

**Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for
Professional Graduate Business School**

The Department of Regional Management,
Graduate School of Management,
Kagawa University



Basic Information of the Institution	
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The Department of Regional Management (hereafter, the DRM) in the Graduate School of Management at Kagawa University sets unique purposes. Such purposes are: to cultivate “through education and research that contribute to regional revitalization” talented persons who “possess high ethics and the ability to deal with managements and regional policies”; and to foster professionals who can carve out a new age of the region, including business leaders in corporations, public officials with expertise in government, and regional producers who can vitalize regional resources. These unique purposes fit the general purpose of establishing a program for professional business degrees. At the same time, the DRM differentiates itself from other professional business schools with the purpose of “cultivating professionals who can carve a new age for the region,” as many others set their chief purpose as fostering professionals and specialists in the area of business management.

In order to achieve the above purposes, the DRM has introduced a student recruitment system through which municipal governments and regional businesses nominate prospective students. Even though the market for business schools is not big, the DRM meets the enrollment capacity every year. This is the fruit of the DRM’s efforts for student recruitment.

In terms of curriculum organization, it is commendable that the DRM sets subject matter that makes the most of its unique characteristics. That is, it makes sure that the students take classes in a phased manner by offering groups of subjects, including “Basic Analytical Subject Group,” “Basic Regional Subject Group,” “Basic Subject Group,” “Applied Subject Group,” and “Project Seminars.” Specifically, the DRM has been effective in its efforts for fostering highly specialized professionals who are rooted in the region by establishing three classes in the Regional Basic Subject Group: “Economic Situation of Shikoku: Regional Revitalization and Business Managements,” “Economic Situation of Shikoku: Regional Revitalization and Policies,” and “Economic Situation of Shikoku: Regional Revitalization and Resources”). Moreover, in other subjects, it has made efforts for inviting lecturers with expertise in each subject from organizations outside the university.

In terms of improving and reforming teaching methods, it is commendable that the DRM has taken the following initiatives. The DRM conducts a survey asking students to evaluate classes and shares the results with all the faculty members through faculty development meetings. As a result, members of the faculty together raise concerns about not only their own but also each other’s teaching and deliberate on measures to improve teaching. That is, faculty development activities operate effectively within the DRM.

Furthermore, it is highly commendable that the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle functions well institutionally and educationally. For example, to better understand the evaluations and activities of graduates, the DRM has sent staff members regularly to places where students are employed and conducted surveys to ask graduates about their satisfaction rates. These means offer the opportunities not only to recognize the graduates’ assessments of the program to find the problems but also to serve as an effective vehicle to help recruit prospective students. That is, the PDCA cycle is working.

Having mentioned the above strengths, Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) must point out some issues that the DRM needs to address to achieve its unique purposes. First, the number of credits required for program completion is thirty-two, which meets the statutory requirement. However, it is necessary that the DRM reconsider whether this number is sufficient given that its diploma policy states that the program's purpose is "to cultivate an 'integrated ability' to plan, pursue, and present."

In addition, although it is not required that students participate in extra-curricular activities such as planning and running symposiums and camps, many students actually participate in such activities. That is, the students' learning goes beyond that of the thirty-two required credits, if their extra-curricular activities are counted. However, the requirement for program completion does not assure that students can acquire knowledge and skills worth more than thirty-two credits. So it is necessary that the DRM devises some measure to address this issue in terms of curriculum organization, including making extra-curricular activities part of official credits and increasing the number of required credits for program completion.

Second, in the curriculum, the DRM defines subjects such as "Project Seminars" and "Project Research" as the only required subjects, and others as electives. Thus, it cannot be said that the DRM ensures that the students are given sufficient opportunities to acquire the specialized knowledge (i.e., strategy, organization, marketing, finance, and accounting) that is needed for the management of businesses and other organizations, even though to allow students to acquire such knowledge is the basic mission of professional business schools. Moreover, it is possible that, in other classes, students are not equipped with the necessary prerequisite knowledge. Thus, it is necessary to arrange the curriculum in systematic and organic ways.

In addition, in such a curriculum organization, faculty members' role as academic advisors (AA) becomes critical in assisting students' as they choose their elective subjects. For that purpose, in addition to the quality of individual faculty members, it is expected that the faculty members as a whole will share the understanding of their role and the instructional content of classes, and that they will join forces to create a course work guidance system and make it function.

Furthermore, the DRM projects three images of talented persons it cultivates—business leaders in corporations, public officials with expertise in government, and regional producers who utilize and vitalize regional resources. However, in terms of coursework models, only two models have been created—one for the business management and accounting, and the other for public policy management. It is, therefore, expected that the DRM will consider a diversification of its coursework models to help students elect courses for their chosen program completion.

As stated at the beginning, it is the strength of the program "to foster professionals who can open a new era of the region" focusing on the region of Shikoku. JUAA expects that the DRM will further this strength, while devising means to organize the curriculum and to advise students in terms of their coursework in a systematic manner, in order to carry out the basic mission of a professional business school. It hopes that the DRM will develop itself more and more in the future.