

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

Notre Dame Seishin University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Okayama, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2016	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2017 – March.31.2024)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Notre Dame Seishin University

Overview

Notre Dame Seishin University (hereafter, the University), established in 1949, originated as Okayama Women's School, founded by the Society of Jesus in 1886 in Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture, where it was the first four-year women's university.

Since then, the University has devoted itself to women's education based on the Catholic spirit and currently has two faculties, the Faculty of Literature and the Faculty of Human Life Sciences; and two graduate schools, the Graduate School of Literature and the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences.

The University's educational philosophy is "seeking truth, goodness, and beauty following the Christian spirit," and the mission of the University is "to maintain the characteristics of a liberal arts college, to be committed to fostering truly free women through learning and research, to provide students with the means to succeed personally and professionally in society, and above all, to encourage them to continue seeking the meaning of life." The employment rate for students is among the highest levels in Japan, a remarkable outcome for a liberal arts institution. Notable features include a one-to-one adviser-to-student ratio, following the policy of small-group instruction; a close connection among administrative staff in the department of academic affairs and student leadership; and careful, dedicated student support through cooperation between faculty and administrative staff. It is also commendable that attentive student support has resulted in a significantly smaller number of holdovers, absentees, and dropouts in recent years, and also sustains the University's educational philosophy of seeking the meaning of life together.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2009, the University has developed and implemented an improvement plan. However, the current accreditation has not found improvements based on the previous suggestions for developing an effective system to implement the results of self-study, nor has there been progress for promoting mutual understanding among faculty and administrative staff. In addition, several issues remain in several areas, including development of the policies on degree award of each faculty and review of the policy on degree award or criteria for examining the degree-seeking thesis in several graduate programs, and measures to promote research ethics. In addition, the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is high in the Faculty of Human Life Sciences and low in several graduate programs.

To address these and other issues, the Institutional Research (IR) Center, established in 2014 is expected to play a leading role in reviewing and reorganizing current systems and making an internal quality assurance system continuously effective.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- It is commendable that the University has made attentive student support to realize the educational philosophy. In particular, advisers not only meet all students individually at the beginning of their university careers, but also frequently attend meetings, including the Department Council and Academic Affairs, to regularly and actively share student information and prepare faculty members for meeting with students. Additionally, students find it easy to interact with administrative staff, due to the collaborative efforts providing ample care for students by faculty and administrative staff. Above all, these efforts have contributed to decreased numbers of holdovers and dropouts, high

passing rates of employment tests for teachers and nursery school teachers, and high employment rates for these groups.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The policies on degree award of each faculty have not been stipulated. This should be improved.
- The required competence to complete the degree is not indicated in the policy on degree award in the Japanese Language and Literature course (master's and doctoral programs) in the Graduate School of Literature, the Human Development and Education major (master's program), the Food Science and Nutrition course (master's program), and the Comprehensive Human Life Sciences course (doctoral program) in the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences. This should be improved.
- The examination criteria for the degree-seeking thesis in the master's program of the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences is not defined. This should be improved.

Enrollment

- 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 both high at 1.20 in the entire Faculty of Human Life Sciences, and both high at 1.23 in the Department of Child Welfare in the Faculty of Human Life Sciences. This should be improved.
- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.25 in the master's program in the Graduate School of Literature and low at 0.20 in the master's program in the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences, and there are no enrolled students in the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Literature and the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences. This should be improved.

Education and Research Environment

- Faculty and administrative staff have not sufficiently engaged in training and the other activities of research ethics in education. Furthermore, graduate students have been asked only to attend the training, but there has been no follow-up or effort to assure attendance. This should be improved.

Area of Serious Concern

Enrollment

- The average of the ratios of the last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap is high at 1.32 and the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.35 in the Department of Japanese Language and Literature in the Faculty of Literature. These numbers must be improved.