

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

Ryukoku University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kyoto, 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 Ryukoku University

Overview

Ryukoku University is a comprehensive university that originates from the *Gakuryo* (boarding school), an educational institution established within the precincts of Nishi Hongwanji Temple. Its educational mission and purpose is to nurture people who can “seek truth, live in truth, and reveal truth” has been drawn up in order to achieve the founding spirit and the objectives of the University, and efforts are being made under this plan to enhance its educational, research, and social contribution activities. In 2018, Ryukoku University also produced its next long-term plan, “Ryukoku Strategic Plan 400—Ryukoku Unlimited Challenge for 2039—”, referred to hereinafter as “RSP400.”

Internal quality assurance is the responsibility of the “All-University Assessment Council”. It takes a leading role in conducting internal quality assurance by means of two systems: “organizational checks and reviews,” which are conducted every year by all organizations, including faculties and graduate schools, and “self-checks of individual faculty members’ activities,” in which each faculty member reviews their activities in the four areas of education, research, social contribution, and university administration. By establishing a cycle of developing and implementing improvement plans for any issues that are identified, it works to maintain and improve the University’s education and research activities. In AY 2019, a new academic management system was established, but the “Three Policies Verification Committee”, which was newly established in conjunction with this system, has yet to fully carry out its role. However, some of the activities of the new academic management system can be seen in the “All-University Educational Policy Council”, and it should be acknowledged that university-wide activities based on policies and procedures for internal quality assurance have begun. It is hoped that the new educational management system will produce positive outcomes in the future.

With regard to education, each faculty and graduate school has generally designed their curricula appropriately in line with the degree award policy (diploma policy) and curriculum design and implementation policy (curriculum policy). All faculties have established an “allocation mat” that prioritizes the class times for compulsory subjects, as well as a curriculum map and grade number system that indicates the grades of subjects, allowing students to take courses in a systematic and sequential manner. The University has also introduced the “Ryukoku IP (Inventive Program)”, which provides financial support to distinctive educational programs and rigorously assesses the

results, showing impressive efforts aimed at educational reform.

In addition, systems such as Class Supporters, in which senior students work with faculty members to provide support to first-year students both in and out of class, are excellent student support initiatives that promote mutual learning and student growth through the PDCA cycle. Furthermore, Yunus Social Business Research Center, which conducts a variety of activities, such as “Social Entrepreneurship Development Program”, to address the world-wide challenges of the SDGs, and Ryukoku Solar Park Project, which provides funds to support community service and civic activities, are highly commendable as distinctive university-specific initiatives.

However, there are several issues that should be addressed. First, at the graduate level, identification of the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy is limited to the submission of a doctoral / master’s thesis and passing the thesis examination. As such, it is difficult to conclude that the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy are being properly identified and assessed. In addition, the Faculty of Advanced Science and Technology does not set curriculum design and implementation policy for each of its degree programs, and the Doctoral Programs at the Graduate School of Economics and the Graduate School of Business Administration do not indicate their basic approach to curriculum design. Moreover, in most of the graduate schools, the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment caps are low, so the University should implement thorough graduate school quota management to improve the situation.

Going forward, we hope that the University will solve these issues by promoting efforts with internal quality assurance and make further progress by further developing distinctive university-specific initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Organizations

- Taking the similarities between the SDGs, an international initiative, and Buddhism as a basis, the Yunus Social Business Research Center conducts research on the SDGs from a Buddhist perspective and operates projects aimed at achieving them. Its establishment can be considered to be unique among institutions of higher education as a response to contemporary social demands and the international environment. The center’s activities are dynamic and diverse. It is commendable that it is anticipated to achieve its founding objectives of “research on the SDGs and projects to realize them” through such initiatives as “Social Entrepreneur Development Program”, a practical

educational program that aims to use business methods to solve social problems, aiming for a sustainable society where “no one is left behind.”

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- “The Ryukoku IP” provides financial support for selecting distinctive educational programs aimed at educational reform, conducting rigorous evaluations of the results in the first and second phases. It is highly commendable that the University is encouraging and implementing excellent educational reform efforts, including “Development of a Liberal Arts Education Program to Launch Civic Learning: Development of University-wide Active Learning Courses and Interdisciplinary Courses that Promote Thematic Learning.”

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- Student FD Salon, where students, faculty, and staff exchange views in a workshop format in order to improve the classroom environment, is a collaborative activity by students, faculty, and staff, with the student self-governing body taking the lead. Specifically, the salon has been held on topics such as “Ryukoku Serious Chat Salon: Discuss What Makes an Ideal Class.” This is commendable because the participation of students, who are important stakeholders in the University, in FD activities can be expected to make a wide-ranging contribution to the improvement of educational activities.

