

## Supplementary Review Results

### St. Marianna University School of Medicine



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kanagawa, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2020	
Accreditation Status: unaccredited	

## **Supplementary Review for St. Marianna University School of Medicine**

### **Overview**

Regarding St. Marianna University, as the “Summary of the Emergency Review to Ensure Fairness in Admissions to Medical Programs” published by MEXT on December 14, 2018 uncovered issues in student selection for medical programs which was identified as a “a case with a high possibility of being inappropriate,” we established an investigative subcommittee inside the University Accreditation Committee in 2019 and examined the validity of results from the 2016 University Accreditation (certified evaluation and accreditation). That examination verified major issues in “enrollment”, “governance”, and “internal quality assurance” and as a result, the determination of the 2016 University Accreditation Results stating that the University conformed to University Standards was overturned and the University was deemed noncompliant.

Assessment in this Supplementary Review based on the state of improvement for the three standards of “enrollment,” “administration,” and “internal quality assurance” that caused the denial of accreditation was carried out alongside an examination for the three suggestions for improvement from the previous University Accreditation Results. As a result, the University itself did not recognize that although some efforts were made to improve each of the criteria pointed out as a serious problem, inappropriate entrance examinations were conducted based on attributes such as gender and age. Also, as there were no fundamental improvements nor sufficient verification in response to the problems identified all along, the University was still deemed to be non-compliant with the University Standards.

Firstly regarding “enrollment,” although there was only doubt about the intentional management according to attributes, the score allocation and assessment criteria of the school records were decided by 3 members (President and Vice Presidents) of the Admissions Committee in the “evaluation of school records.” The evaluation of these same reports was conducted in a situation where it was easy for specific people to pass a subjective judgment without obtaining agreement from any of the council bodies related to student enrollment. In addition, the score distribution of the “evaluation of school records” changes according to the academic year, which makes it possible to greatly overturn the test results of academic ability tests, interviews, and essays. The fact that there were apparent differences due to attributes such as gender and age in the final admission standards of the entrance examination in this system posed a serious problem.

Following that, a survey was also conducted by a Third-Party Committee established under the guidance of MEXT, and the survey report published in January 2020 demonstrated that, “a uniform discriminatory treatment was seen to be practiced on the grounds of attributes in the form of gender and attribute classification.”

In response to these points, at St. Marianna University School of Medicine, the following theory was supported as the result of an audit conducted as a school corporation in February 2019: “there was no recognition of the fact that attributes such as men and women or students currently in attendance as opposed to those studying to enter university etc., were divided up and points were either added or deducted uniformly according to said attributes.” Some remedial measures are being implemented from the standpoint that discrepancies in gender and age did occur although it was unintentional. That is to say, in response to the proposal recommended by the audit, the Admissions Committee President and two Vice Presidents have been replaced, confirmation exists that all the Admissions Committee members deliberated, female faculty members have been placed on the Interview Committee, and changes took effect for the handling of application documents, etc. In addition, the Third-Party Committee made recommendations such as fostering an awareness of holding fair and appropriate entrance examinations, bolstering the mutual check function within the Admissions Committee, transparency of the entrance examination system, and strengthening the supervision system. In response to this, the University is reviewing the “Admissions Committee” system and taking measures such as strengthening the audits of medical school entrance examinations as conducted by auditors. Furthermore, while complying with the “Criteria for the University School of Medicine Entrance Examination System” (November 16, 2018) published by the General Incorporated Association of Japan Medical Colleges, the policy to incorporate is to select enrolling students in an appropriate and fair manner and some improvement efforts can be seen here. As a result, the “Survey Results on the Improvement Status of Improper Operations in the Faculty of Medicine (Regarding the Selection of Enrollees in 2019)” conducted in May 2019 by MEXT shows improvements; the scoring of school records, etc. has been abolished and is now put into practical use as graded evaluation by interviewers. Also in the interviews, no situation was confirmed in which there was a difference, or the average score of males was significantly higher than that of females, and that of active students was significantly higher than that of aspiring students studying to take the entrance exam.

