

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

Bunsei University of Art



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tochigi, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2017	
Accreditation Status: limited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2018 – March.31.2021)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Bunsei University of Art

Overview

Bunsei University of Art (hereafter, the University) was founded in Utsunomiya City, Tochigi Prefecture, in 1999 based on its predecessor Utsunomiya Bunsei Junior College. The University conducts education and research activities as an art university comprised of the School of Fine Arts and the Graduate School of Arts.

In light of the findings in the previous accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) with respect to student enrollment and financial status, the University formulated a five-year management improvement plan under the Bunsei University of Art Improvement Plan Review Committee (the “Improvement Plan Review Committee”) in 2011 and has worked toward making improvements. However, the latest accreditation review found no evidence of improvement with respect to these issues, and self-study is also insufficient, so it cannot be said that an internal quality assurance system is in place.

Specifically, with respect to student enrollment, the average of ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the last five years and the ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap remain low, and securing a sufficient number of students in a stable manner is a pressing issue. With respect to reinforcing its student recruitment activities, the University is conducting various activities to attract students and increase the number of applicants mainly through the Improvement Plan Review Committee. The University must verify the effects of those activities and continue working to improve the situation.

Furthermore, due to the low enrollment of students, the University’s financial situation remains difficult. The University has worked to deal with this issue by, for example, combining the fine arts majors and reducing the number of faculty members and other staff, but it still has not secured an adequate financial basis. The Improvement Plan Review Committee will formulate a management improvement plan for a five-year period from 2017 in order to improve the situation, and it is necessary to consolidate the University’s financial basis as soon as possible.

Under these circumstances, organizations such as the Self-Study Steering Committee and the Future Planning Committee have been established as initiatives to secure education quality, but no organization other than the Improvement Plan Review Committee is functioning properly, and no regular self-study has been carried out other than responses to

external public agencies. It is essential in the future to clarify the division of roles and coordination among the committees, implement periodic self-study, and develop a mechanism to use the results of these activities for improvement.

Despite the major issues mentioned above, the Improvement Plan Review Committee has been playing the central role in formulating the Improvement and Reform Road Map in accordance with the five-year management improvement plan, which clearly sets out the procedures to promote a realistic plan focused on management improvement. JUAA has determined that the University should work on improvement activities consistently in line with those procedures and rated the University as “accreditation with limitation.”

The University also conducts social contribution activities such as repairing local shrines and temples by making the best use of its characteristics as an art university and works actively as a university deeply rooted in the local community. It is desirable that the University continue these activities.

With this accreditation review as an impetus, the University and its faculty members are expected to exert every effort in the initiatives for improvement and continue to conduct education and research activities and develop.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The University undertakes initiatives in which the Bunsei Art and Culture Regional Cooperation Center acts as a contact point for the execution of agreements with prefectural governments, and faculty members and students continuously work on restoration and repair projects, including ceiling paintings and other artworks in shrines and temples in Nikko City. The University informs society of these initiatives by summarizing and publicizing their results in booklets. The University also utilizes its technologies in various art fields within the University, such as paintings, design and cartoons, and strives to contribute to society by, for example, working with local companies and undertaking advertisements and product package designs. It is commendable that through these initiatives the University is able to promote community development through art and culture and return its art and cultural knowledge and technology, which are the University's assets, back to society.

Suggestions for Improvement

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- No qualification review criteria related to the screening of graduate school supervisors are set at the Graduate School of Arts. This issue needs to be addressed.

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- No activities are conducted at the Graduate School of Arts to improve the educational content and methods focusing on the perspective of the graduate school's unique education. This situation needs to be addressed.
- There are no clearly written dissertation or thesis examination criteria in the Master's Program or Doctoral Program of the Graduate School of Arts, and the Master's Program has no expressly specified examination method, etc. for artwork related to awarding degree. The University needs to address this issue by clearly stipulating the criteria in the Student Handbook or other materials.

Enrollment

- The ratio of transfer student enrollment to the transfer student enrollment cap at the School of Fine Arts (the entire university) in 2017 was low at 0.20. This issue needs to be addressed.
- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap at the Graduate School of Arts is low at 0.30 for the master's program and 0.13 for the doctoral program. This situation needs to be addressed.

Education and Research Environment

- With respect to research ethics other than public research funding, no regulations or systems are in place, and no training is provided to prevent misconduct. This issue needs to be addressed.

Administration and Finance

- The Bunsei Art and Culture Regional Cooperation Center Establishment Guidelines stipulates that the center has its secretariat in the University's Secretariat Planning Policy Office, but this office is not stipulated in the Utsunomiya Gakuen Office Management Organization Regulations, which provides for matters including office management organization. This is one example of regulations not being reviewed in accordance with organizational changes. This situation needs to be appropriately and promptly rectified.

Area of Serious Concern

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- No research guidance plan has been formulated in the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Arts, and this situation must be addressed to ensure that research guidance, dissertation or thesis drafting guidance, etc. are conducted based on a research guidance plan.

Enrollment

- At the School of Fine Arts (the entire university), the average of ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the last five years in 2017 is low at 0.59, and the ratio of student enrollment to the enrollment cap is also low at 0.62. This situation must be addressed.

Administration and Finance

- The ratio of the excess expenditure carried forward to the following year (excess consumption expenditure carried forward to the following year) to operational revenue (imputed income) has been worsening, and the ratio of financial assets to the required reserve account has been extremely low with only cash deposits since 2012. The improvement of the University's financial status is a pressing issue, and the University must work to improve the situation by periodically verifying the feasibility of the management improvement plan formulated in 2017 and establishing a solid financial basis

as soon as possible.

Internal Quality Assurance

- Although regulations stipulate that the Self-Study Steering Committee conducts review, in reality no self-study of the University's activities is being conducted, except when the Improvement Plan Review Committee prepares management improvement plans for external submission. The University must promptly address this issue by reviewing its regulations, regularly conducting appropriate self-study of the overall activities of the University, and developing a system to use the results of the inspections and evaluations for improvements so that the internal quality assurance system is fully functioning.