University Accreditation Results

(Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for University)

Shikoku University

Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokushima, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2020	
Accreditation Status: accredited　（Accreditation Period: April.1.2021 – March.31.2028）	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results
for Shikoku University

Overview

Shikoku University adheres to the idea of "Holistic Independence" as its founding principle. To put this into practice, it has established the following four points to define its educational mission and goals: Shikoku University "develops individuals who can be independent as respectable members of society," "develops individuals who can not only absorb knowledge, but also do their own thinking and research," "places high importance on a good rapport between students, academic staff and working adults, developing individuals who shine as human beings," and "have a wide field of view, developing highly employable graduates who can contribute to society and local communities". As a medium- to long-term plan, the University has established a five-year plan, "Shikoku University School Corporation University Reform Vision 2017" (referred to below as "University Reform Vision 2017"), which it has been working on since 2017. As such, the University is acknowledged to be actively working to enhance its education and research activities.

Based on the view that realization of the University Reform Vision 2017 constitutes internal quality assurance in a broad sense, the University has been implementing various measures indicated in the University Reform Vision 2017, centered mainly around the Head Office for University Reform. However, an internal quality assurance system based on a systematic PDCA cycle, including measures for checks and reviews, and improvement of each faculty and graduate school, has yet to be established for the University as a whole. In addition, the system for implementing internal quality assurance as a University is not sufficiently coordinated, as organizations not included in the "Organization Chart for Internal Quality Assurance Implementation" are involved in the University Reform Vision 2017's PDCA cycle. After establishing policies and procedures for internal quality assurance, the University should review its internal quality assurance system, including from the perspective of academic management, and take corrective measures to develop a structured framework that enables it to function.

Regarding education, curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate level have been organized appropriately in accordance with the degree award policy (diploma policy) and the curriculum design and implementation policy (curriculum policy). As a measure to encourage students' self-driven participation, each department and graduate school provides an appropriate combination of class formats including lectures, exercises,

experiments, and practical classes, while active learning is also being vigorously incorporated. In addition, the introduction of the "Self-Education Skills Sheet" in the undergraduate division has established a system that allows students to clearly understand the progress of their learning, which in turn improves their motivation to learn.

One notable initiative is the "High School-University Connection Career Development Support Program", which aims to facilitate students' learning from before their enrollment to the University and support their employment by encouraging them to obtain qualifications. This program has shown results in terms of improving student motivation: as well as students demonstrating a desire to acquire multiple qualifications, there are students who have already received job offers who use the program to acquire qualifications that can be put to practical use in their future place of work.

In addition, the University has formulated the Shikoku University Community Education Program, which offers various activities such as systematic education for acquiring skills to contribute to the community, education through exchanges between students and practicing professionals, and the opportunity for students to engage in community service and volunteering. These activities are to be highly commended. Not only do the University's faculty and staff return the fruits of their education and research to the community, they also develop capable students who, in the context of community-contribution focused education, can serve the local area well into the future.

However, there are several issues that should be addressed. Some faculties have not taken sufficient measures to substantiate academic credits, nor have there been adequate efforts to ascertain the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy for both undergraduate and graduate divisions. In addition, there are shortcomings in the curriculum design and implementation policy for some graduate schools, while others are yet to develop and make public their criteria for reviewing the results of special assignment research. Problems were also observed in student quota management and faculty development (referred to below as "FD") in both undergraduate and graduate divisions.

Going forward, we hope that the University will make further progress by solving these problems with internal quality assurance efforts and by further developing its excellent and distinctive community-based initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- The University has been conducting a "High School-University Connection Career Development Support Program," which aims to facilitate students' learning from before their enrollment in the University and support their employment by encouraging them to obtain qualifications. This program features the following distinctive initiatives: the "Incentive System for Qualifications on Enrollment," which provides incentives based on the qualifications students acquire while in high school; the "Qualification Preparation Course," which provides preparatory courses for various qualifications at the University; and the "Qualification Acquisition Incentive System" which provides incentives to students who take the qualification preparation courses and pass the relevant examinations. This has led to improvements in student motivation: as well as students demonstrating a desire to acquire multiple qualifications, there are students that have already received job offers who use the program to acquire qualifications that can be put into practice at their future place of work. It is commendable that the school is promoting students' independent learning from the perspective of enrolment, using the acquisition of qualifications as a starting point, and linking this to student support.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- In addition to a wealth of public lectures and cultural activities led by the Center for Regional Education and Cooperation, the University has established partnership agreements with neighboring municipalities and businesses, and is developing a leadership development program for university students in Tokushima Prefecture, as well as the Shikoku University Community Education Program, an on-campus educational program for regional education. The Shikoku University Community Education Program is a structured program for providing students with the knowledge and abilities to work with communities to solve local problems. The program also includes various activities such as exchanges with practicing professionals and volunteering, providing outstanding education to develop human resources who can make a contribution to the local area. The Shikoku University Regional Education Guidebook presents these learning activities to students in an easy-to-understand way, and students mark their accomplishments on the Self-Education Skills Sheet. The activities are to be highly commended. Not only do the University's faculty and staff repay the fruits of their education and research to the community, they also develop capable students who, in the context of community-contribution focused education, can serve the local area well into the future.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- With respect to curriculum design and implementation policy, neither the Master's Program or the Doctoral Program at the Graduate School of Management and Information Science indicates its basic approach to curriculum implementation, while the Master's Program at the Graduate School of Nursing Science does not indicate its basic approach to the implementation or design of its curriculum. This needs to be improved.

