

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

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2016	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2017 – March.31.2024)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results For Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

Overview

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (hereafter, the University) succeeded Kobe Municipal College of Foreign Affairs (founded in 1946) and expanded into a single-subject university with a faculty of foreign studies consisting of three departments: English, Russian, and Chinese. After the addition of departments and the creation of a new graduate school, the University has the Faculty of Foreign Studies (consisting of the Department of English Studies, the Department of Russian Studies, the Department of Chinese Studies, the Department of Spanish Studies, the Department of International Relations), the Faculty of Foreign Studies (evening courses), and the Graduate School of Foreign Studies. With its campus in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, the University is engaged in education and research activities based on the mission of “instruction and research of so-called ‘foreign study’ with the aim of comprehensively understanding and studying the language, culture, politics, laws, economy, and other topics in each region, with a focus on mastery of the foreign languages.”

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2010, the University worked to establish a standing organization to prioritize university reform. The Reform Promotion Committee was established in April 2016. Since then, the University has worked to develop a comprehensive review system covering a variety of areas, from its mission and purpose to the faculty organization, educational content, and methods.

The distinctive features of the University noted in this accreditation review include its active involvement in local contribution activities, taking advantage of its role as a university specializing in foreign languages and located in the international city of Kobe. The Regional Collaboration Promotion Center initiative facilitates the University’s response to local requests. Contribution activities include sending students as volunteer interpreters to events such as international conventions. Also, student volunteers organize theatrical troupes based on specialized language plans and have managed their performances for many years. These activities help students develop their foreign language skills and facilitate their understanding of different cultures.

However, the University has several issues to address, such as the underdevelopment of enrollment management in several undergraduate programs, the purpose of the graduate school and the curriculum design policies of the graduate school, and the lack of sufficient criteria for professor qualification and examination of the degree-seeking thesis and dissertation. In the future, the newly established Reform Promotion Committee is expected to lead efforts to improve these issues and to further develop the University in cooperation with the Management Council and the Education and Research Council, which are mainly responsible for internal quality assurance.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- It is commendable that the University promotes students’ voluntary activities, and these efforts help strengthen their language skills and facilitate cross-cultural understanding according to the mission of the University. In particular, the Language Drama Festival is held regularly, and students from the various language departments perform in events specific to their language of specialization. The University, while respecting the students’ autonomy, actively supports them by providing pronunciation practice, financial assistance, and

practice space as well as inviting acting coaches from overseas to participate.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University makes efforts to realize its basic purpose, which was adopted from the first mid-term plan: “In cooperation with Kobe City and local companies, the University provides the local community with its intellectual resources in various ways to vitalize cultural, social, and economic activities.” In particular, with regard to the “support of volunteer activities,” which is listed in the second midterm Plan, the University has focused on activities for international cooperation under the initiative of the Regional Collaboration Promotion Center and in cooperation with various sections, such as the International Office and the Volunteer Corner. Furthermore, by taking advantage of its identity as a university specializing in foreign languages, the University made “contribution to International city of Kobe” by sending a number of students as volunteer interpreters to international events, including sports competitions and academic conferences, to meet multiple language needs in response to a request by Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture and private companies in the prefecture.

Suggestions for Improvement

Mission and Purpose

- Although the purpose of the Graduate School of Foreign Language Studies is defined, the purpose of each program (master’s and doctoral) is not stated clearly in the school regulations and related standards. This should be improved.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The Graduate School of Foreign Language Studies does not define the qualification examination criteria for the professor or other academic staff in charge of the graduate school. This should be improved from the perspective of quality assurance.

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In the master’s and doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Foreign Studies, the basic ideas of educational content and methods are not stated in each curriculum design policy. This should be improved.
- In the Faculty of Foreign Studies, the maximum number of credits a student can take per year is set high at 50. This should be improved considering the purpose of the credit system.
- In the Graduate School of Foreign Studies, the Degree-Seeking Theses Course in the master’s program and the doctoral program have common criteria for examining degree-seeking theses and dissertations. Each program should develop its own criteria and indicate these in the student handbook. Also, the Research Project Course in the master’s program does not stipulate its examination criteria for the research project. These issues should be improved.

Enrollment

- In the Graduate School of Foreign Studies, the master’s program and the doctoral

program do not set their own individual admission policies. This should be improved.

- The ratios of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap are high at 1.25 in the Faculty of Foreign Studies, 1.26 in the Department of Russian Studies, 1.27 in the Department of Chinese Studies, 1.25 in the Department of Spanish Studies, and 1.36 in the Department of English Studies Evening Course. These numbers should be improved.