

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

Health Sciences University of Hokkaido



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Hokkaido, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2024	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2032)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Health Sciences University of Hokkaido

Overview

Health Sciences University of Hokkaido (hereafter “University”) has established the founding ideal of “perfection of the whole person as a health professional through knowledge, virtue, and physical well-being.” Based on this ideal, the University has set forth the educational philosophy of its undergraduate schools as “contributing to local and global communities by cultivating professionals with rich human qualities, solid knowledge and skills, and a broad and profound education” and its graduate schools as “contributing to social development and the wellbeing of humanity through original research activities and the cultivation of highly specialized professionals with rich human qualities.” To realize these educational philosophies, the University has formulated the Medium-Term Plan AY2020-AY2024 that identifies seven priority issues that include the enhancement of education. This plan also incorporates responses to issues pointed out in the previous certified evaluation and accreditation results, and efforts are being made to implement the plan.

With regard to internal quality assurance, the University has established an institution-wide policy and set in place the University-Wide Self-Study Council (hereafter “University-Wide Council”) as an organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance. Under the University-Wide Council, a Self-Study Committee has been established for each undergraduate and graduate school, collectively referred to as Division-Specific Self-Study Committees. Furthermore, an Advisory Board has been formed as an external evaluation body, and a mechanism is in place whereby the self-study results are reported to the University-Wide Council. For other committees that fall outside the undergraduate and graduate divisions, such as the Self-Study Committee for Affiliated Research Institutes and Other Affiliated Organizations and the Self-Study Committee for Medical Institutions, improvements are required to address the lack of clear regulations and inadequate implementation of self-studies. In practice, the University-Wide Council merely receives and approves reports from the Division-Specific Self-Study Committees and does not necessarily function adequately as the main body for promoting internal quality assurance. For this reason, improvement is required to ensure that the University-Wide Council functions as an organization promoting improvement and enhancement through institution-wide internal quality assurance, and

from the perspective of the management of teaching and learning.

With regard to education, both the undergraduate and graduate divisions have formulated degree award policies (diploma policy) and curriculum design and implementation policies (curriculum policy), and develop structured curricula based on these policies. As a distinctive educational initiative, the University leverages its characteristics as a comprehensive medical university to include the enhancement of interprofessional collaborative education in its Medium-Term Plan. In the first year, all students take the interdepartmental “Introduction to Interprofessional Working” course and participate in interdepartmental practical training courses. One such example is “University-wide Practical Exercises for Community-based Care”, in which students visit users of the University’s affiliated Regional Comprehensive Care Center, which forms part of the community-based integrated care system of the municipality where the University is located, and reflect on the quality of life and quality of living based on the voices of care recipients. This staged approach to education enables all students to learn the principles of interprofessional collaboration and to apply them in practice by leveraging the University’s strengths as a comprehensive medical university. This is a highly commendable endeavor.

As another noteworthy initiative, the University provides student support by assigning tutors to all students in its undergraduate schools, with particular attention given to first- and second-year students who receive extensive support in the form of academic guidance and advice on daily life. In the area of student enrollment, the University annually conducts follow-up student surveys to monitor the progression rates, graduation rates, and national examination pass rates for each admission category, and uses the results of these surveys to review its admission selection methods and improve pre-enrollment education. With regard to social contribution initiatives, the Regional Comprehensive Care Center engages in community healthcare support, including assistance for daily living, in cooperation with the interprofessional collaborative education program described above, and the Center for Regional Partnership Promotion is responsible for providing lifelong learning opportunities for local residents and for addressing issues related to regional healthcare, welfare, and other community needs based on comprehensive partnership agreements with local governments in Hokkaido.

There are areas of improvement the University needs to address, however, in addition to improving and ensuring the effective functioning of its internal quality assurance system. Except for the Master’s Program in Clinical Laboratory Sciences in the Graduate School of Medical Technology Sciences, the graduate schools fail to state in their degree award policies the learning outcomes appropriate for each degree to be

awarded, such as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be acquired. The Department of Clinical Psychology in the School of Psychological Sciences does not articulate the basic concept of curriculum implementation in its curriculum design and implementation policy. These areas require improvement. Some graduate schools have yet to establish evaluation criteria for the research outcomes of special research projects; such criteria should be clearly formulated. With respect to student enrollment, instances of over-enrollment and under-enrollment have been observed in some schools and departments, and appropriate student quota management is necessary. Moreover, although structured and multifaceted faculty development (hereafter “FD”) is generally implemented to enhance the competencies of faculty members, some graduate schools do not conduct FD activities on themes specifically focusing on the improvement of graduate education, and it is desirable that such activities be implemented.

