

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

**Graduate School of Social Sciences,  
Department of Professional Business, University of Hyogo**



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Hyogo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2029)	

## **Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the Graduate School of Social Sciences, Department of Professional Business, University of Hyogo**

The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Department of Professional Business, University of Hyogo, also known as the Graduate School of Business, has the unique purpose of “nurturing business management professionals with high professional ethics and expertise, the critical thinking skills and judgment to adapt to changing social conditions, and the abilities to lead such organizations as companies, medical institutions, and care providers through systematic business management training.” The Graduate School of Business operates with the basic mission to “contribute to community development through cultivating business management professionals who act as a bridge between local communities and the world and practice social innovation.” With the aim of training “(a) Business operators and public sector employees who help drive regional businesses, (b) Small and medium-sized enterprise consultants with the ability to develop business management solutions for local companies based on advanced management theories, and (c) Business management professionals with strong professional ethics, an international perspective, and the skills to manage medical and care provider organizations,” the Graduate School is implementing its annual action plan as follows: “The Graduate School of Business will revamp its curriculum to focus on developing business management professionals for various fields in local communities and deliver distinctive recurrent education programs for the post-pandemic era, such as the online and in-person program drawing on the Graduate School’s knowledge and experience tentatively called the Short-Term Intensive MBA Program. This action plan is based on the AY2019-AY2025 Hyogo University Second Medium-Term Plan’s vision to “expand the recurrent education programs to provide opportunities for working adults to pursue graduate school studies.”

The Graduate School’s goals and objectives, whether they are comprehensive, brief, or otherwise, clearly emphasize helping to address local challenges through collaborations with local communities, and the objective of developing skilled business management professionals, in particular, is designed to attain and maintain specific professional qualifications. These goals and objectives are suitable for defining measurable success indicators, such as qualifications attained and research outputs made by students, and are easy for everyone to understand, including parties outside the Graduate School.

The Graduate School offers a curriculum consisting of basic economic theory

subjects and field-study and other practice-based subjects, with courses designed for students to take either sequentially or concurrently. Many courses are structured in a way that ensures students learn how to draw up solution proposals for issues concerning local companies, medical institutions, and care providers, and for challenges faced by local communities based on field research, analyses, diagnoses and discussions; students acquire the skills to create and present reports and proposals developed through various collaborative activities, even in courses outside the practice-based subject category. Furthermore, the curriculum offers many recurrent education and other field-oriented programs in collaboration with companies, medical institutions, and care providers as part of the Graduate School's Human Resource Development and Education and Research Project, with the regular MBA Program's flagship course, "Leadership in Practice I and II," being one such example. The rich lineup of practice-based courses is expected to further contribute towards the Graduate School's goals and objectives. A highly commendable effort of the Graduate School is the establishment and effective operation of the Industry-Academic-Government Human Resources Innovation Promotion Council, a competent body of local stakeholders that facilitates the Graduate School's smooth collaboration with businesses for such purposes as sourcing hosts for field studies or the management consulting internship program and organizing collaborative courses and seminars. Furthermore, several of the Graduate School's full-time faculty members also teach doctoral-level seminars and courses of the Department of Economics in the Graduate School of Social Sciences. This arrangement motivates students in the Department of Professional Business to consider pursuing a doctoral degree in the Department of Economics after completing their master's studies, and in fact many students have consistently chosen to do so. Providing an appealing post-graduation option as part of the efforts to produce competent business management professionals with research skills is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Graduate School.

There are several areas of improvement the Graduate School should address, however. First, the Graduate School has yet to establish a written version of its vision and strategy, even though faculty and staff members agree that the Graduate School should articulate a clear vision and strategy consistent with the overriding mission and purpose of the University of Hyogo. The lack of guiding statements has not compromised the Graduate School's operation so far, but from the standpoint of sustaining the Graduate School into the future and ensuring that its direction is understood by everyone concerned, work on formulating vision and strategy statements should begin as soon as possible. The second area of improvement concerns the education programs. The information provided in the syllabus varies from course to course, and the Graduate School is advised to

establish and implement a mechanism that ensures the syllabus contents are up to standard across all courses. As for grade review and appeal, the current policy requires that students with grading questions raise the issue first with their course teachers, but there may be cases where a student hesitates to approach a teacher directly. A mechanism should be put in place to allow students to file an appeal with the department without having to contact the class teacher. The Graduate School also excludes seminar courses from the course evaluation surveys. To improve the quality of instruction and collect student feedback, the Graduate School is advised to consider administering surveys for all courses, including seminars, after taking the necessary steps to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Faculty organization is the third area of improvement. The Graduate School should keep track of discussions pertaining to its basic policy on faculty composition and the overall design of the faculty organization, starting with the compilation of past meeting notes on these topics. As for the faculty's age profile, the Graduate School needs to examine and improve the demographic diversity of its faculty. Efforts should also be made to diversify the faculty in terms of gender and international experience through strategic recruiting and training when replacing outgoing teachers. Finally, the information submitted by the Graduate School fails to clearly show how research is contributing to teaching. The Graduate School is advised to revisit its past discussions about how research should be tied to education and express the outcomes in written form as well as encourage its faculty members to engage in research projects continuously by providing systematic support.

Going forward, the Graduate School is advised to utilize the results of this certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business schools and continue its self-study efforts for improvement, while assuring and enhancing the quality of its education program and further developing its unique characteristics.