

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

Iwate Medical University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Iwate, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2020	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.1.2021 – March.31.2028)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Iwate Medical University

Overview

Iwate Medical University originated from a medical training center, a midwifery nurse training school, and a hospital, and was founded in 1897, based on the founding spirit of “Be a sincere person first, then a medical professional”. While taking charge of regional medical care, it has developed as a comprehensive medical university following World War II. In 2007, the University moved from Morioka to Yahaba, and then in 2019, the University hospitals other than dentistry also moved to Yahaba. The new Yahaba campus has all the faculties and graduate schools housed in one school building in accordance with the basic concept of “education and research in all four faculties” related to an environment for education and research, in turn based on the idea of medical practice through multidisciplinary collaboration and cooperation where the University has realized an environment for education and research.

After receiving the previous University Accreditation, the results of a national survey on the selection of new students by MEXT in 2018 revealed serious problems related to the School of Medicine. The findings of a survey conducted by the Association in response to this indicated (1) the fair and appropriate selection of new students with respect to “enrollment” in line with the admission policy was not put into practice (2) regarding “administration,” the governance related to enrollment did not function sufficiently, and (3) checks and reviews were not appropriately conducted. Due to (1), (2) and (3), the awarding accreditation for the University Accreditation Results carried out in 2013 was modified to non-compliant in January of 2020. However, after the problem of new student selection became clear, the University took prompt action for making improvements, and the entrance examination for the 2019 academic year was conducted in the proper manner.

In addition, in response to the fact that the problems in the selection of new students in 2018 were not clarified by the checks and reviews done so far, the internal quality assurance system was drastically reformed. Under the new system, the University is restructuring an organization that inspects and evaluates various activities within the University, including entrance examinations, under the “University Check and Review Committee”, which is a university-wide organization for checks and reviews. The University is constructing a system to improve education in cooperation with the Education Operations Board, which is the highest executive body. From here on, under

the newly established system, the University will be required to promote checks and reviews as well as the improvement of education based on those results. In addition, appropriate improvements have also been made in administration, and all the serious problems that resulted in noncompliance have been improved on the whole.

Regarding educational activities, based on the fundamental mission of aiming for “comprehensive community medical care for people who excel,” students from each faculty who work on multidisciplinary collaborations in the future learn while interacting with each other as the University provides a common liberal arts education that makes the best use of the characteristics of a medical university. In terms of specialized education as well, the University is in the process of formulating multidisciplinary education. Regarding the ascertainment of learning outcomes, the School of Medicine has determined graduation competencies that indicate a connection with the degree award policy (diploma policy), constructed an educational program to achieve educational outcomes based on this, and used a roadmap to ascertain the details. However, the undergraduate and graduate divisions other than the School of Medicine do not fully comprehend the learning outcomes indicated in the degree award policy.

As an educational and research environment, the new Yahaba campus does not have individual teaching practice or research buildings for each faculty, but rather integrated teaching practice and research buildings that allow students and faculty members to interact across faculties which makes for an outstanding environment. A consistent cross-departmental education and clinical training environment as well as a cross-faculty research environment have been established, and this can be positively evaluated from the fact that results from multidisciplinary collaborative activities can be expected.

Issues that need to be improved include faculties that do not have sufficient measures to substantiate credits, and some faculties that have many students repeating a year. Therefore, as a form of practicing quality assurance, it is desirable to enhance education and strengthen student support after conducting checks and reviews. In addition, some graduate schools do not clearly indicate their research supervision methods and schedules to students, and do not sufficiently specify information on degree assessments, so urgent action is required. In addition, there are apparent problems with quota management for faculties and some graduate schools.

Although the cause behind the problem of enrollment selection in AY 2018 has been examined and improved, in order to gain the trust of medicine and medical education in society and achieve the human resource development that the University aims for, it is necessary to ensure that the newly constructed internal quality assurance system functions

correctly.

Notable Strengths

Education and Research Environment

- The Yahaba Campus, which was relocated in 2019, does not have a teaching practice or research building for each faculty, but instead has integrated teaching practice and research buildings creating an environment that enables faculty and staff to interact with each other more easily across faculties. In addition, the student dormitory on the same campus has a shared space with a certain number of rooms as a unit, and each unit has a lounge that can be used as a space for student learning. By adopting a system in which all of the freshmen students from the School of Medicine and applying students from the School of Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Nursing are mixed together in the dormitory, this dormitory life gives rise to group learning that exceeds individual faculties. The creation of an environment that promotes learning and exchanges across faculties throughout student life as a whole - including dormitory life - as well as education and research, can be expected to produce results for smooth multidisciplinary collaboration activities. This can be commended as an initiative based on the activity policy that aims to develop human resources with excellent collaborative skills.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In the Doctoral Course of the Graduate School of Medical Science, although the dissertation is required to be a paper published in a peer-reviewed journal, it is a problem that only a student submitting the thesis in English can defer this requirement and their thesis is reviewed as a Doctoral candidate. Furthermore, on account of this, some students withdraw from the University without completing the dissertation examination while enrolled, and after confirming that the dissertation was published in a peer-reviewed journal, the Doctoral Degree of the course is conferred regardless of said students not being enrolled, therefore improvement is required.

- In the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, the maximum number of credits that can be registered in one year is as high as over 50 credits depending on the grade, and as a result, a significant number of students actually register for large numbers of credits. Although efforts are being made to describe the pre-learning time and content in the syllabus, more than half of the students lack sufficient time for class preparation and review according to the questionnaire survey conducted by The Institute for the promotion of Higher Education. Since measures to substantiate the credits are insufficient, improvement is required in light of the purpose of the credit system.
- In the Schools of Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Nursing, the relationship between the method of ascertaining various learning outcomes and the degree award policy is unclear, and the learning outcomes indicated in the degree award policy are insufficiently ascertained. In addition, at each graduate school, the method of ascertaining the learning outcomes indicated in the degree award policy based on the status of subject acquisition is unclear, as is the relationship between the degree award policy and the dissertation examination criteria. Thus, improvement is required because the learning outcomes shown in the degree award policy are not properly ascertained.
- Since the Graduate Schools of Medical Science and Pharmaceutical Sciences do not formulate examination criteria for dissertations for each course, improvements are required to determine and make them public for each course.
- Since the number of students repeating a year and those postponing graduation is commonly large throughout the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy, and the passing status of the national examination is insufficient, further checks and reviews regarding the curriculum, its content and methods must be carried out while efforts are required for realizing improvements and enhancements.

Student Enrollment

- The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.35 for the Master's Course in the Graduate School of Medical Science and 0.17 for the Master's Course in the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Therefore, the University should significantly improve graduate school quota management.

Recommendations

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Graduate School of Medical Science Master's Course has not set forth research supervision methods and schedules in the form of a research supervision plan. These should be established and clearly presented to students in advance.

Student Enrollment

- In the last five years, the average of ratios of freshman enrollment to the freshman enrollment cap, in accordance with the common consent of the Japanese Association of Private Dental Schools, has seen the enrollment quota reduced and the number of students being recruited with fixed numbers is low at 0.89 for the School of Dentistry and 0.68 for the School of Pharmacy. The ratio of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap is high at 1.05 in the School of Medicine and low at 0.77 in the School of Pharmacy. Therefore, the University should thoroughly implement faculty quota management to improve the situation.