

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

Kumamoto Gakuen University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kumamoto, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Kumamoto Gakuen University

Overview

Kumamoto Gakuen University, founded on the principles of “Mutual Friendship between Teachers and Students,” “Deep Respect for Freedom and Liberty,” and “Warm Heart of One School as One Family,” defines its purpose as “imparting a broad range of knowledge and conducting in-depth teaching and research of specialized academic theories on economics, commerce, management, foreign languages, and social welfare.” The University also sets forth the mission of “contributing to the development of global culture by cultivating people with a high level of intelligence, applied abilities, and profound knowledge, while striving to preserve both Kumamoto Prefecture’s tradition of international activities for overseas development and the free open-minded academic culture of private schools.” To achieve the founding principles, purpose, and mission, the Second Kumamoto Gakuen Medium-term Management Plan sets two goals for the University: “university providing student-first education” and “university serving as a hub of knowledge and communities to support the development of society.”

The University has created an internal quality assurance system with the Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committee as a responsible body following the establishment of the University-wide Policy for Kumamoto Gakuen University Internal Quality Assurance and the Kumamoto Gakuen University Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Regulations. The committee issues instructions for improvement in the regular inspection of the links to the diploma and curriculum policies, appropriate assessment of student learning outcomes, student support, the education and research environment, and other activities, but many of the improvement efforts have yet to be undertaken, and support for improving the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycles of the faculties and graduate schools is insufficient. This situation should be addressed with teaching and learning management effectively operated by the Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committee.

As for the University’s education, the diploma policy is established based on the founding principles, and the curricula are systematically designed in accordance with the curriculum policy and curriculum design policy issued by the president every academic year. To provide education effectively, the University conducts class evaluation surveys to check student study hours and analyze

aggregates data, and actively promotes problem-based learning (PBL) and active learning.

The University has established the Institute of Economics and Business, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Social Welfare, and Open Research Center for Minamata Studies based on its founding principles, along with its historical background and engagement with the local community. It is highly commendable that the Open Research Center for Minamata Studies in particular, as an interdisciplinary research organization with researchers from various fields, contributes to advancing practical educational and research activities rooted in the community. In addition, the University has established the Inclusive Student Support Center to enhance its student support system from a university-wide perspective in coordination with multiple service desks. The Support Office for Students with Disabilities, which serves as a contact point for students requiring reasonable accommodations, provides student supporters with skills training to assist those with disabilities. It is particularly notable that the support office not only offers specific support based on the University's student support policy, but also provides learning opportunities for student supporters. The Institute of Economics and Business has opened Kumamoto Innovation School Jidaisha as a project commissioned by Kumamoto Prefecture to provide young managers and future executives of next-generation businesses with opportunities to learn about business creation and innovation as entrepreneurs. This is an outstanding initiative that contributes to building momentum for business startups in the region.

There are several issues the University needs to address, however. In terms of education, the maximum number of credits students can register for is specified, but subjects for acquiring qualifications are excluded, with some departments failing to take sufficient measures to ensure credit validity for students taking these subjects. As for monitoring student learning outcomes, the graduate schools have not established methods for measuring students' acquired knowledge, skills, and other qualities from a multifaceted perspective as stated in the diploma policy. Moreover, student enrollment in some faculties and graduate schools is below the student enrollment cap. These issues should be addressed.

In the coming years, the University is expected to appropriately operate its internal quality assurance system, with the efforts of faculty members and departments further leading to the realization of its founding principles.

Notable Strengths

Educational and Research Structure

- The University has established the Institute of Economics and Business, Institute of Foreign Affairs, and Institute of Social Welfare based on its historical background and engagement with the local community, as well as the Open Research Center for Minamata Studies as part of the Academic Research Promotion Center's project. The research center in particular, as an interdisciplinary research organization with researchers from various fields, conducts progressive programs, such as creating an archive of local materials, thereby contributing to the advancement of practical educational and research activities rooted in the community. The research center is commendable as an organization committed to embodying the University's founding principles of "Mutual Friendship between Teachers and Students" and "Warm Heart of One School as One Family."

Student Support

- To enhance the student support system from a university-wide perspective in line with the student support policy, the University has established the Inclusive Student Support Center in coordination with multiple service desks that include the Student Counseling Room, Support Office for Students with Disabilities, and Nurse's Office. The Support Office for Students with Disabilities in particular, which serves as a contact point for students requiring reasonable accommodations, provides student supporters with training in mobility assistance and lesson support, including notetaking, braille transcribing, and captioning, to assist students with disabilities. It is commendable that the support office not only offers specifically designed support based on the University's student support policy, but also provides learning opportunities for students.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The Institute of Economics and Business, which aims to contribute to the development of regional industry management, has opened Kumamoto Innovation School Jidaisha as a project commissioned by Kumamoto Prefecture to provide young managers and future executives of next-generation businesses with a systematic lecture and workshop program. It is commendable that the

program offers the participants opportunities to learn about business creation and innovation as entrepreneurs, and contributes to building momentum for business startups in the region.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University has established an internal quality assurance system with the Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committee as a responsible body. The committee issues instructions for improvement in the regular inspection of the links to the diploma and curriculum policies, appropriate assessment of student learning outcomes, student support, the education and research environment, and other activities, but many of the improvement efforts have yet to be undertaken, and support for improving the PDCA cycles of the faculties and graduate schools is insufficient. This situation should be addressed with teaching and learning management steadily implemented by the Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committee.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The faculties specify the maximum number of credits students can register for in a year, but subjects for acquiring qualifications and approved for transfer credits are excluded. Many students in the Department of Life Wellness and the Department of Child and Family Welfare in the Faculty of Social Welfare have registered for credits that exceed the upper limit. The faculty's syllabus specifies learning content outside of class hours (preparations and reviews), and course guidance is provided, but these measures are insufficient to ensure credit validity. This issue should be addressed.
- The graduate schools fail to monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes with corresponding measurement methods from a multifaceted perspective as stated in the diploma policy. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Social Welfare – Evening Division, has a low average ratio of 0.29 in freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years, and a low ratio of 0.31 in student enrollment to the student enrollment cap. These ratios should be improved with the faculty’s student quotas thoroughly managed.
- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.20 in the master’s program in the Graduate School of Commerce, 0.27 in the master’s program in the Graduate School of Economics, 0.11 in the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Economics, 0.27 in the master’s program in the Graduate School of Area-based Cultural Studies, 0.11 in the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Area-based Cultural Studies, and 0.47 in the master’s program in the Graduate School of Social Welfare. These ratios should be improved with the graduate schools’ student quotas thoroughly managed.

University Management and Finance

- The balance sheet ratio for operating the University’s activities as a corporation and school division remains below average for a private university with multiple faculties, and the University’s ratio of financial assets to the required reserve fund is also low. This situation indicates that the University is far from establishing a solid financial base to sustainably conduct its educational and research activities. While the situation has shown improvement with a temporary increase in expenditures driven by reconstruction and revitalization after the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes, efforts should be made in the years ahead to ameliorate the financial conditions based on the University’s medium- and long-term financial plans.