As a comprehensive medical university encompassing the fields of pharmacy, dentistry, nursing, welfare, and rehabilitation, the University works to cultivate professionals who are essential to regional healthcare and currently serves as an important hub for addressing healthcare-related issues in the region where it is located. Going forward, the University is expected to continue to advance as an institution that contributes to the local community by leveraging its distinctive characteristics, even after relocating to a new campus. To this end, while respecting the initiatives of its undergraduate and graduate divisions with different areas of specialization, the University is expected to establish an overall management system and to ensure that its internal quality assurance system functions effectively, thereby contributing to the resolution of various issues and evaluating and further advancing the outcomes of its distinctive initiatives.

Notable Strengths

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In addition to the compulsory “Introduction to Interprofessional Working” course offered across all undergraduate schools and departments, the University has newly introduced the “University-wide Practical Exercises for Community-based Care” course for upper-year students. Students taking this course visit users of the University’s affiliated Regional Comprehensive Care Center, which forms part of the community-based integrated care system of the municipality where the University is located, and learn about home healthcare through practical experience while

reflecting on the quality of life and living based on the care recipients' voices. By capitalizing on the resources of a comprehensive medical university, students gain firsthand experience with healthcare issues in the community. Consequently, through the process of considering and proposing care related to these issues based on their individual specializations, students are expected to broaden their perspectives beyond their own fields of expertise. This learning approach is recognized as an effective educational method with the expectation of fostering the development of professionals who can promote interprofessional collaboration—a crucial competency in today's society.

Suggestions for Improvement

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University has positioned the University-Wide Self-Study Council as the main body responsible for promoting internal quality assurance, and states that the University-Wide Council formulates improvement plans and issues directives for improvement based on the results of self-studies. In practice, however, individual divisions develop and implement their own improvement measures based on the results of self-studies conducted in the undergraduate and graduate schools and other organizations, and the University-Wide Council merely receives and approves the reports for improvement. In addition, some Division-Specific Self-Study Committees do not conduct periodic self-studies. Given these issues, improvement is required to establish a method of institution-wide management, including the University-Wide Council providing improvement support to each division, and to ensure the effective functioning of the internal quality assurance system.

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Graduate School of Dentistry, Graduate School of Nursing & Social Services, Graduate School of Psychological Sciences, and Graduate School of Rehabilitation Sciences do not state in their degree award policies the learning outcomes appropriate for each degree to be awarded, such as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be acquired. Improvement is therefore required.

- The Department of Clinical Psychology in the School of Psychological Sciences has not articulated in its curriculum design and implementation policy the basic concept of curriculum implementation. Improvement is therefore required.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- In the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Graduate School of Medical Technology Sciences, FD activities have not been conducted on themes specifically focusing on the improvement of graduate education. Improvement is required to ensure that these activities are appropriately implemented.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- Although the Master's Program in Nursing and the Master's Program in Clinical Social Work in the Graduate School of Nursing & Social Services and the Master's Program in Clinical Psychology in the Graduate School of Psychological Sciences specify the successful defense of a master's thesis or the evaluation of the outcomes of special research projects, together with a final examination, as requirements for program completion, the programs fail to establish evaluation criteria for the outcomes of special research projects. These criteria should be established and clearly communicated to students in advance.

Student Enrollment

- The average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap in the last five years is high at 1.20 in the Department of Physical Therapy in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences, and the ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is also high at 1.23; these ratios are also high at 1.25 and 1.28 in the Department of Occupational Therapy in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences. The ratios are low at 0.57 and 0.58 in the Department of Social Management in the School of Nursing & Social Services, and the ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is also low at 0.85 in the Department of Dentistry in the School of Dentistry. Measures are required to ensure appropriate management of student quotas at the school level.