

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

University of Kochi



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Public	Location: Kochi, 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 the University of Kochi

Overview

The University of Kochi defines its educational principles as “conducting academic research leading to the creation of knowledge with the aim of developing a peaceful society, improving people’s quality of life while contributing to the development of local cultures, and enhancing health and welfare through community-oriented education and research.” The University also sets forth the mission of promoting educational reforms, upgrading academic research, and strengthening social cooperation activities while conducting assessment activities, with its administration based on “respecting diversity,” “strengthening cooperation,” and “taking on strategic challenges.” To achieve these principles and mission, the University has been conducting educational and research activities under the Second Mid-term Plan of Kochi Prefectural Public University Corporation during the six-year period from FY2017, with the aim of educating students on how to identify and resolve community challenges using specialized knowledge based on the principle of “Community-University Partnership.”

Regarding the University’s internal quality assurance, the Self-Study Steering Committee is positioned as a university-wide organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance. From a university-wide perspective, the committee assesses the results of faculty peer evaluations as well as annual self-studies (annual reviews) by faculties, graduate schools, centers, and committees, with the assessment results reported to the Education and Research Council and improvements and enhancements undertaken in line with the University’s decision-making process. The University also uses the results of corporate and university institutional evaluations in a continuous pursuit of better quality assurance. When the self-study results indicate the need for university-wide improvements, the University Education Reform Committee takes swift action by launching projects under the president’s leadership and presenting proposals to the faculties and graduate schools.

As for the University’s education, the curricula are systematically designed with subjects appropriately arranged for each degree program based on the curriculum policy established and linked to the diploma policy. To monitor and evaluate student learning outcomes, the University carries out achievement surveys linked to the diploma policy and learning outcomes, and creates a curriculum map to

check the outcomes through practical training and seminar subject grades. A rubric has also been introduced to evaluate graduation theses and dissertations to assess students' acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Regarding the University's graduate school education, all master's programs accept research outcomes on specific themes in place of master's theses, but the screening criteria are the same as those for the master's theses. This situation should be corrected with the screening criteria for specific-themed research clearly defined. In terms of credit validity, the undergraduate programs allow students to register for credits exceeding the upper limit when taking subjects for acquiring qualifications, resulting in a credit overload for many students in certain faculties and fiscal years. With credit guidance insufficiently provided for students wishing to acquire qualifications, appropriate measures should be taken to ensure students have sufficient study hours for their credits.

The University undertakes the Community University Project – “Risshishachu” to implement the principle of “Community-University Partnership” in line with its medium-term plan. Specifically, the project calls for student groups to promote and revitalize local cultures and address community challenges. Selected teams are provided with financial support and advice as well as skills development sessions aimed at encouraging student independence. It is highly commendable that students' self-directed learning is enhanced through this extracurricular activity. It is also notable as a distinctive initiative with the University utilizing its resources to help address issues involving healthcare and nursing care in the community, with its faculty and staff working together to build a base for securing and dispatching visiting nurses to areas in Kochi Prefecture lacking in-home nursing care providers.

It is important for the University to continue its efforts to develop human resources who can play active roles in the community and offer solutions to community challenges, while constantly reviewing the outcomes of its activities, making improvements, and widely disseminating its activities and outcomes to the public. The University is therefore expected to strengthen its internal quality assurance structure and system, further enhance its education under the president's leadership, and work to promote high-quality research.

Notable Strengths

Student Support

- The Community Center for the Advancement of Education and Research organizes the Community University Project–“Risshishachu” as an extracurricular activity calling for student groups to promote and revitalize local cultures and address community challenges. Selected teams are provided with financial support, skills development sessions, and consultation and advice from faculty and staff members. The program attracts many applicants, and participating students are working actively in various areas in Kochi Prefecture. It is commendable that the project helps students build independence and acquire planning skills, thereby enhancing their self-directed learning.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The University’s faculty and staff work together to offer the Kochi Prefecture Home-Visit Nurses Training Course for Semi-Mountainous Areas with the aim of securing, training, and maintaining the necessary human resources for in-home nursing services in the prefecture’s mountainous areas. Specifically, the course provides introductory training based on a systematic curriculum originally designed to teach the necessary in-home nursing knowledge and practical skills. These approaches not only increase the number of home care nurses and nursing stations, but also open up new career paths by providing the opportunity for new graduates to work as home care nurses. It is commendable that this initiative contributes to addressing healthcare, nursing, and welfare issues in the community.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- Students are allowed to register for credits exceeding the upper limit when taking subjects for acquiring qualifications, resulting in a credit overload for a significant number of first- and second-year students in the Faculty of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Social Welfare, and Faculty of Nutrition in certain fiscal years. Credit guidance such as orientation is provided for students wishing to acquire qualifications, but these measures are insufficient to ensure credit validity. This issue should be addressed in light of the purpose of the credit system.

Recommendation

Educational Program and Learning Outcomes

- The Master's Program of the Graduate School of Nursing and the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Human Life Sciences accept research outcomes on specific themes in place of master's theses in accordance with the graduate school regulations, but they only stipulate the screening criteria for the master's theses. This situation should be corrected with screening criteria established for specific-themed research outcomes.