However, after the changes and improvements to the method of conducting the entrance examination, the results of the examination have not been precisely verified, and although the Admissions Committee system has been reviewed and several female

members have been added, it cannot be said that suitable measures have been taken in response to the “transparency of the entrance examination system and strengthening of the supervision system” as pointed out by the Third-Party Committee and findings indicated by the Association, in terms of purely operational changes without altering the existing framework. Furthermore, since the University itself does not recognize that the scoring adjustment according to attributes actually happened, the intrinsic problems that led to the inappropriate entrance examination have not been verified. Based on the above, a sustainable system for enrolling students fairly and appropriately has still not been established. Improvements should be made so that the University drastically improves enrollment, including the introduction of a regular verification system.

Regarding the second point on “administration” there are only three people involved, the President and two Vice Presidents, without prior consent from the committee or other institutions when conducting the entrance examination. The evaluation criteria and point allotment for the school records were decided, and it was not a fair method of conducting the entrance examination. Thus, following the first admission standards adjudication committee meeting for the AY 2019 entrance exams, important matters will be decided accordingly by the consensus of the members of the “Admissions Committee,” and some improvements are being instigated.

In addition, it is said that the independence of the “Admissions Committee” was so important that the Directors of the School of Medicine and other University / school corporation officials, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Councilors were not involved in determining admission standards (Foundational Material 1-4, Field Study). As a result, the fact that the actual situation of the inappropriate entrance examination could not be perceived was due to insufficient supervision of the committee, alongside serious problems with the governance and administration of the University / school corporation. Regarding this problem, the activity status of the “Admissions Committee” will be discussed by the “Academic System Review Committee” which communicates and coordinates with the Standing Committee, and measures such as improving the materials for the conference are being taken to enable the faculty council to sufficiently discuss the success or failure of the entrance examination. Furthermore, in strengthening governance, although the intention to make improvements is acknowledged due to the change of University President, etc., new regulations and organizational restructuring to prevent recurrence have not been established, and it also cannot be said that the points identified by the Third-Party Committee have been dealt with appropriately. In particular, although the President and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine have explained to faculty about the “cultivation of awareness to conduct fair and appropriate entrance examinations”

as required in the committee's investigative report, sufficient efforts have not been made, such as incorporating this into training as Faculty Development (hereinafter referred to as “FD”) or Staff Development (hereinafter referred to as “SD”). For these reasons, the administration system is still not sufficiently improved, and it is not a system that can continuously improve while accepting objective opinions from outside the University. We therefore hope to see corrections to fundamentally review the ideal way of appropriate and effective University management. In the future, in addition to the review of the management systems by the President and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and review of the supervisory methods by the Board Chairman and Board of Trustees, as pointed out by the Third-Party Committee in response to the “Admissions Committee,” it is also necessary to consider reviewing the internal reporting program (the public interest reporting system).

In addition, the conclusion of the Auditor's Report, diverged significantly from the investigative report of the Third-Party Committee, and nevertheless, the Auditor's Report was not published on the grounds of protecting personal information. Instead, only a summary was reported on the website, so it was not possible to confirm the actual situation of said audit. Regarding the auditing, the “Audit Regulations” were created in April 2020 in response to the revision of the Private Schools Act, and the audit plan for the same academic year included “About Medical School Entrance Examinations” as an audit item. The “Admissions Committee” will be regularly verified, but it is hoped that further consideration will be given not only to include it in this year's audit plan, but also to construct a system for continuous audits by auditors.

Regarding the third point, “internal quality assurance,” despite the facts mentioned above, the selection of enrollees was judged to be “appropriate,” and the Check and Review Report contained an account that was different from the facts. Therefore, a system capable of checking and assessing its own activities while implementing improvements and reforms did not come to fruition. In response to this problem, remedial measures were implemented such as the addition of off-campus experts with knowledge of administration related to health and medical care to the members of the “Check and Review Operations Committee” as well as verification of “the Admissions Committee set-up and admission standards procedures” and “review of the admission policy” to confirm fairness and validity within the internal quality assurance system. In addition, the University will continue to check and assess the admission system and the appropriateness of admission standards, and continuously review the state of admissions selection through improvements based on these results. A willingness to work toward the active promotion of internal quality assurance has been recognized. However, there is still

a passive stance on investigating the cause of problems related to enrollment selection, and it is irrational that the decision-making mechanism as a university and school corporation does not observe “uniform discriminatory treatment” over a prolonged period. As a higher education institution, which is an autonomous organization entrusted by society, it does not succeed in fulfilling its accountability to society. In addition, despite the fact that the actual situation of this inappropriate entrance examination was not recognized in the internal quality assurance system so far, tangible improvements such as the concept of internal quality assurance and the method of checks and reviews have not been implemented. We therefore hope to see the University correct its course by conducting a drastic review of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system so that the internal quality assurance will function properly.

