023 International Conference on "The Present and Future of Student Engagement in Higher Education Quality Assurance" hosted by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT). The conference invited panelists from Europe, Australia, Mongolia, and Taiwan, and the participants had a lively discussion on how to promote student engagement in QA in Asia, where students are considered to be learners. During the panel discussion, we had the opportunity to introduce the situation in Japan and JUAA's efforts. Through the discussion, we recognized the importance of exploring ways of student engagement in quality assurance that are appropriate for Japan, despite the different cultural backgrounds of the students.



4. JUAA Staff Presentation at APQN Academic Conference 2023

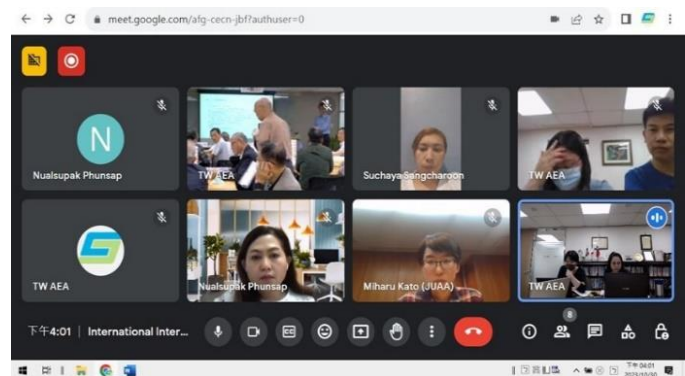
The Academic Conference of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) "Innovation and Sustainable Development in Higher Education " was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from November 2 to 4, 2023. Mr. Akinori Matsuzaka, Associate Director, and Ms. Miharu Kato, Assistant Director of the Planning and Research Division, participated in the conference. They presented a paper on " Digital Technologies and Ethical Approaches in Quality Assurance: A Case of the JUAA" at the breakout session on "Quality of Transformative Learning (TL) and Transformative Teaching (TT)."



5. Start of International Internship Programs with TWAEA and ONESQA

Quality assurance agency staff are required to have various competencies including problem-solving skills, communication skills, and attitudes such as social skills and teamwork, in addition to knowledge of higher education and evaluation at the national and international levels. To foster and develop the competencies of QA agency staff, JUAA, the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA), and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) in Thailand have been conducting staff exchange-based training programs since 2017.

In 2023, we launched the new training program "International Internship Program" to further deepen understanding of cross-cultural exchange and QA in higher education in the Asian region among the three agencies. The first program, hosted by TWAEA, was very well organized. The program consisted of a preliminary online session and on-site training in Taiwan and lasted approximately five months. From JUAA, an Assistant Director of the Planning and Research Division participated. After the online orientation on August 17, the interns participated in three online exchange events such as briefings for higher education institutions on institutional accreditation and training for evaluators.



The interns then visited TWAEA from December 18 to 23 to participate in site visits with the evaluators, which allowed them to output their learning from the online training. At the end of the program, the individual interns presented their learning and findings from the training.

After the internship, JUAA held a debriefing session with a participant to share among staff the lessons learned from the other agencies' evaluation practices and suggestions from the training, including the knowledge and attitudes required of QA staff.

Finally, here we would like to express our sincere gratitude to TWAEA for providing the best learning environment and program.



INQAAHE Conference 2025

JUAA is pleased to announce that INQAAHE Conference 2025 will be held in Tokyo from May 13 to 16, 2025. As the readers of this newsletter know, INQAAHE holds a forum and conference every other year to keep abreast of global trends in quality assurance and provide opportunities for exchange among stakeholders. To bring this international conference to Japan, JUAA decided to apply as the host agency at the end of February 2023. After passing a preliminary review and a final review based on our final proposal submitted at the end of April, we were selected as one of the four finalist agencies. Then, at the INQAAHE 2023 Conference held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from May 29 to June 1, 2023, former JUAA President Dr. Nagata (then in the position of President) made a final presentation on our proposal. Afterward, INQAAHE members voted electronically, and JUAA received the highest number of votes and was selected as the host agency.

It is a great honor for JUAA, the longest-established quality assurance agency in Asia, to serve as the conference host for INQAAHE. We would like to take this opportunity to prepare ourselves to further promote quality assurance in higher education in Japan and to contribute to quality assurance in higher education in the region.



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