- Although an upper limit has been set on the number of credits students can register to take in a single year, students are allowed to register for courses related to qualifications and off-campus practical training in excess of this limit. Moreover, the first year of study in some faculties is set up in such a way that it is difficult to study without exceeding the limit. In addition, students who meet specific requirements, such as those who excelled in the immediately preceding semester, are allowed to register for courses in excess of the limit with the approval of the Faculty Council. As a result, in the first year of study at the Faculty of Literature, the Faculty of Human Life Science, and the Faculty of Nursing, and in the second year of study at the Faculty of Management and Information Science, there are a considerable number of students who actually register for a large number of credits in excess of the upper limit. In addition, the "Internal Rules on the Upper Limit of Course Credits" allow students who retake courses to register to take credits in excess of the limit. Other measures have not been implemented to substantiate credits, and not enough is being done to give substance to credits. Therefore, the University should improve the situation in view of the purpose of the credit system.

- At the undergraduate level, although measurement methods have been established for some of the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy, and efforts are being made to monitor various learning outcomes, overall, it is difficult to say that they are being measured in general with a clearly defined relationship to the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy. Similarly, at the graduate level, some efforts are being made to measure various learning outcomes, but these too are not sufficiently connected to the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy.

Therefore, improvements are required at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to ensure that the learning outcome specified in the degree award policy are properly monitored and assessed.

Student Enrollment

● The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are 0.35 for the Master's Program in Japanese Literature and Calligraphic Culture, 0.33 for the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Management and Information Science, 0.11 for the Doctoral Program in the Graduate School of Management and Information Science, and 0.45 for the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Human Life Science. These figures are low, so improvements should be made to ensure proper student quota management at the graduate school level.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

● Systematic graduate school-specific FD relating to educational improvement has not been conducted except at the Graduate School of Nursing Science, so improvements are required to properly implement such, either for the Master's and Doctoral programs as a whole or for each graduate school individually. In addition, although the Graduate School of Nursing Science conducts FD aimed at things like social contribution and stepping up research activities, it does not conduct FD in other areas, a situation that requires improvement.

Recommendations

Internal Quality Assurance

● With policies and procedures for internal quality assurance yet to be established, efforts aimed at implementing the University Reform Vision 2017 will be implemented under a framework involving multiple committees and subcommittees, centered on the Head Office for University Reform. Conversely, the Shikoku University Assessment Committee is responsible for checks and reviews of individual faculties and graduate schools, which are then used to make improvements via the Management Committee. The inadequate interaction between the above means that an internal quality assurance system based on a systematic PDCA cycle

has yet to be established for the University as a whole. In addition, the system for implementing internal quality assurance as a University is not sufficiently coordinated, as organizations not included in the "Organization Chart for Internal Quality Assurance Implementation" are involved in the University Reform Vision 2017's PDCA cycle. In establishing policies and procedures for internal quality assurance, the University should review its internal quality assurance system, including from the perspective of academic management, and take corrective measures to develop a structured framework that enables it to function.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Master's Program in Japanese Literature and Calligraphic Culture, the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Management and Information Sciences, Master's Program in the Graduate School of Management and Information Science, and the Master's Program in the Graduate School of Nursing Science have not established criteria for reviewing the results of special assignment research. Corrective measures should be taken so that these can be determined and made public.

Student Enrollment

- In the last five years, the average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap is high at 1.22 in the Faculty of Human Life Science's Department of Human Life Science, and low at 0.72 and 0.65 in the Faculty of Literature's Department of Calligraphic Culture and in the Faculty of Management and Information Science's Department of Media and Information Systems respectively. In addition, the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.27 in the Faculty of Human Life Science's Department of Human Life Science, and low at 0.69 and 0.59 in the Faculty of Literature's Department of Calligraphic Culture and in the Faculty of Management and Information Science's Department of Media and Information Systems respectively. This should be rectified to ensure thorough student quota management.