

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

Nagaoka Institute of Design



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Niigata, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2015	
Accreditation Status: Accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016 – March.31.2023)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the Nagaoka Institute of Design

Overview

The Nagaoka Institute of Design (hereafter, the Institute) started its existence in 1994 as a single-subject university with the Faculty of Design, which was run privately but established publicly. It opened the Graduate School of Design in 1998 and became a public university in 2014 with Nagaoka City as the founding body. With a campus in Nagaoka City, Niigata Prefecture, the Institute has engaged in education and research activities under the founding philosophy of exploring true human richness through art and design, and develop human resources with creativity that can contribute back to society.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2008, a gradual decrease in the number of applicants, due to the economic slump and the decline in the population of 18-year-olds, has forced the Institute to set up a planning committee for university reform. The committee developed a draft plan to change the Institute in an attempt to make it contribute more effectively to the local community. The Institute has set three goals since 2014 to enhance education and research capabilities, to enhance the capacity to contribute to local communities, and to consolidate management (as a result of it changing to a public university founded by Nagaoka City).

In efforts to realize the concept of “the campus as a whole as the material for design,” the Institute has made several attempts to systematically develop ateliers, studios, and other facilities as superior educational and research features that bring out students’ creativity, and has provided students with rich learning and production environments. The content of the first-year education in the Faculty of Design, which includes activities for local contribution based on community-oriented education, is a notable feature of the Institute and should be maintained.

However, several issues need to be resolved. Insufficient enrollment still persists in some departments in the Faculty of Design, and in the Graduate School of Design. In addition the policy on degree award and the curriculum design policy have not been formulated in the Graduate School of Design.

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the Faculty of Design offers educational content throughout the entire university that helps improve students’ motivation for learning. For example, the Basic Design Workshops I and II offer education in drawing, color, two-dimensional and three-dimensional construction, photography, and lettering, which helps students (including inexperienced learners) to study the basic skills in each design area. The curriculum is also designed to help experienced students learn basic skills in areas where they are inexperienced and advanced skills in those in which they have greater experience. In addition, each class welcomes all students, regardless of department, and encourage students to exchange ideas with individuals from other departments.

Education and Research Environment

- It is commendable that the Institute has created an appropriate environment specializing in design to realize the concept of “the campus as a whole as the material for design,” and that the students make positive use of these learning and production

environments for their creative activities. The Institute sets in place these state-of-the-art learning and production environments with both hardware and software, which give students a high satisfaction. The environments include the systematic development of effective education and research facilities such as ateliers and studios, a security system wherein a student identification card functions as a chip card that allows students to access production rooms outside of class hours, and free creator-oriented software available for all students and faculty members.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the Institute has made outstanding efforts to conduct activities to develop relationships with the local community. Activities for local contribution, such as the Community Co-creation Practices and the Volunteering and Internship, have continued for many years. In the Community Co-creation Practices, students work together with local residents or businesspeople who have made the request to create intellectual, local, and corporate projects. Students work with local residents to plan, manage and produce local events, to plan and implement exhibitions at museums, and to design packages or labels for products from various companies in Niigata Prefecture. These activities have achieved various goals in the local community, and with the involvement of many students, they have built closer ties between students and the local community and businesses.

Suggestions for Improvement

Mission and Purpose

- The purpose of the graduate school has not been communicated or made public in official publications or on websites. This should be improved.

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The policies on degree award and the curriculum design policies have not been formulated in the master's and doctoral program in the Graduate School of Design. Each program should develop its own policy.
- The curricula of the doctoral program in the Graduate School of design do not appropriately combine research work and course work. Considering the purpose of a credit-based degree-granting system, the doctoral program should offer appropriate educational content.
- The criteria for examining degree-seeking theses or dissertations and the criteria for examining graduation projects in the Graduate School of Design have not been stipulated. Each program should clarify these criteria in the graduate student handbook.

Enrollment

- The admission policy in the Graduate School of Design does not clearly state the image of desirable students and the kinds and levels of required knowledge. They are set in place only for the entire Graduate School but should be developed for each of the master's and doctoral programs.
- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap in the Graduate School of Design is low at 0.37 in the master's program and no enrollment in the doctoral

program. These numbers should be improved.

Education and Research Environment

- The library does not employ any full-time staff members with specialized knowledge. This should be improved.

Area of Serious Concern

Enrollment

- In the Faculty of Design, the average of the ratios of the last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap and the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.77 and 0.85 respectively in the Department of Product Design, 0.85 and 0.74 respectively in the Department of Art and Craft, and 0.78 and 0.76 respectively in the Department of Architecture and Environmental Design. These must be improved.