

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

Kobe Women`s University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	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 Women's University

Overview

Kobe Women's University (hereafter, the University) was founded as Kobe Women's School of New Fashion in 1940. In 1950, Kobe Women's School of New Fashion became Kobe Women's Junior College, and in 1966, the current University was established with a single Faculty of Home Economics. Later, the University established other undergraduate faculties, departments, and graduate schools. Currently, the University consists of four faculties: The Faculty of Literature, the Faculty of Health and Welfare, the Faculty of Home Economics, and the Faculty of Nursing; and three graduate schools: The Graduate School of Life Science; the Graduate School of Literature, and the Graduate School of Health and Nutrition (which was added in 2016). The University has three campuses in Kobe City: Suma Campus in Suma Ward, Port Island Campus and Sannomiya Campus in Chuo Ward. The University has engaged in education and research activities based on its educational goal: "We hold that our university function as a seat of learning, research and community service. We aim to be an institution attractive to students, of value to the community and relevant to the times, while nurturing their independence, communicative, and creativity."

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2009, the University has clearly defined the philosophy and objectives of the faculties and graduate schools based on the University's educational goal. It also has clarified its future direction, reviewed the self-study system, made improvements in education (such as enriching the content of the syllabus), and made continuous efforts for social collaboration and community contributions.

The University has initiated several notable programs, including the promotion of various local activities in fields such as welfare, health, and education in an effort to continuously develop relationships with the local community. Through these activities, the University has made social contributions, making full use of its expertise. Another initiative includes opening its Library Commons, equipped with a Learning Support Center, a Student Study Space, and a Language Café, to help support students' voluntary and active learning activities.

However, the credit registration policies in the undergraduate schools and various policies in some graduate schools need further review. In addition, several issues exist concerning building the internal quality assurance system. The University should reconsider these concerns in order to build a functional system in future.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Environment

- It is commendable that the University has made use of the Library Commons as a space that students actively use and where they can study proactively. The Library Commons, located in the library, consists of the Learning Support Center, the Language Café, and the Student Study Space. In the Learning Support Center, resident teaching staff alternately provides support and guidance on basic learning skills and offer lectures on science, mathematics, and Japanese language as well as on mental health issues. In the Language Café, information on studying abroad is available, and exchange opportunities with international students are held.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University has strengthened the relationship between students and the community through the Community Relations Promotion Committee, and has provided the entire University with a support system that is enhanced through organized activities. For example, consistent with its objective as a university “of value to the community,” the University has agreements with Suma Ward and Chuo Ward of Kobe City and works collaboratively on various local activities that utilize its expertise, including: supporting community development; providing welfare activities such as meals for the elderly and learning support for local elementary school students. Many students have participated in these activities and earn credits for Regional Learning, one of the University’s core subjects.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In the Graduate School of Life Science, the policies on degrees awarded for the master’s and doctoral programs have not been individually formulated. Each program should develop its own policy.
- In the Graduate School of Literature, the curriculum design policies for the master’s and doctoral programs have not been individually formulated. Each program should develop its own policy.
- In the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Life Science, research activities are not properly combined with coursework in the curriculum. The program should offer appropriate educational content considering the purpose of a course-based graduate school.
- The maximum number of credits a student is allowed to register for per year is not set for fourth-year students, transfer students from other universities, and transfer students from other faculties or departments. In addition, the Department of Education in the Faculty of Literature; the Department of Health, Sports, and Nutrition; and the Department of Social Welfare in the Faculty of Health and Welfare set the maximum number high at 58 credits. Furthermore, while Kobe Global-Local Studies Department in the Faculty of Literature sets a maximum number of 48 credits, 12 out of 36 units of the Off Campus Program IV are exempt from this limitation. This should be improved considering the purpose of a credit system.

Enrollment

- In both the master’s and doctoral programs in the Graduate School of Literature, the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.16 and 0.21, respectively. These numbers should be improved.

Education and Research Environment

- As a regular staff, any librarian or other staff with professional expertise has not been hired in the library at the Port Island Campus. This should be corrected.

Administration and Finance

- While the ratio of expenditure to income in the university exceeds “the average ratio of private universities with multiple faculties including that of letters,” the ratio in the governing corporation is consistently below the average, and “the sufficiency rate of financial assets against required savings” has fallen. Therefore, the University is advised to develop a mid- and long-term fiscal plan to secure funding for educational, research, and facility-building plans, and to work to stabilize the financial foundation of the University.

Internal Quality Assurance

- The university has developed a system for improvements using the self-study system led by the Self-Study Committee. In addition, it has implemented a system for improvements based on the activity plans and activity reports prepared by each department. However, the system of self-study is not linked to the system of improvements, and the University-wide mechanism to enact the results of self-study has not been sufficiently established. Therefore, the University should develop an internal quality assurance policy as well as a system whereby all sections and departments link efforts together to ensure proper functioning of the system.