As described above, St. Marianna University School of Medicine continues to maintain the position until the present day that it does not treat the examinees uniformly according to their attributes in accordance with the Audit Report. Besides not examining the rationality of the investigative report from the Third-Party Committee, they have also not fully investigated the cause from the standpoint that there is no problem. Therefore, the improvement measures are not drastic with respect to any of the three serious problems, and because the quality assurance is insufficient, it cannot be recognized as conforming to the University Standards.

Next, although improvements were generally observed in the matters pointed out in the previous University Accreditation, when it comes to finance, the balance in income and expenditure of business activities has been declining since AY 2016 and the excess expenditure of the balance carried forward is increasing further. In addition, in order to secure financial resources for the Sugao Campus renewal project, etc., the reserve assets have decreased and borrowings have increased, so the “reserve ratio of financial assets to the required reserve amount” is still at a low level. In order to establish and stabilize the financial base, the University's medium-term plan includes items for goals and plans related to finance, but with some exceptions, numerical targets are not indicated. In addition, the financial outlook that incorporates the campus renewal project has not been clarified. For these reasons, it cannot be said that the sufficient improvements have been made since the previous University Accreditation. Considering that new construction and renovation of hospital wards, etc. planned as a campus renewal project will continue until AY 2026, and that repayment of debt will take an even longer period of time, it is hoped that the numerical targets as a medium- to long-term financial plan as well as the financial outlook will be clearly defined and that efforts to establish a financial base will be continued while conducting appropriate verifications in accordance with progress.

Finally, St. Marianna University School of Medicine is the only medical university in Japan that is based on the spirit of Christianity and takes as its founding spirit a “self-awareness of the sense of duty as doctors based on the ‘dignity of life’ rooted in Christian love for humanity, while fostering human beings who can serve human society, and developing doctors who will utilize the results of specialized research in the welfare of humankind” The University has made sizable contributions to the local community through education, research and medical care for about 50 years since its foundation. Taking these Supplementary Review results as an opportunity, the University is expected to promptly revise the way internal quality assurance should be, make efforts to solve the various problems indicated above, and develop toward fully realizing the University’s spirit of founding and purpose.

## **Suggestions for Improvement**

### *Administration and Finance*

- Since the last University Accreditation, the amount of excess expenditure of the balance carried forward has increased, while the “reserve ratio of financial assets to the required reserve amount” is still at a low level, so it cannot be said that improvements have been made sufficiently. It is desirable to clearly define numerical targets and a financial outlook as a medium- to long-term financial plan, and continue efforts to establish a financial base while conducting appropriate verifications in accordance with progress.

## **Recommendations**

### *Enrollment*

- Regarding the entrance examination implementation system, etc., although the composition of the committee members has been partially improved so that there is no bias due to attributes, the University does not recognize that the score adjustment according to attributes was actually carried out. Since the University has not reviewed the essential issues that led to holding an inappropriate entrance examination, the existing framework has not been changed; rather only operational changes, and a system and mechanism for the continuous enrollment of students in a fair and just manner has not been implemented. We hope to see the University make corrections

to drastically improve enrollment, including the introduction of a regular verification system.

#### *Administration and Finance*

- Insufficient measures have been taken to strengthen governance and prevent the recurrence of problems. Also the University has maintained the stance of denying the issues pointed out by external parties such as the Third-Party Committee and this Association while failing to verify the measures. Thus, it cannot be said that proper administration is being carried out. There is an urgent need to establish an administrative system that enables improvement efforts to be made continually, while accepting objective opinions from the outside. In addition, the University should make corrections in order to fundamentally review the proper and effective approach to University management, such as implementing FD / SD for the purpose of changing awareness to enact the fair selection of new students.

#### *Internal Quality Assurance*

- It is unreasonable that the decision-making mechanism as a corporation does not allow “uniform discriminatory treatment” over a long period of time, being reluctant to investigate the cause of the problematic selection of new students. Moreover, the lack of tangible improvements made in the approach to internal quality assurance and the method of checks and reviews does not fulfill the accountability to society as an autonomous higher education institution entrusted by society, and it cannot be said that the quality of the University is properly guaranteed. The University should verify the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system, including a drastic review of the organization and method, and make corrections so that it will function properly.