

Supplementary Review Results

Nihon University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2021	
Accreditation Status: unaccredited	

Supplementary Review Results for Nihon University

Overview

Regarding Nihon 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, we established an investigative subcommittee inside the University Accreditation Committee in 2019 and investigated the validity of the results from the 2017 University Accreditation (certified evaluation and accreditation). Since the investigation identified major issues in student enrollment, governance, and internal quality assurance under the University Standards, the determination of the 2017 University Accreditation Results stating that the University conformed to the University Standards was overturned, and the University was deemed noncompliant. This Supplementary Review assesses the improvements made in response to the issues identified in the Investigation Results for the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, Nihon University regarding the criteria of student enrollment, governance, and internal quality assurance, which were the reasons for the denial of accreditation, and also assesses the improvements made regarding the two areas of serious concern and 13 suggestions for improvement, including those related to student enrollment, that were presented in the previous University Accreditation.

In terms of the issues concerning student selection, Nihon University has developed the Guidelines for Ensuring Fair Student Selection and established a governance structure for entrance examination-related tasks in general through the Headquarters Entrance Examination Supervision Committee that is responsible for examining important matters pertaining to student recruitment and entrance examinations, as well as revising the system for checking student selection-related operations in individual faculties. In addition, the University has established the Investigation and Verification Committee for School of Medicine General Entrance Examinations under its corporate headquarters in response to a request from the School of Medicine, which underwent an emergency investigation by MEXT. This committee is responsible for verifying measures for recurrence prevention and improvement and confirming the implementation status of recurrence prevention measures, and has prepared the Investigation and Verification Committee Report. In order to improve the issues regarding student selection conducted in 2019, the

University has notified additional successful candidates of their individual ranking, contacted the candidates in accordance with the Additional Successful Candidate Phone Response Manual, and disclosed the second stage examination scores to unsuccessful examinees. Furthermore, under the leadership of the president who was appointed in 2020, the University has developed an internal quality assurance system and formulated the Nihon University Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Nihon University Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Regulations, aiming to create a system for ensuring the quality of education and research. As a result, the JUAA admits serious issues identified in the Investigation Results for the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, Nihon University of 2019 have been improved.

However, since October 2021, during the Supplementary Review period, serious governance issues have been identified at Nihon University, which has cast significant doubt on the assessment results on governance under the University Standards. For this reason, we decided to conduct an additional investigation regarding these issues to check the University's governance in general.

Regarding the issues of university management, Nihon University launched an internal investigation committee led by an auditor to clarify the facts from the corporation side. Additionally, the University established a third-party committee in accordance with the guidelines of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, conducting a further investigation into the facts and causes and formulating recurrence prevention measures. The University also established the Nihon University Revival Meeting composed of outside experts, in response to the direction from MEXT. The University published the investigation report and inquiry report compiled by the third-party committee on March 31, 2022 and is making efforts toward developing a sound university governance structure. However, even though all trustees, councilors, and auditors have decided to step down and the University is planning to launch a new governance structure by July 2022, the specific details are still under consideration, and the current trustees and others will temporarily continue serving until the establishment of the new structure. Therefore, an appropriate governance structure is still not in place.

As described above, the additional investigation showed that Nihon University has serious issues related to governance under the University Standards, on the basis of which we have determined that the University does not comply with the University Standards.

(1) Issues identified in the 2019 investigation results

The improvements made regarding the issues raised in the Investigation Results for the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, Nihon University are described below for individual items in the University Standards.

First, regarding student enrollment, when selecting additional successful candidates for the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine in the student selection process, it used to be customary for the dean of the School of Medicine or head of the secretariat at the time to arbitrarily give preference to applicants from the School of Medicine's alumni who had passed the first stage examination on the basis of an alumni list obtained from alumni association members. Regarding this issue, the University formulated the Guidelines for Ensuring Fair Student Selection in 2018 in response to suggestions from MEXT, in which measures for ensuring fairness were set forth in the following five areas: organization and structure, recruitment guidelines, application documents, interviews, etc., and determination of acceptance. Regarding determination of acceptance in particular, the guidelines prohibit uniform or discriminatory treatment based on attributes, as well as restricting access to materials pertaining to the determination of acceptance and stating the need for appropriate consideration when handling such materials. In addition, starting with the 2019 entrance examinations, a system was put in place that allows the president to confirm the fairness of determination results by making it mandatory for the scores and ranking of examinees, including additional successful candidates, to be submitted when reporting the successful candidates to the president, additional successful candidates are notified of their ranking and that information is announced on the website, and the examination scores are disclosed to all unsuccessful examinees regardless of whether they have made a request. The University has strived to disclose information related to the determination of acceptance and additional successful candidates, announcing additional successful candidates according to the ranking while checking whether such candidates wish to enroll in accordance with the Additional Successful Candidate Phone Response Manual. The University has also revised its student selection criteria: transcripts are only used for determining suitability and do not affect the score, and the point allocation and evaluation method for interviews and essays are set forth in the Transcript Evaluation Procedure Guidelines and the Interview Examination Evaluation Criteria. The situation of entrance examination procedures, such as determination of interview scores, is reported to the faculty council as necessary to ensure transparency. The University has made it so that during the preparation of determination of acceptance-related materials and additional successful candidate lists, the relevant data can only

be viewed or edited in the presence of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Supervision Committee and the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Implementation Committee, thereby preventing any arbitrary judgements from being made.

