

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

Graduate Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Niigata, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2015	
Accreditation Status: Accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016 – March.31.2021)	

## **Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the Graduate Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies**

The Graduate Course of Entrepreneurship, Professional Degree Program (hereafter, the Program) in the Graduate Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, was established to train “practitioners of entrepreneurial creation” to start new businesses or entrepreneurial creative activities within an existing organization. It intends to train entrepreneurs who can initiate local development in the Niigata region while responding to the global economy.

Niigata City, where the program is located, has been designated as the National Strategic Special Zone for agriculture and employment, and this region is expected to develop independent economic structures based on its particular local features. Therefore, it is commendable that the Program has social significance as a professional graduate school specifically related to training entrepreneurs based in the Niigata region. For example, in order to respond to the social demands for training persons of talent, adult students are able to pursue an MBA while they work and training is offered for entrepreneurs who plan to develop the local economy. These are notable strengths that are in line with the purpose of the Institute.

It is commendable that the Program has made special efforts to demonstrate its active contribution to the development of the local economy. For example, the Program set up the Niigata Institute of Regional Revitalization in order to apply research results to the local community and pursue joint projects with local industries and local governments. A full-time faculty member participates in research activities as the head researcher, and publishes the results in open lectures, trial experience lectures, and seminars. It is also commendable that the Program gives thoughtful attention to inclusivity by admitting many international students of diverse cultural backgrounds and having them work together with Japanese students in seminars.

The Program has made various efforts to attain better education and research based on the recommendations of the previous Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. This time, Japan University Accreditation Association (hereafter, JUAA) noted that the Program closed its Tokyo campus and concentrated its resources in Niigata, established the Niigata Institute of Regional Revitalization, and produced actual results by acquiring students sent by local companies and building strong ties with local businesses. Also, activities such as setting up an advisory committee consisting of outside experts and seeking opinions from broad perspectives in order to improve the Program produced good results.

Although the Program has steadily improved since the previous accreditation, it still needs to make further improvements. The following five points are important considerations.

First, with regard to research experience among full-time faculty, some faculty members have few research records in their area of specialization. This requires improvement, because to provide good education the faculty needs to produce research of high quality. This point is related to the regulation and standard of recruitment, appointment, and promotion of faculty members and the Program needs to reconsider these.

The second issue, which is related to the first one, is to consider the introduction of sabbatical leave to improve the research environment for faculty. While the limitation to sabbatical leave imposed by the limited number of full-time faculty members is understandable, it might be possible to introduce at least a half-year sabbatical leave by figuring out practical ways to handle a faculty member’s absence.

The third point concerns the student enrollment. While the selection process consists of faculty members interviewing the applicants, consulting the assessments of their proposed research topics, and assessing a writing examination, in reality, every year

most of the applicants are admitted. To maintain the educational quality and standard appropriate for the purpose of the Program, it is important to secure high quality applicants. The Program is expected to consider examining basic academic ability and testing for Japanese language proficiency among international applicants.

The fourth point concerns business-related databases. Although most of the information necessary for the creation of business plans is prepared in the Program, the Program does not offer the financial and macroeconomic databases necessary for the analysis of financial relations. The Program should consider acquiring additional databases.

The fifth point concerns carelessness in the accreditation procedure. Several errors and mistakes are found in the self-study report and the written replies to questions asked in the field audit submitted for this accreditation. Also, the tabulated totals of the Inquiry to students who completed the Program (conducted in 2014) have serious errors in the responses. Therefore, it is inevitable to point out that the self-study was conducted based on the inappropriate data, and will require careful handling in the future.

It is noted that the Program has made significant efforts to improve the shortcomings of its education and management pointed out in the previous accreditation review by JUAA. However, many of its efforts began in 2014, and it will take a few more years to verify the results. Thus, the Program should continue these efforts in the future.