

**Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for
Professional Graduate Business School**

Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: National	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2018	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2019 – March.31.2024)	

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The Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University (hereafter, GSBA) specifies the educational purpose of “fostering a core group of businesspeople in Japanese society with advanced expertise in both general business administration and specific areas of study, who can think logically and apply their expertise in practice, and have world-class capabilities to think, judge, and communicate.”

Today with many professional graduate business schools in Japan facing the problem of insufficient enrollment, GSBA steadily fulfills its quota of sixty-nine students per year, providing a program that allows students to take classes only on Saturdays and complete their coursework in one and half years. It is commendable that the school systematically offers practical interactive seminars, including “Case Project Research,” “Theme Project Research,” and “Thesis Supervision Seminar,” in the business-dominated Keihan area. It is also notable that the school is working to achieve its objective by taking measures that include “Applied Study in Industrial Management of Japan and UK,” a course promoting international exchange with the UK’s Cranfield University. In addition, the school has adopted the unique initiative of asking former graduates, as MBA fellows, to give advice to students in “Theme Project Research” mentioned above. GSBA has also taken other outstanding actions to create an educational environment that encourages students’ self-learning and interaction, for example, by providing a study room students can use freely on the Rokkodai First Campus, organizing open seminars and forums on the university’s campuses, and actively publicizing the multiple aspects of GSBA’s educational and research policy to society and the business community through the publication of the book “Jinsei wo Kaeru MBA” (A Life-changing MBA: Leading through Management Theory in Practice).

There are several issues that GSBA needs to address, however. For some subjects, the methods and standards for assessing academic achievement are not set forth in the syllabi, a situation that should be rectified as soon as possible. Attendance is currently one of the factors for accessing academic achievement for more than a few subjects; it is expected that GSBA will consider whether this policy is appropriate in light of its educational purpose and take the necessary actions in line with the features of each subject. Furthermore, there is the issue of assigning an “F” grade to students in the bottom 5 percent a more without exception for core subjects. It is desirable that GSBA reconsider its efforts to apply more stringent rules to grading. In addition, syllabi are written in detail for some subjects, but not for others. This problem must also be addressed.

There are also issues that must be examined from the perspective of disseminating information to students and other parties. First, GSBS’s purpose is described differently depending on the medium. Although it is possible to use different expressions with different mediums to explain the purpose intelligibly, it is expected that GSBA will review the consistency of the content once again, with clarification provided on its website after making the necessary revisions. Second, it is not clear which subject category each subject belongs to, whether it is core, specialized (applied), or specialized (practical). The school should indicate this clearly to students through the student handbook or curriculum map. Third, it is desirable that GSBA set up minimum grading guidelines for non-core subjects.

In addition, despite the many unique aspects of its curriculum GSBA does not provide all students with an opportunity to acquire a high level of professional ethics. As a high-profile issue for professional business schools in recent years, it is expected that GSBA will devise a way to ensure this. It is also desirable that the school review the maximum number of credits students can register for in one academic year as well

as the academic calendar. Finally, GSBA is expected to take this opportunity to begin discussions on creating a written strategy for better resource allocation, enhancement of institutional abilities, creation of value, increasing the number of foreign faculty members, and strengthening the administrative bureau.

This is the first time for GSBA to be evaluated and accredited as a professional business school by the Japan University Accreditation Association. Through the evaluation and accreditation process, its achievements and unique characteristics have been clarified. GSBA is expected to leverage the evaluation results for further development.