

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

Kobe Shinwa Women's University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2021	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.1.2022 – March 31, 2029)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Kobe Shinwa Women's University

Overview

The educational philosophy of Kobe Shinwa Women's University is to “in accordance with the spirit of the University's founding, to develop students as human beings through academic study, to enhance practical skills useful to society by cultivating global expertise, perspectives and sensibilities, achieve a thorough understanding of human rights, and raise well-rounded, intelligent women for the future. On the basis of this philosophy, the University aims “to nurture individuals with all-round decision-making skills who can engage independently with society by taking a broad perspective on the direction of social development, cultivating a rich cultural understanding through education and research in a variety of arts and sciences, and enhancing students' specialized academic knowledge.” To realize this, a “Five-Year Plan for the Third Ten-Year Program” has been established in AY2020. Furthermore, in AY2019, the University drew up a new educational vision, SHINWA VISION 2030, which focuses on the next 10 years.

Regarding internal quality assurance, following the establishment of a university-wide system under the University Assessment Committee from AY2015, the All-University Working Group for Internal Quality Assurance Promotion (hereinafter the “All-University Quality Assurance WG”) was set up in AY2019 as a university-wide body responsible for promoting internal quality assurance. The All-University Quality Assurance WG is composed of the “Executive Council,” which is an existing body, and the “Academic Management Council,” which is in charge of academic affairs. The All-University Quality Assurance WG has developed a basic university-wide policy for internal quality assurance, on which basis an internal quality assurance system has been established. However, the University is still working on internal quality assurance under this new system, which has only been in place for a short period of time, while identifying the benefits and drawbacks of being a small university. While the collection and analysis of data by the “Office of Institutional Research” and the use of such data to provide fine-grained and careful feedback is a strength that supports internal quality assurance, the positioning within the system of the “Management Strategy Council” and other related bodies is unclear. As such, the system centering on the All-University Quality Assurance WG should be reviewed and its powers and roles should be clarified going forward. Since there

is insufficient support for improvements and enhancement based on check and review results at this stage, the JUAA hopes that the PDCA cycle will be used to periodically check and review the appropriateness of the internal quality assurance system and continue to examine how the system can be operated more effectively in the future.

Regarding educational program and methods, policies have been established for each type of degree in accordance with the university-wide educational objectives, and are appropriately specified with consideration for the expertise of each department and graduate school. In undergraduate education, in AY2015, a cap on the number of credits students can register for in a year was introduced, ensuring that students have the study time necessary to acquire credits, while lectures, exercises, practical training, and other class formats have been appropriately allocated to match the nature of each department's studies. A distinctive feature of the University's education is that many of its classes incorporate active learning methods in order to enable independent and exploratory learning among students. This educational program is clearly summarized in the curriculum map and communicated to students. As part of the university-wide efforts to identify learning outcomes, rubrics have been developed for each faculty, department, and graduate school in accordance with their respective specializations. In addition, a "Survey of Student Engagement" and "Student Satisfaction Survey" are administered to students, and a separate Academic Conduct Survey is conducted for the Distance Learning Faculty. Assessment policies have also been drawn up as guidelines for assessing learning outcomes at three levels: university-wide, department, and subject. It is clear that the University as a whole is working vigorously to monitor student learning outcomes.

In accordance with the aim of "nurturing individuals who can engage independently with society" stated in its educational objectives, the University's social cooperation and contribution activities centered on the Center for Community Service, particularly those aimed at neighboring communities and neighborhoods, are highly commendable as traditional characteristics of the institution. In addition, under the leadership of the "Faculty Development Committee" wide-ranging and practical faculty development (hereinafter "FD"), such as curriculum development and career development (including faculty research) is conducted in line with the faculty organization and curricula. The high rate of participation by faculty members in these activities makes this another outstanding initiative. In addition, the fact that assessment criteria are checked and verified during faculty activity evaluations, and reviewed annually as necessary, is also highly commendable for its expected contribution to improving educational content.

