

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

Iwate Prefectural University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Iwate, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Iwate Prefectural University

Overview

Iwate Prefectural University, founded on the spirit of “In hopes of creating a new era of harmony among men, nature and science, we provide an education that fosters independence, knowledge and highly specialized skills which contribute to the enrichment of humanity and society,” sets forth the University’s Basic Direction comprised of five elements that include “rich knowledge and the spirit of respect for people,” “distinctive education and research with an emphasis on interdisciplinary fields,” “education and research focusing on practical studies and practices,” “social contribution,” and “international contribution.” In response to the administrative goals set over a six-year period from AY2017 to AY2022 by the Iwate Prefectural Government, which established the school, the University created the Iwate Prefectural University Third Mid-term Plan in AY2017, and has worked to improve the content of its educational programs and research and contribute to society in accordance with the plan. Under the University Evaluation Committee designated as the main body for promoting the Mid-term Plan, the University strives to undertake improvements and enhancements by having the committee confirm and review the progress of the plan developed by the Mid-term Plan Committee, and reflect the results of these activities to ensure that the internal quality assurance system functions effectively.

With respect to internal quality assurance, in AY2021 the University developed the University-wide Internal Quality Assurance, which stipulates the six-year Mid-term Plan as a schoolwide policy for internal quality assurance, and defines the fundamental philosophy, framework, and procedures of internal quality assurance.

Regarding education, in light of the above described founding spirit and the University’s Basic Direction, the University established the university-wide diploma policy that sets out the skills to be developed by the time of graduation as the “common pillars”, and lays out the diploma policies of the individual faculties and graduate schools in line with the schoolwide policy. The University has also organized its curricula based on the curriculum policy and undertaken various creative measures, including a first-year course where students from different faculties learn together. In particular, the Faculty of Software and Information Science has introduced a unique educational program involving a problem-solving

research project support PBL (project based learning) program, where undergraduate and graduate students team up, regardless of grade level, to tackle tasks they set for themselves. Some extracurricular activities have students from different faculties working together in teams to solve problems by making use of their respective specialties. In these ways, the University is aspiring to develop students' self-initiative through educational activities in and out of the curricula.

One outstanding effort is active engagement in social cooperation. For example, at the Iwate Monodukuri and Software Integration Technology Center, the University offers extension courses for local elementary and secondary school students and hosts seminars to improve the technical skills of young engineers and university students, which is highly appreciated by many participants. Furthermore, the University works with the Takizawa IPU Innovation Center to support students in starting new businesses. It is highly commendable that through these activities the University provides students and local residents with various opportunities to learn and grow. The Center for Regional Policy Studies plays the role of a "think tank for the residents of Iwate Prefecture" by publicly soliciting local issues from organizations and companies in the prefecture and designating faculty members to solve selected issues. This is a noteworthy activity that not only returns its research outcomes to the area, but also promotes the outcomes across the local community.

There are several issues the University needs to address, however. With regard to education, the maximum number of credits a student can register in a year is high in the Faculty of Social Welfare, and the actual number of credits registered by students is high. Although the University has taken measures to address this situation, such as requiring students to complete courses prior to taking practical training to acquire qualifications, its efforts are viewed as insufficient, and the University should consider measures to ensure credit substantiation, including a review of the curricula. In the Masters Course of the Graduate School of Nursing, the same examination criteria are used for research on specific themes and for master's theses. The Graduate School of Social Welfare has failed to implement school-specific faculty development (FD) in terms of educational improvements. Under the circumstances, improvements are required by the graduate schools. Some of these issues were also pointed out in the previous certified evaluation and accreditation results. The University should examine the effectiveness and functionality of its internal quality assurance system centered on the University Evaluation Committee, and develop and implement measures to improve the situation by ensuring that the system functions more effectively.

The University has taken various initiatives to take advantage of its characteristics as a public university close to the local community, enhance its education and student support services, and contribute to the local community. It is expected to flourish as a university that contributes to solving regional problems as well as developing the local community.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- At the Iwate Monodukuri and Software Integration Technology Center, the University provides programming classes and ICT courses for local elementary and secondary school students and hosts the Highly Technical Worker Training Session to help young engineers and university students improve their technical skills. These long-standing training efforts have generated outstanding achievements, including a former training participant winning a national competition prize. Furthermore, the University works with the Takizawa IPU Innovation Center to support students in starting new businesses. It is commendable that through these activities the University provides its students and local residents with various opportunities to learn and grow and nurtures persons who will achieve successful careers in the community.
- The Center for Regional Policy Studies publicly solicits local issues from organizations and companies in the prefecture, and starting in AY2017 the center has divided the issues into two groups: “Stage 1: Stage for formulating a plan for finding solutions to issues” and “Stage 2: Research results implementation stage.” The center seeks to enhance the visibility of the classification system in the community and to match local issues with the University’s faculty members. It is commendable that through these activities the University functions as a think tank for the residents of Iwate Prefecture, returns its research outcomes to the local community, and promotes the outcomes across the local community by implementing them throughout society. These activities are reflected in the University’s efforts to solve local issues based on the research outcomes on community formation in public housing set up after a natural disaster.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- In the Faculty of Social Welfare, the maximum number of credits a student can register in a year is high, and the actual number of credits registered by students is high. As a measure to substantiate credits, other than capping their number, the University requires students to successfully complete certain courses before undertaking practical training to acquire qualifications. This requirement is not viewed as sufficient for substantiating credits, and improvements are necessary in accordance with the purpose of the credit system.
- In the Masters Course of the Graduate School of Nursing, the same examination criteria are used for research on specific themes and for master's theses. A separate set of standards to review research outcomes on specific themes should be developed.

Student Enrollment

- In the Graduate School of Policy Studies, the ratios of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap are low at 0.45 in the Masters Course and 0.22 in the Doctoral Course. These ratios should be improved with graduate school's student quotas thoroughly managed.

Faculty and Faculty Organization

- The Graduate School of Social Welfare has not implemented school-specific faculty development (FD) for educational improvements. This situation should be improved.