University Accreditation Results

(Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for University)

Shonan Institute of Technology

Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kanagawa, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022 Accreditation Status: accredited （Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030）	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Shonan Institute of Technology

Overview

Shonan Institute of Technology defines its purpose as "conducting academic teaching and research on engineering in accordance with the Basic Act on Education, and cultivating engineers with practical skills, creativity, and well-rounded character traits," and sets forth the mission of "contributing to the development of Japan, industry, and the community." The Institute remains committed to the educational philosophy and purpose established at the time of its founding to undertake educational and research activities. In AY2013, the Institute established the new mission of "fostering engineers who participate actively in society" and endeavors to produce individuals who support the social infrastructure under its unified institute-wide purpose. In AY2019, the Institute formulated the Shonan Institute of Technology First Medium-term Plan (2020-2024) with the basic strategies of "producing human resources with technical knowledge and skills, along with communication and other basic social skills" and "engaging in education and research on a mission to contribute to the community." The plan outlines six key items to be addressed that include education, student support, regional cooperation and contribution, high school-university integration, research, strategic public relations and student recruitment. At the same time, the Institute has defined its brand statement, vision, and tagline in pursuit of new growth opportunities based on the medium-term plan, and laid out the objectives of presenting and implementing a new future direction while maintaining its original educational philosophy and purpose, in light of an increasingly diverse society and the growing importance of the underlying science and technology.

Regarding the Institute's internal quality assurance, the Meeting for the promotion of Educational Reform is positioned as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, with a mechanism in place for the meeting to undertake improvement and enhancement efforts based on the annual self-study results. However, the meeting handles only issues involving all departments, faculty, and staff members, and items to be addressed in the Institute's medium- and long-term plans, while the Core Member Meeting, which is not specified in the Institute's regulations or other rulemaking documents, discusses and decides on improvement measures to address issues raised by the departments and divisions, before issuing

instructions for improvement to the divisions and other bodies. This process indicates that the internal quality assurance system led by the Meeting for the promotion of Educational Reform is not functioning as stated in the Shonan Institute of Technology Internal Quality Assurance Policy, and that reviews and decisions in the Institute's decision making process are made by the meeting body that is not specified in the regulations. This situation needs to be addressed with the meeting bodies involved in internal quality assurance structured properly to operate the system under appropriate role allocation and coordination.

In terms of education, the Institute has established diploma and curriculum policies, and the Cross-Department Learning Activation Program was initiated in AY2018 to teach students from the second year to acquire a wide range of skills through research activities in advanced technology and other fields. The Institute also encourages active learning and eagerly incorporates project-based learning (PBL).

The Institute has made notable efforts in its social contribution activities. In addition to its faculty's research activities, the Institute offers community outreach subjects designed for faculty members and students to work together to address regional challenges. In AY2020, the Center for Regional Collaboration was launched to advance these longstanding efforts in a more systematic way. As a comprehensive contact point, the center is expected to help make further progress in the Institute's regional cooperation and contribution initiatives.

Moreover, the Institute's admissions process has adopted various approaches that include adding participation in the Matching Workshop to its application requirements for school recommendation-based admissions and comprehensive selection, and requiring applicants to attend trial lessons in the Institute's PBL subject, the Interdepartmental Basic Skills Workshop, with the aim of facilitating student learning after enrollment. Furthermore, as a unique educational approach, the Institute has established the Technical Course in cooperation with its affiliated high school to realize a high school and university articulation system.

There are several issues the Institute needs to address, however. First, freshman enrollment is far above the freshman enrollment cap, and student enrollment is below the student enrollment cap in some departments. This situation must be corrected with the departments' student quotas thoroughly managed. The graduate school also falls short of fulfilling its student quota, and this issue should be addressed as well. Next, in terms of education, external assessment tests and graduate surveys are conducted to monitor student learning outcomes, but this method is inadequate for monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes stated in the diploma

policy. Furthermore, as mentioned above, meeting bodies not specified in the regulations play a key role in operating the Institute's internal quality assurance system, and this matter needs to be taken seriously. In addition, the Meeting for the promotion of Educational Reform, positioned as a body promoting internal quality assurance, is not involved in inspecting and assessing the Institute's faculty organizations, community activities, school management, and other activities, nor in implementing improvement measures based on the results. The Institute must correct this situation, in addition to addressing the ineffective operation of the internal quality assurance system.

With the Faculty of Informatics newly established in AY2023, the Institute is expected to contribute to education and research in the information field, which faces human resource shortages. On the other hand, in view of the new faculty being added to the current single faculty and graduate school, the Institute is expected to clarify the roles and coordination of its organizations, and develop policies and plans linked to its medium-term plan; the quality of its education and research activities should also be assured by appropriately operating the institute-wide Plan-Do-Check-Act(PDCA) cycle to resolve issues.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contributions

- The Institute has long been committed to social contribution activities linked to education, such as the introduction of the Social Contribution Activity subject in the Basic Social Skills Development Courses offering a wide range of support activities for the local community and elementary school students. The Institute also works with industry through faculty research activities and student participation to respond to community needs and various challenges. Furthermore, the Center for Regional Collaboration was established in AY2022 to organize these activities in a more systematic way. It is commendable that the Institute's initiatives are expected to contribute further to overcoming regional challenges.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- To monitor student learning outcomes the faculty uses assessment tests by external agencies and graduate surveys, while the graduate school screens dissertations. However, both evaluation methods are unclear in terms of the connection to the diploma policies. This issue should be addressed with methods and indicators adopted to monitor the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policies.

Student Enrollment

- The doctoral program in the Graduate School of Engineering has a low ratio of 0.17 in student enrollment to the student enrollment cap. This ratio should be improved with the graduate school's student quotas thoroughly managed.

Recommendations

Internal Quality Assurance

- The Meeting for the promotion of Educational Reform is positioned as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, but it plays a limited role in handling only issues involving all departments, faculty, and staff members, and items to be addressed in the Institute's medium- and long-term plans. On the other hand, the Core Member Meeting, which is not specified in the Institute's regulations or other rulemaking documents, discusses and decides on improvement measures to address issues raised by the departments and divisions, before issuing instructions for improvement to the divisions. This situation must be corrected by resolving the discrepancies between the regulations and actual management, while developing and operating a mechanism for the body promoting internal quality assurance to oversee improvement and enhancement efforts based on the self-study results.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratio of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years is high at 1.31 in Information Science. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are high at 1.26 in the same department,

low at 0.88 in Mechanical Engineering, and low at 0.84 in Materials and Human Environmental Sciences. These ratios must be corrected with the faculty's student quotas thoroughly managed.