

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

Miyagi Gakuin Women's University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Miyagi, 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 Miyagi Gakuin Women's University

Overview

Miyagi Gakuin Women's University (hereafter, the University) upholds the founding philosophy of "providing education rooted in Evangelical Christianity with the aim to teach women to fear God, to seek truth with both freedom and humility, to respect all people on the principle of loving all our neighbors, and to work for the better welfare of all humans and to contribute to world peace." To realize its purpose "to provide university education to women rooted in Christianity" and its missions "to promote the Christian value of love, enhance academic culture, support the improvement and progress of social and family life, especially in northern Japan, and strive to develop the spirit of international cooperation," the University offers education programs anchored in character and liberal arts education reflecting Christian values. Based on the MGU Master Plan adopted in 2014, the University has actively implemented reform and was reorganized in FY2016 into four faculties and nine departments. Previously it had one faculty and ten departments.

On the education front, all undergraduate and graduate schools offer a curriculum appropriate for their curriculum design and implementation policies, with classes actively incorporating the active learning method. In line with its purpose and mission the University offers all students a set of liberal arts classes called "MGU Standard" with the aim of developing women who can take ownership of their lives in today's world. This is a highly commendable effort likely to succeed in developing in students the ability to take ownership in creating a vision of their future.

In terms of social cooperation and contribution, a range of activities are vigorously implemented by various centers under the leadership of the Social Liaison Center. The Liaison Action Center (MG-LAC), in particular, designs and assists voluntary project-type learning programs conducted in cooperation with the local community. The program is a remarkable initiative that has contributed to the recovery and revitalization of the local community over an extended period of time.

There are a number of issues the University needs to address, however. The degree award policy of some graduate school courses does not contain student learning outcomes appropriate for the degree offered. The efforts to ensure the course workloads align with the credit hour definition are insufficient, and a few undergraduate and graduate schools have issues with their enrollment management. Furthermore, the

graduate schools fail to implement their own faculty development (FD) programs. These issues should be addressed.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), the process for universities to assure the quality of their education, research, and other activities, is an element of the review that JUAA considers the most crucial. While the University has an organization responsible for implementing self-study, the Self-Monitoring Committee, it has no documented IQA policy or procedures in place. Also, although the Miyagi Gakuin Women's University Self-Monitoring and Assessment regulations stipulate that the Self-Study Administration Committee is responsible for identifying the areas that require improvement based on the results of self-study conducted by the undergraduate and graduate schools, reporting its recommendations to the Faculty Council, and undertaking the necessary improvements, in reality the improvements are made in ways that do not conform with these rules. This has led JUAA to conclude that the University lacks an appropriate system to facilitate improvement efforts based on the self-study results in accordance with the rules, and advises that this situation be corrected.

Going forward it is important for the University to address these issues and work on quality assurance for further development of the institution.

Notable Strengths

Educational Program and Outcome

- The University offers “MGU Standard” as a set of liberal arts courses aimed at developing women capable of leading autonomous lives in today’s world. It consists of three course categories: (1) a wide range of courses, such as “Religious Studies and Modern Society,” “Women's Life and Rights,” and “Modern Society and Women,” designed to encourage students to explore their life and future as women; (2) courses to develop skills required for work, including language skills and information processing skills; and (3) career-design courses students can take over four years. MGU Standard was established based on character and liberal arts education reflecting the teachings of Christianity in line with the University’s mission and purpose, and is a highly commendable effort expected to succeed in developing the ability of students to take ownership in creating a vision of their future.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The Liaison Action Center (MG-LAC) is a resource that creates and assists students by providing opportunities to connect with the local community, and supports the student-run community cooperation effort called the “Sanagi Project/Tebirakko Project,” consisting of many types of projects, large and small, designed to help rebuild and revitalize local communities. The Center secures external funding and actively implements regional and international exchange programs as well. It is commendable that these on-going activities are resulting in a growing number of partner organizations and increasing the interest in collaborating with the Center, and more importantly, the achievement of the University’s mission of developing women who can take ownership of their lives in today’s world.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Outcome

- The degree award policies of the courses of English, Japanese Literature, and Cultural Studies of the Graduate School of the Humanities and Cultural Sciences do not state the expected learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies appropriate for the degrees conferred in each course. The descriptions of the relationship between the general and specialized education in the degree award policies and the curriculum design and implementation policies of the undergraduate and graduate school are not fully consistent with those in the university-wide degree award policies and curriculum design and implementation policies. These issues should be addressed.
- There are some inconsistencies in the graduate school syllabus, indicating the checks by the Academic Affairs Committee are inadequate. This issue should be addressed.
- To ensure that course workloads align with the credit hour definition, the University sets a cap on the number of credits for which a student can register in a year. This measure is not effective because of exceptions made for the certification or license preparation courses, and in fact a significant number of students exceed the credit limit. The pre- and post-class studies required in the syllabus are not sufficient to ensure that the workload merits the credits earned. This issue should be addressed in

light of the purpose of the credit system.

- TOEIC scores, assessment test results, and thesis evaluation results are used as criteria to determine the student learning outcomes in some of the undergraduate and graduate schools, but the achievement of the learning outcomes established in the degree award policy are not fully measured and assessed pending the development of the criteria. This issue should be addressed.

Student Enrollment

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.34 in the Graduate School of Humanities and Cultural Sciences. Graduate school enrollment should be managed more effectively.

Faculty and Faculty Organizations

- The Graduate School should implement its own FD programs in an appropriate manner.

Education and Research Environment

- The Graduate School's efforts to instill research ethics in students are insufficient and should be improved.

University Administration and Finances

- The decision-making process in university administration is not always clear due to discrepancies between the rules and actual practices in terms of the positioning, responsibilities, and authority of the key positions (e.g. deans) and meeting bodies that include the Sanyaku Meeting, President's Liaison Meeting, and President's Strategy Office. The University should define a clear administration policy and establish rules for the administrative organizations to demonstrate appropriateness and transparency in organizational management, and ensure that each organization performs its duties responsibly.

Recommendations

Internal Quality Assurance

- Although there is an organization responsible for overseeing the self-study of the entire institution, there is no documented internal quality assurance (IQA) policy or procedure, and in particular, the authority and responsibilities of each organization in implementing improvement measures based on the self-study results are unclear. Miyagi Gakuin Women's University Self-Study Rules stipulate that the Self-Study Administration Committee identifies the areas that require improvement based on the results of self-study conducted by the undergraduate and graduate schools, reports its recommendations to the Faculty Council, and undertakes the necessary improvements, but in reality the improvements are made in ways that do not conform with these rules. Moreover, the improvement measures have so many issues from an educational standpoint that it is difficult to conclude they reflect the self-study results appropriately. Going forward the University must define the authority and responsibilities of the IQA organizations, ensure that the self-study practices are relevant, and create a system capable of assisting the improvement measures based on the self-study results.

Student Enrollment

- In both the Department of Cultural Studies and the Department of Music, Faculty of Liberal Arts, the average ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap over the past five years are low at 0.74 and 0.73, respectively, and the ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are also low at 0.73 and 0.79, respectively. Undergraduate enrollment must be managed more effectively.