Following the wishes of the dean of the School of Medicine who was appointed in 2020, the School of Medicine General Planning and Information Committee formulated a proposal titled “Utilization of the Nihon University Common Examination (N) Entrance Examination and Revision of Second Stage Examinations for Improved Efficiency in Nihon University’s School of Medicine Entrance Examinations” (March 3, 2021) and submitted it to the university headquarters. The proposal states that the selection method unique to the School of Medicine (A Individual Method should be abolished starting from the 2022 student selection, and that the student selection method should be changed to include a first stage examination based on an academic examination according to the N Common Examination Method and a second stage examination based on an academic test and interview unique to the School of Medicine. The proposal also states that the aptitude test (psychological test) and essay that are conducted in the second stage examination should be abolished, and that mathematics (essay format) and foreign language (English) tests should be introduced as academic tests for evaluating logical thinking skills. From the above, we have determined that the School of Medicine and the whole University are working to prevent recurrence, the issues related to enrollment that were identified have mostly been improved, and efforts for further improvement, such as the introduction of new student selection methods, have been made.

Next, the following issues were raised regarding governance: despite that the determination of additional successful candidates is the responsibility of the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Management Committee, decisions were made by the dean of the School of Medicine, the chairperson of the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Implementation Committee, and the head of the secretariat without any clear determination criteria being set, and the faculty council had no way of knowing that alumni were given preference when selecting additional successful candidates. In response to this, the University reviewed the organizational structure for entrance examinations in the 2018 faculty council, replaced the chairpersons of the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Management Committee and the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Implementation Committee, and improved its checking system by newly appointing two vice chairmen for the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Implementation Committee. In 2019, the faculty

council established the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Supervision Committee Rules and the School of Medicine Entrance Examination Implementation Committee Rules. At the university-wide level, the Headquarters Entrance Examination Management Committee discussed a governance structure for entrance examination-related tasks in general led by the president. As a result, it was decided that the vice-president and the Headquarters Entrance Examination Management Committee supervise deans and Faculty Entrance Examination Supervision Committee, and individual faculties have been encouraged to develop their organizational structure. At the same time, the Admissions Division, Office of Academic Affairs has conducted a survey on all faculties and graduate schools to confirm that fairness is ensured in student selection, working on improving student selection-related governance procedures. Going forward, we hope the Headquarters Entrance Examination Management Committee functions as a permanent organization responsible for managing, verifying, and ensuring fair student selection. The School of Medicine Entrance Examination Management Committee Rules stipulate that the committee must verify the implementation status of entrance examinations, so we hope the committee continues to work with the faculty council and other organizations to conduct verification and make improvements in student selection on a consistent basis.

As for internal quality assurance, it was noted that fairness was not adequately ensured in department and graduate school specific student selection procedures, and the University was requested to ensure student quality as well as review the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system so that it could demonstrate that education and learning at the University satisfy the appropriate standard. Under the president who was appointed in September 2020, the University developed an internal quality assurance system in order to improve the quality of education, research, and governance and earn social recognition and trust for its human resources development activities and research achievements. In addition, it formulated the Nihon University Internal Quality Assurance Policy and a conceptual diagram, and in the same year, established the Nihon University Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Regulations. According to the policy and regulations, the University Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committee is to be established as the organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance on a university-wide level, Faculty Internal Quality Assurance Promotion Committees are to be established as organizations responsible for internal quality assurance in individual faculties, etc. The aim is to make improvements and enhance quality on a consistent

basis by having the organizations responsible for internal quality assurance cooperate with existing organizations and activities and verify/identify areas that require improvement on a university-wide basis. At the university-wide level, the University Assessment Expert Committee oversees measures for improvement based on checks and reviews, the University Assessment Section supports internal quality assurance-related activities, and the University is considering introducing inspections by outside experts. Therefore, the JUAA hopes the University conducts external evaluations and makes its internal quality assurance system function in a permanent and consistent fashion. It should be noted that the University made changes to its internal quality assurance system in 2022. Specifically, the University Assessment Expert Committee was abolished, and its functions were transferred to the University Check and Review Committee.

