University Accreditation Results

(Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for university)

The Graduate School of Project Design

Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2017 Accreditation Status: accredited　（Accreditation Period: April.01.2018 – March.31.2025）	

**Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for
the Graduate School of Project Design**

Overview

The Graduate School of Project Design (hereafter, the School) was incorporated in 2012 as a professional graduate school by the Japan Educational Research Group, an educational institution. Founded with the mission to "impart deep knowledge from a broad perspective and develop highly skilled professionals equipped with creative problem-solving abilities through project design research education," the School located in Minato Ward, Tokyo, has one program, that being the School of Project Design. The 2018 review is the first certified evaluation and accreditation of the School conducted by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA).

It should be mentioned that the School of Project Design underwent JUAA's certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business schools in 2016, and that the latest review was conducted in accordance with the university accreditation (institutional accreditation) criteria focusing on the improvements made over the past two years.

In response to the results of the 2016 review, the School's General Affairs Committee, Steering Committee, and other relevant bodies have made concerted efforts to drive improvements under the leadership of the board of directors. One such improvement is the introduction of services that accommodate the needs of the School's largely working-adult student body. Previously, for example, it was left to individual teachers to provide make-ups for absent students, but now students are able to view online video recordings of the lessons they miss.

The "Project Research" program carried out by the affiliated research institute is a distinctive feature of the School. The initiative solicits a variety of research proposals, accumulates data on company case studies, and uses the data in collaboration with local governments and companies to develop business professionals and local innovation leaders. The project research program's contribution to revitalization of the local community is worthy of recognition.

As for areas of improvement, problems with some of the syllabuses, which were found to be lacking in detail and clarity during the certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business school, have not been fully addressed. Other issues that require improvement are the degree completion assessment

performed using criteria not stipulated in the "Degree Completion Review Committee Regulations" and the lack of evaluation criteria for the "Project Design Plan," a research project deliverable. The School is also advised to revise its procedures for administering the second round of the entrance exam (the written exam) as they could give rise to questions regarding fairness, and to consider staffing the library with full-time specialists.

The School's fundamental challenge is to develop a clear definition of the concept of "project design," which is a distinguishing feature of the institute, and establish it as a distinct field of study. This point was raised during the certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate business schools. This issue is under discussion by the Steering Committee and JUAA looks forward to seeing the outcome of their efforts.

The School is advised to revise its regulations and/or their implementation, as discrepancies were observed between the written rules and actual practice. In future, the Self-Study Committee is expected to carry out appropriate self-study and take necessary steps based on its findings to drive further improvement.

Notable Strengths

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The School implements the social contribution program guided by the mission to "develop leaders in the field of project design" in collaboration with the city of Iida, Nagano Prefecture. The School invites local working adults to apply to participate in its program as "project researchers," and sends its faculty members to Iida to conduct classes and assist them engage in community revitalization projects or launch new initiatives. The School is commended for returning the benefits of education and research to society through this program and helping to develop local innovation leaders in various fields by offering practical education opportunities in partnership with local governments and private companies.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The School is advised to revise some of the syllabuses found lacking in detail and clarity. For example, some syllabuses do not have a detailed lecture plan and fail to indicate clear grading criteria.

- The School is advised to stipulate in the "Graduate Student Handbook" a clear set of evaluation criteria for the "Project Design Plan," a research project deliverable assigned in seminar classes.

- The Degree Completion Review Committee regulations stipulate that in determining a student's eligibility to graduate, members of the Degree Completion Review Committee first exchange opinions based on a grading table and then independently grade the student; approval to graduate is given only when the student receives a score of 60 or higher out of 100 from all members. In practice, however, the committee merely verifies whether the student has earned the required number of credits for graduation and has passed the examination for the research project on a specified topic. The School is advised to correct the discrepancy between the regulations and practice, which may include revising the regulations, and ensure the degree completion reviews are conducted appropriately.

Enrollment

- The School is advised to revise its procedures for administering the second round of the entrance exam (the written exam), which presently could give rise to questions regarding fairness.

Education and Research Environment

- The School is advised to staff the library with full-time librarians with specialized knowledge.