

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

University of Niigata Prefecture



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Niigata, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2014	
Accreditation Status: accredited	(Accreditation Period: April.01.2015 – March.31.2022)

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the University of Niigata Prefecture

Overview

The University of Niigata Prefecture (hereafter, the University) was established as an independent public university corporation founded by Niigata Prefecture in 2009, utilizing the campus of the former Niigata Women's College. It states three missions: cultivating international perspectives, valuing regional character, and cultivating humanity. Currently, it has two faculties: the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development and the Faculty of Human Life Studies. It plans to establish the Graduate School of International Studies and Regional Development in 2015, and it is in the process of building a base of research and education to pursue its mission. Its campus is located in Niigata City, Niigata Prefecture, and the University has conducted educational activities that are rooted in the region, while making active efforts to educate talented persons with global perspectives.

Because the University was established in 2009, this is the first accreditation review. Since its establishment, the University has organized a curriculum that reflects regional and international characteristics based on its mission, and implemented its enriched educational content in its liberal arts education, professional education, and research instruction for undergraduate thesis. In particular, it has thoroughly implemented small-size class instruction and developed an educational and instructional system that begins with guidance for registration and continues through the completion of the undergraduate thesis research. This is commendable. In addition, the University has initiated efforts in relation to its mission of "cultivating international perspectives." For example, the University has implemented fully developed language education in collaboration with staff members at the Self Access Learning Center ("SALC"), who are passionate about language education. In relation to the University's other missions of "the valuation of regional character" and "cultivation of humanity," faculty members and students actively participate in volunteer activities. These aspects demonstrate that the University has become an institution that meets the challenges of its mission and purposes.

However, the University has several issues to address. These include the challenges faced in organizing its curriculum by utilizing educational and research resources inherited from the previous junior college, the enrichment of graduate education, and balancing the course load among faculty members. These issues are expected to be addressed urgently. In the future, the University, while receiving the financial and moral support from Niigata Prefecture, is expected to further enhance its accessibility and vitality. This includes the enrichment of facilities and staff members and the extension of open hours for its facilities in order to attain the high level of education and research that befits a university with graduate schools.

Notable Strengths

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has organized a curriculum that allows students to acquire language abilities with English and other languages, and also the rich, cultured knowledge and skills to become persons who thrive in contemporary society. In doing so, it has developed the concept of "multicultural literacy" education at Niigata, the gateway in the Northeast Asian region" and focused on the international character that exists within the local communities of Niigata Prefecture. In particular, the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development offers subjects, such as "International Studies" and "Niigata Studies,"

that embody the University's mission for students to cultivate "glocal" perspectives. In addition, the faculty has the Academic Communicative English (ACE) program in which students take intensive language classes to learn English and the program in which students have the opportunity to professionally study other languages (Chinese, Korean, and Russian) that have close ties with Niigata Prefecture. These unique efforts are commendable.

- It is commendable that the University has implemented small-size class instruction with various educational methods. For example, it has a faculty advisor system in which full-time faculty members advise and guide students from registration through career development consultation. Each faculty member guides four to five students, and listens to the students' needs and desires closely. In addition, the University offers the "EMS Module," a program of small-class size education where students learn educational content through English. This class offers education whereby students actively pursue their learning by having close interaction with instructors. A large number of students, including those core students from the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development, take the module classes and are actively engaged in acquiring language abilities and skills.

Student Support

- It is commendable that the University offers cordial and thorough instruction which meets individual student needs, supports students' active learning of languages, and promotes university-wide language education and language learning support. In particular, the University has established the "Self Access Learning Center (SALC)," and assigned "English mentors" there who specialize in the English language. Most notably, the English mentors offer detailed advice concerning various language ability tests and study abroad programs and destinations in response to individual student needs. The students trust and have high regard for the mentors, and, as a result, a large number of students use the Center.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- It is commendable that the University, through its mission "to value regional character," promotes wide-ranging, diverse social contribution activities and interactions with the local communities. The University sets clear policies concerning "cooperation and collaboration with the local community and society" and "promotion of industry-academia-government collaboration" in its mid-term objectives and plans. Following these policies, the University has taken initiatives to revitalize local business districts, to participate in local events and projects, to offer educational support for children of low-income families, and to assist in activities conducted and organized by handicapped persons. Many students actively take part as volunteers in these activities and play central roles in projects and events.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- In regards to the descriptions of policies both on degree award and curriculum design in the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development and in the Faculty of Human Life Studies, there are some differences between those on the web and those written in some printed materials such as the "Student Handbook

and Course Taking Guides.” This should be improved.

- The maximum number of credits students can register for per year has not been set in the Department of International Studies and Regional Development in the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development or in the Department of Child Studies in the Faculty of Human Life Studies. This situation should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having a credit system.
- In the Faculty of International Studies and Regional Development and in the Faculty of Human Life Studies, some classes do not clearly stipulate the criteria for assessing academic achievement in the syllabi. This should be improved.

Education and Research Environment

- Course loads per year for full-time faculty members are not equal among faculty members. Some faculty members take more teaching responsibilities. This should be improved.
- The campus buildings and some of the facilities for research and education are too old to be used in their current condition. Their condition should be improved so that there will be no hindrances in education, research and learning. Moreover, the University as a whole sets a limit on the use of the campus on weekends and there are shortages in facilities and spaces for extra-curricular activities. These have become a factor hindering students’ learning, social contributions, and extra-curricular activities. This situation should be improved.