Regarding faculty and faculty organization, one of the two areas of serious concern raised in the previous University Accreditation, the University has appropriately improved the issue of the lack of research supervisors in the Major in Commerce, Graduate School of Commerce (Doctoral Program) by creating the Graduate School Faculty Placement Plan and conducting appointment procedures in accordance with the plan in 2020. As for student enrollment, in response to the issue of quota management, the University has reduced the number of students repeating the same year by providing learning guidance to underachieving students in the Department of Law, College of Law (First Division) and conducting meetings with the parents of such students. In the Department of Physical Education, the University has sufficiently improved the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap by ensuring quota management when conducting entrance examinations. Regarding the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, although the average of ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap in the last five years has improved, the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap have not been improved sufficiently. Therefore, further improvement is needed. Furthermore, most of the issues raised in the 13 suggestions for improvement have been rectified. However, further measures for improvement are required as the qualification examination criteria for faculty, degree award policies, curriculum design and implementation policies, and credit substantiation measures are inadequate in some departments and graduate schools.

The JUAA provides the recommendations below regarding these matters that require further improvement. Going forward, the JUAA hopes the University leverages the internal quality assurance policy and system it has established to make

improvements toward further development of its program.

(2) New issues identified in 2021

The JUAA conducted an investigation on the new issues identified in 2021 regarding governance under the University Standards. The investigation showed that the serious issues described below contributed to the numerous perfidies. Therefore, radical improvement is required in these areas.

First, trustees and councilors were preferentially appointed in accordance with the former chairman's wishes, and trustees were not appointed/dismissed appropriately. For instance, the recently arrested former trustee resigned from the position of trustee and councilor due to abuse of authority in 2018 but was later reappointed as a trustee and councilor. In addition, the former chairman abused his authority over personnel matters to force individuals who did not comply with his wishes to be transferred to other departments. Thus the University's personnel system did not function properly. As personnel decisions were arbitrarily made by particular officers in this way, the University needs to correct the situation to ensure appropriate and fair personnel decisions.

Also, the Board of Councilors and auditor failed to exercise checks on the Board of Trustees. As the school corporation, the parent body of the University, was not governed appropriately, the University should correct the situation by clarifying the system for appropriately checking the status of operational execution by the Board of Trustees, trustees, etc. and creating a new governance structure.

Owing in part to the long incumbency of the former chairman, many agendas of the Board of Trustees were regarded as fixed policies of the former chairman, and proposals were approved without adequate discussion. Therefore, under the governance structure of the school corporation, which is closely involved in the administration of the University, the trustees failed to perform their mutual checking function. Since the University intends to create a new and functioning governance structure, including a system for checking the Board of Trustees, the JUAA hopes it develops and implements effective, concrete measures for improvement to achieve sound university management.

The issues related to the University's governance structure described above are presented as issues requiring improvement in the recommendations. The Nihon University is committed to revive itself, swiftly implementing initiatives with the aim of launching a new governance structure by around July 2022. Therefore, the JUAA hopes it maintains efforts and implements measures for revival going forward.

Suggestions for Improvement

Student Enrollment

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap in the Department of Medicine, School of Medicine was high at 1.01 in 2020. This should be improved.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- Qualification examination criteria for faculty have not been established in the Graduate School of Science and Technology, Graduate School of Medicine, Graduate School of Bioresource Sciences, and Graduate School of Veterinary Medicine. This should be improved.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- Even though the knowledge and skills to be acquired in the Graduate School of Engineering are presented in the degree award policy of the respective degree programs, the contents are almost identical. This should be improved.
- Regarding the curriculum design and implementation policy, the ideas on curriculum design and implementation are unclear in the College of Law (regular program, distance learning), College of Commerce (regular program, distance learning), Graduate School of Art (Master's Program, Doctoral Program), Graduate School of Medicine, Graduate School of Pharmacy, Graduate School of Integrated Basic Sciences (Master's Program, Doctoral Program), and Graduate School of Economics (Master's Program, Doctoral Program). This should be improved.
- In the Doctoral Program of the Graduate School of Law, research work is not appropriately combined with course work. In view of the purpose of the graduate school system, the Doctoral Program should provide a suitable educational program.
- Verification of credit substantiation (e.g., the maximum number of credits that students can register for in a year) is insufficient in the College of Science and Technology and the College of Industrial Technology. This should be improved. The College of Engineering reduced the number of credits that students can

register for in a year in 2022. However, this measure is relaxed for high achievers. Therefore, the university should verify the effectiveness of its credit substantiation activities along with the appropriateness of this measure.

Recommendations

University Management and Finance

- As personnel decisions related to trustees and staff were arbitrarily made by particular officers, the University must correct the situation to ensure appropriate and fair personnel decisions.
- The Board of Councilors and auditor failed to exercise checks on the Board of Trustees, and governance was not performed appropriately. The University must correct the situation by developing a system for appropriately checking the status of operational execution by the Board of Trustees, trustees, etc.
- Members of the Board of Trustees did not conduct adequate discussion, and the trustees failed to perform their mutual checking function. The University intends to create a new and functioning governance structure, including a system for checking the Board of Trustees. Therefore, the JUAA hopes it develops and implements effective, concrete measures for improvement to achieve sound university management.