

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

Takasaki University of Health and Welfare



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Gunma, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2031)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Takasaki University of Health and Welfare

Overview

Takasaki University of Health and Welfare, founded on the spirit of “Jiri-Rita (Benefit Yourself and Benefit Others),” sets forth the founding philosophy of “contributing to human health and welfare” based on respect for and understanding of humans. The University defines its purpose as “teaching an abundant, broad range of knowledge and in-depth specialized knowledge and skills in each department to cultivate talented individuals who can contribute to the health and welfare of people and the advancement of society, while pursuing measures for a comfortable human life.” To both achieve its philosophy and purpose and strengthen its management and educational and research activities, the University has formulated a medium-term plan for the six-year period from AY2020 with the five strategic pillars of enhancing the university brand, sustaining itself in a society with declining birthrates, upgrading the quality of its education, promoting quality assurance, and establishing a solid financial base. For example, the University sets forth the objective of “strengthening its learning support system and upgrading the quality of its education,” and strives to advance its educational and research activities in line with specific strategies and measures, including reinforcing the support system for small-group learning and measuring student learning outcomes using a rubric and other means, as laid out in the medium-term plan.

Regarding the University’s internal quality assurance, the Takasaki University of Health and Welfare Internal Quality Assurance Regulations was revised in 2022 to position the University Management Council as a body promoting internal quality assurance. The university-wide PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle was developed with the council issuing instructions for improvement after receiving a report from the FD and Self-Inspection Committee in charge of planning and implementing the inspections and assessments of the faculties, graduate schools, and other organizations. Specifically, the committee compiled the results of inspections and assessments conducted by the faculties and graduate schools in AY2022, and the council documented the issues to be addressed and improvement measures, and notified each faculty and graduate school in AY2023. This cycle indicates that the internal quality assurance system has begun operation. With the faculties and graduate schools continuing to make improvements upon receiving the document, the University Management Council is expected to monitor the progress of

their improvement efforts, with the internal quality assurance system in full operation, thereby upgrading the University's education and improving student learning outcomes.

As for education, each department and graduate school program has established diploma and curriculum policies, and designed a systematic curriculum for each degree in a way consistent with the required subjects for qualifications. Curriculum maps are also created to illustrate the connection among lesson subjects for students to take courses in their fields systematically and sequentially. Some departments have begun to introduce learning portfolios that can be modified according to the specialties of each department for university-wide use. This initiative is expected to help encourage active student learning, visualize their learning outcomes, and undertake educational reforms using the results.

Furthermore, the University is strengthening its learning support system as indicated in the medium-term plan, with a counseling system in place for all full-time faculty members in the faculties and departments to serve as advisors offering consultations and assistance to students in small groups. Advisors, course instructors, and supervisors for each school year work together to quickly detect and offer timely and appropriate support to absentee students and others struggling with poor grades. They also cooperate with the Career Support Center in assisting students in designing their desired career paths. It is highly commendable that faculty and staff collaboration helps keep the University's repeat-year and dropout rates low. Moreover, the University encourages students to deeply engage with community members to resolve regional challenges, rather than simply participate in volunteer activities. The "Voluntary Action Support Center" serves as a contact point to gather information and coordinate with educational programs to address regional challenges. Notably, the Child and Family Support Center has specialists in place, and operates the Parent and Child Classroom in cooperation with students in the Department of Child Education. The facility is also taking further steps in welfare, such as accepting children with disabilities. These are outstanding initiatives to realize the University's founding spirit, with the aim of overcoming regional challenges as well as connecting students with the community to deepen their studies, raise public awareness, and better understand others.

There are several areas of improvement the University should address, however. First, some faculties and departments have insufficient or excessive quota fulfillment in student enrollment, while graduate schools have insufficient quota fulfillment. The University has implemented improvement measures, including increasing its enrollment quotas in AY2023, but continued efforts are needed to appropriately manage student quotas. Second, in terms of education, the graduate schools inadequately monitor and

evaluate student learning outcomes, and indicators should be developed for measuring the knowledge, skills, and mindsets stated in the diploma policy. Moreover, some graduate schools do not conduct their own faculty development (FD) activities to improve the faculty members' skills and abilities. These issues should be addressed.

The University plans to consolidate all faculties into a single campus to strengthen its functions and improve the convenience for students. Parallel with this campus reorganization, the University is working to enhance coordination within and between the faculties and departments. Specifically, the common liberal arts subject called "Steps to Well-being at KENDAI" has been introduced under the president's leadership in an attempt to encourage students' cross-disciplinary interaction through collaboration in different fields of study. In the coming years, the University is expected to advance these initiatives and operate a mechanism for assuring their quality, thereby upgrading its education.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- All full-time faculty members in the faculties and departments serve as advisors offering specific support to students in small groups. A mechanism is in place to notify advisors of absenteeism and to require students struggling with poor grades to meet with advisors. In addition, advisors, supervisors for each school year, staff in the Career Support Center, and other officials coordinate with each other, with advisors' information shared at department meetings to offer learning support. It is commendable that faculty and staff members work together to provide students with swift and tailored assistance, contributing to the University's low repeat-year and dropout rates.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The "Voluntary Action Support Center" serves as a community contact point to gather information and coordinate with educational programs to address regional challenges. Notably, the Child and Family Support Center has established a system for specialists, including doctors, nurses, clinical psychologists, and nursery teachers, to offer counseling for mental and physical health issues for children and their families. The facility operates the Parent and Child Classroom in cooperation with students in the

Department of Child Education and other departments, and is also taking further steps in welfare, such as accepting children with disabilities. These are commendable initiatives to realize the University's founding spirit of "Jiri-Rita" by engaging in volunteer activities and involving students in these activities to deepen their studies, raise public awareness, and better understand others by interacting with people in society.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The basic concept of curriculum implementation is not specified in the curriculum policies of the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Care; Department of Child Education, Faculty of Human Development; Department of Health Care (master's degree) in the Graduate School of Health Care; and Department of Pharmacy (doctoral degree) in the Graduate School of Pharmacy. This issue should be addressed.
- The graduate schools monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes through dissertation screening and class evaluation surveys, but the connection between the methods, including screening criteria, and the diploma policy is vague. This issue should be addressed to measure the learning outcomes stated in the diploma policy.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.85 in the Department of Applied Biological Science, Faculty of Agriculture, which opened in AY2019, and 0.35 in the master's course in the Graduate School of Health and Welfare. These ratios should be improved with the University's student quotas thoroughly managed, including the quotas of the faculties and departments whose first students recently completed their degrees.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The Graduate School of Agriculture Science does not conduct its own FD activities for educational improvements. This issue should be addressed with the graduate

school's FD activities appropriately implemented.

Recommendation

Student Enrollment

- The Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Health and Welfare, has a high ratio of 1.33 in student enrollment to the student enrollment cap as well as a high average ratio of 1.33 in freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years. The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are also high at 1.21 in the Faculty of Health and Welfare, 1.22 in the Department of Healthcare Informatics, Faculty of Health and Welfare, and 1.22 in the Department of Physical Therapy, Faculty of Health Care. These ratios must be lowered with the faculties' student quotas thoroughly managed.