However, there are some problems that should be noted. The lack of a positive turnaround in the student admission situation and the resulting inability to establish a financial base for the stable implementation of educational and research activities require immediate improvement in order to ensure the sustainability of the University's education and research. Going forward, the JUAA would like to see the University steadily implement a number of policies, centering on reform of entrance examinations and education as set forth in the medium- to long-term plan, and corrective actions should be taken to establish a financial footing in accordance with the "Third Fiscal Improvement Plan."

The JUAA hopes that by resolving these issues through internal quality assurance initiatives and further development of its distinctive approaches, the University will make greater forward progress in the future.

Notable Strengths

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- Under the university-wide policy for the composition of the faculty organization, practical FD and faculty assessment initiatives tailored to the faculty organization and curricula, such as curriculum development and career development (including faculty research), are being undertaken. Under the leadership of Faculty Development Committee, the University is actively engaged in FD training sessions, open classes, and FD activities for each department, and is implementing wide-ranging and systematic FD activities, with high rates of participation by faculty members. In addition, adjunct faculty members are also asked to participate in FD activities, and efforts are being made to improve the capabilities of both full-time and adjunct faculty members. With respect to the evaluation of faculty activities, the evaluation criteria are checked and verified every year, and a working group has been established to set out issues and discuss measures to address them, as well working for improvements by providing suggestions to the "Faculty Evaluation Committee" The expected ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching by faculty members as a result of these efforts are commendable.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- In accordance with the University's policy on social cooperation and social contribution, the Center for Community Service plays a central role in numerous social contribution activities that draw on the University's unique

characteristics. For example, the University offers numerous courses such as the “Baby Science Course for Childcare Professionals” and “Japan climatotherapist training workshop: basic level” as well as holding a “Kids Open Campus” and “Monozukuri Festival.” In terms of student volunteering, more than half of the students are registered as volunteers and participate in activities at school gardens, public institutions, facilities, and community events. This contributes to students studies through the “off-campus learning” that the University advocates. Furthermore, it is commendable that the University is actively returning the fruits of its education and research to the community through the establishment of the “Sukusuku” Child Rearing Support Center, the “Psychological and Educational Counseling Room” and “Shinwa Sports Net,” a specified nonprofit corporation.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The All-University Quality Assurance WG, which is responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, has no position in the University's regulations and does not have sufficient organizational legitimacy or permanence as a body for promoting internal quality assurance. In addition, related organizations for internal quality assurance, such as the Management Strategy Council and Faculty Development Committee are not clearly positioned within the internal quality assurance system, and the relationship between them is not sufficiently indicated. Furthermore, although issues for improvement have been identified by the All-University Quality Assurance WG based on checks and reviews, the nature and progress of the WG's support for individual organization's improvements are not adequately monitored, and management and support for such are insufficient. Therefore, improvements are required such that the internal quality assurance promotion bodies provide appropriate support for improvements and enhancements based on the check and review results.

Student Enrollment

- In AY2020, the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap at the Faculty of Human Development and Education's Departments of Psychology and Social Welfare were low at 0.88 and 0.69, respectively. Although both these departments have already stopped accepting applications,

the newly reorganized Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Literature has a low ratio for AY2021, and it is difficult to say that a stable intake of students is being maintained. This should be corrected to ensure proper undergraduate student quota management.

Recommendation

University Management and Finance

- With the ratio of personnel costs remaining high, the operational income and expenditure balance ratio has turned negative, and the ratio of the financial assets to the required reserve fund has remained extremely low. This indicates that the financial base necessary for the stable provision of educational and research activities has not been established. Going forward, the JUAA would like to see the progress of the Third Fiscal Improvement Plan reviewed annually, ongoing revisions made based on the results of these reviews, and corrective measures taken to establish a financial footing by steadily implementing various policies centering reform of entrance examinations and education as set forth in the Five-Year Plan for the Third Ten-Year Program.