

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

Hiroshima Shudo University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hiroshima, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2018	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2019 – March.31.2026)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Hiroshima Shudo University

Overview

Since its establishment, Hiroshima Shudo University (hereafter, the University) has strived to conduct education and research activities based on its founding spirit of “Cultivating the Way” with the educational mission and goal of “fostering individuals who can contribute to the development of the local community from a global perspective.” The University defines its educational capabilities as the “capabilities for cultivating the way for learning.” It is now in the final fiscal year of the FY2015-2018 Medium-Term Operational Plan, the third of such plans developed every four years. In line with the operational plan’s main theme of “creating a university responsive to change (vision),” the University implements various projects in cooperation with the local community with a view to becoming a global institution as it strives to improve the learning environment for students.

In accordance with the Medium-Term Operational Plan, the University implements a curriculum consisting of general education subjects for students of all faculties and major-specific subjects, and incorporates problem-solving and active learning approaches in its classrooms. It also provides Manabi Commons as a space where students engage in group work and operate a voluntary study group with the assistance of academic advisors. This is a commendable initiative that helps the participants develop presentation skills and improve their motivation to learn. Furthermore, the University has signed regional partnership agreements with local governments and other organizations to promote activities with the local community and implements the “Building the Future of Hiroshima with the Innovation Bridge Project,” which assists student-run activities aimed at solving local problems. This on-going project is noteworthy for leading to the University’s growth, such as the creation of a new department of study. It is also commendable that teaching and non-teaching staff actively work together on the project, sharing information and holding internal seminars to share achievements.

There are a number of issues the University needs to address, however. The number of research supervisors or assistant research supervisors in several schools failed to meet the requirements set out in the Standards for Establishment of Graduate Schools, with the teacher shortage extending over a number of years for some of them. This problem was addressed by adding teachers through open announcement hiring and promoting eligible teachers within the University to these positions. In the future the

University should ensure the number of teachers does not fall below the levels required in the standards.

There are other changes and improvements needed in the graduate level education. The University should, for example, clearly communicate to students in advance, and in writing, the evaluation criteria for research projects on specific topics and present the research supervision plans with clearly outlined schedules. Except for a few departments, all undergraduate and graduate schools fail to effectively measure and assess the student learning outcomes established in the degree award policy and should improve their practices. Furthermore, some undergraduate and graduate schools have student enrollment issues that require better management.

It is important to evaluate the appropriateness of the improvement measures for these issues in accordance with the relevant policies, but individual organizations, namely the undergraduate and graduate schools, are failing to implement these steps effectively. The University established an internal quality assurance (IQA) policy and procedures in 2017, and under this framework the University Steering Meeting and the Board of Councilors have adopted a holistic operational plan and other measures. However, it is not clear which organization bears the overall responsibility for the university-wide efforts to implement improvement measures based on the self-study results. Furthermore, while the self-study results of the undergraduate and graduate schools are communicated to the Self-Study Committee and shared at meetings where the progress of the operational plans are reported, the findings are not fully used to inform the university-wide operational plans. Since the University is currently failing to implement institution-wide improvement plans based on the self-study results of the undergraduate and graduate schools, the allocation of authority and responsibilities among the University Steering Meeting, the Board of Councilors, and the Self-Study Committee should be defined to ensure the effective implementation of the IQA system. Going forward it is important that the University operate an effective IQA system and address the issues it faces. Once this is accomplished, the University is advised to enhance its unique projects and programs, improve its education and research activities, and work on the quality assurance of education.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- Manabi Commons is a resource where faculty members hold office hours to answer

students' questions about their lectures or standard exams. It is also a place where a voluntary study group launched with assistance from academic advisors meets. The extensive learning support programs provided in Manabi Commons are highly appreciated by students, helping not only to address their academic concerns but also provide an environment for students to practice group learning and improve their motivation and presentation and other skills. The increasing number of students who visit Manabi Commons, a commendable and apparently effective resource, demonstrates that the University's student support program is widely known and used by students.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The “Building the Future of Hiroshima with the Innovation Bridge Project” was selected as one of MEXT's Center of Community Projects. The University participates in, and sometimes leads, the planning and implementation of various programs conducted by government bodies with which partnership agreements have been concluded, including the cities of Hiroshima and Hatsukaichi and the towns of North Hiroshima and Sakacho. Under this project, education and research activities that address issues identified by local communities are certified and supported by the University. The students help revitalize the local communities through participation in the Community Innovation Courses and Connecting with the Community Project that are part of the “Building the Future of Hiroshima with the Innovation Bridge Project.” A think tank where faculty members offer consultation and advice, and open lectures and extension courses, is also part of this project. After the COC designation expired, these activities and programs were either succeeded by the “Next Hiromira Project” or developed and integrated into the newly established program offered by the Department of Regional Administration in the Faculty of Global Community Studies. The project is a remarkable, highly commendable initiative in line with the University's social cooperation and contribution policy.

University Administration and Finances

- In keeping with the philosophy of “Kyoshoku Kyoso” (teaching and non-teaching staff working together across organizational lines towards one goal) the University systematically implements numerous teacher-staff cooperation programs on a university-wide level, such as the “Shudoryoku Forum”, FD and SD training sessions,

and seminars on enhancing teaching abilities. The FD and SD programs have high participation rates, with efforts made to ensure that information on education is shared among the teaching and non-teaching staff through internal seminars and the newsletter “Jimukenshu” (clerical training). These are commendable undertakings that put into practice the idea of “university administration through teacher-staff cooperation.”

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- Under the current practice, the undergraduate and graduate schools create their activity plans based on the overall activity plans developed by the University Steering Meeting and Board of Councilors. However, it is not clear which organization bears the overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the improvement activities carried out by the undergraduate and graduate schools based on their self-study results. Another problem is the Self-Study Committee that merely accepts and shares the self-study results of the undergraduate and graduate schools without taking further action, meaning that the self-study results are not being used to drive university-wide improvement. The University needs to clearly define the allocation of the authority and responsibilities of the related organizations and ensure the IQA system is implemented effectively.

Educational Program and Outcome

- The Doctoral Program in the Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences Graduate School provides a research instruction plan outlining research instruction methods and schedules. However, the schedules in the document are mostly for the doctoral thesis evaluation and should be amended to include more complete information.
- Although all master’s and doctoral programs have established evaluation criteria for research projects on specific topics, not all the criteria have been put in writing and communicated to students in advance. This issue should be addressed.
- Except for the Department of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences, all undergraduate and graduate schools determine student learning outcomes through

thesis and dissertation evaluations. However, the current practice fails to effectively measure and assess the learning outcomes established in the degree award policy. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratio of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years is high at 1.25 in the Department of Human Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences. The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are high at 1.25 in the Department of International Politics, Faculty of Law, and low in the following programs: Master's and Doctoral programs, Faculty of Commercial Sciences Graduate School (0.43 and 0.13, respectively); Master's and Doctoral programs, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences Graduate School (0.20 in all three programs); Master's program, Faculty of Law Graduate School (0.40); and Master's and Doctoral programs, Faculty of Economic Sciences Graduate School (0.13 and 0.17, respectively). Student enrollment of undergraduate and graduate school should be managed more effectively.