Student Support

- As a support measure to encourage students’ independent learning, each faculty has established a system (class supporters, seminar supporters, tutors, mentors, etc.) in which senior students support first-year students both in and out of class. Drawing on their own experiences, the senior students offer advice and support to help students acquire academic skills such as writing reports and summaries, as well as things like the attitude to learning required of university students. There is also a system in place to improve the methods and content of the support. For example, the class supporter system involves checking of the class journals submitted by supporter students at meetings of multiple class instructors, and providing them with training sessions accordingly. First year students are highly satisfied with this kind of support from seniors, and the supporters themselves conduct their activities independently, which

includes planning and organizing events for the first-years while communicating and coordinating with other students. This system of support by senior student supporters is recognized as an effective way to develop the ability of first-year students to learn independently, and can be commended as an excellent initiative to promote mutual learning and growth between students, including the senior students.

Education and Research Environment

- Support for internally funded project research is provided through Priority Research Promotion Program, which aims to create, promote, and enhance advanced, interdisciplinary, and original research at the University. Its results include the selection of “Diachronic and Synchronic Research of Japanese Buddhist: Challenges and Prospects of Inclusive, Multicultural Society” and two other projects by MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities, and the selection of the “Project for Creative Criminology in a New Era: The Transdisciplinary Integration and Systematization of Knowledge Concerning Crimes and Criminals” as a Private University Research Branding Project. The program is highly commendable as it functions as a system to foster distinctive research that makes use of the University’s strengths.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- At Volunteer NPO Center Meeting, student staff, coordinators, and administrative staff gather together for discussions led by the center director. As such, the center is jointly managed by three parties: faculty, staff, and students. In addition, Volunteer NPO Center Committee, made up of faculty and staff members, also has students participating as observers. This and other administrative efforts are being made so that students can use these activities to empower themselves. It can be concluded that these activities are being put to effective use under the “Social Cooperation and Social Contribution Policy” of “developing talent for social change.”
- Under the Ryukoku Solar Park Project, profits from mega-solar power plants installed on land owned by local governments are used to support community service and civic activities in the areas where the plants are installed. The project is based on the results of research on the local application of renewable energy conducted at the “Research Centre for the Local Public Human Resources and Policy Development”,

which is one of the projects of the “Research Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion, Science and Humanities”. In accordance with the spirit of the University’s founding, discussions were held on whether or not to implement the project, and its uniqueness as a social cooperation or contribution activity such as the establishment of a system was considered commendable.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Doctoral Programs at the Graduate School of Economics and the Graduate School of Business Administration do not indicate their basic approach to curriculum design and implementation policy. This should be improved.
- The Faculty of Advanced Science and Technology does not set curriculum design and implementation policy for each of its degree programs. Improvements are required so that these policies can be established and made public.
- At the graduate level, identification of the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy is limited to the submission of a doctoral / master’s thesis and passing the thesis examination. As such, it cannot be said that the learning outcomes specified in the degree award policy are being identified and assessed in a multi-faceted and appropriate manner, so improvements are required.

Student Enrollment

- The number of transfer students in each faculty is far below the maximum number, especially in the Faculty of Letters, the Faculty of Advanced Science and Technology, and the Faculty of Agriculture. The number in the University as a whole is also below capacity, a situation that has become normalized and requires improvement.
- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is 0.38 for the Master’s Program at the Graduate School of Law, 0.08 for the Master’s Program at the Graduate School of Economics, 0.17 for the Master’s Program at the Graduate School of Business Administration, 0.11 for the Doctoral Program at the Graduate School of Business Administration, 0.40 for the Master’s Program at the Graduate

School of Sociology, 0.19 for the Doctoral Program at the Graduate School of Science and Technology, 0.45 for the Master's Program at the Graduate School of Agriculture, and 0.36 for the Master's Program at the Graduate School of Practical Shin Buddhist Studies. These figures are low, and improvements are required in order to ensure proper management of student quotas.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The “Definition of FD at Ryukoku University” defines FD as activities relating to educational improvement. In actuality, although there have been some initiatives such as the “Support System for Scientific Research Grants”, with the exception of the Faculty of Policy Science and the Graduate School of Science and Technology, there have been no FD activities aimed at boosting research or promoting activities such as social contribution.
- The Graduate School of Letters, Graduate School of Economics, and Graduate School of Agriculture have not implemented graduate school-specific faculty development (FD) activities relating to educational improvement. Improvements are needed to ensure that these are appropriately carried out for all Master's and Doctoral Programs or in the respective graduate schools.

Education and Research Environment

- Although all faculty members are required to attend and complete Research Ethics Education Program, some faculty members have not done so. This is a situation that requires improvement.