

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

Otani University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kyoto, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2015	
Accreditation Status: Accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016 – March.31.2023)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Otani University

Overview

Otani University has its roots in a dormitory for students that Higashi Hongan-ji Temple established in 1665, which later became Shinshu University, and then Shinshu Otani University. In 1949, after the new Japanese higher education system was introduced, Otani University (hereafter, the University) was founded as a university in the new system. Since then, the University has established and reorganized faculties, departments, and graduate schools. Currently, it operates as a university with the Faculty of Letters and the Graduate School of Letters. With its two campuses, one located in Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture, and the other located in Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture, it has been carrying out research and educational activities according to its founding mission.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2008, the University has made various efforts for improvements. For example, it has established an Education Advancement Room, which constantly examines educational activities and makes suggestions in order to assure the quality of student learning. It has also reorganized its curriculum to develop four subject groups in the Faculty of Letters and three subject groups in the Graduate School of Letters so that students can achieve the learning outcomes defined by the University's policies on degree award. Moreover, the University has made efforts to enrich learning supports and to create and develop education and research environments. As a result, the University has developed unique characteristics. In particular, it has developed an area that features conveniences for students. In this area, several offices are situated on one floor, including: "Language Study Support Room (Global Square)," a support office for language learning and study abroad programs; "Learning Square (Study Support Room)," an office where individual students can receive support for their learning provided by learning support advisors who are always stationed there; and "Comprehensive Research Room", where assistant professors are always available to offer students learning and research support. In addition, the area is connected by a stairway to the library.

However, the University has several issues to address. In terms of student enrollment, there is a problem with enrollment management. The University has not set the maximum number of credits that students may register for in an academic year. The Graduate School of Letters has difficulties systematically implementing its improvement plans in educational content and methods. Furthermore, the Graduate School of Letters should implement a systematic program of self-study. JUAA hopes that the University will make improvements on these issues.

Notable Strength

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the University has developed a varied and effective way to use facilities to enhance student autonomy and facilitate their interactions with each other. In particular, the University has developed an area in which students can study and conduct research in a convenient manner. To this end, it has placed three offices— "Language Study Support Room (Global Square)," a support office for language learning and study abroad programs; "Learning Square (Study Support Room)," an office where individual students can receive support for their learning provided by learning support advisors who are always stationed; and "Comprehensive Research Room", where assistant professors are always available

to offer students learning and research support. These offices are located on the same floor and are connected by a stairway to the library. In addition, a studio for group works has been created in the “Comprehensive Research Room”.

Suggestions for Improvements

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- The Graduate School of Letters has offered several combined classes that both undergraduate and graduate students can take; however, the educational methods, e.g., assessment methods, have not been clearly differentiated. This should be improved according to the purpose of each degree program respectively.
- The maximum number of credits students can register in a year has been set high at 52 in the Department of Education and Psychology in the Faculty of Letters. It should be improved in accordance with the purpose of having a credit system.
- The Graduate School of Letters has not held a systematic seminar of its own to improve educational content and methods. This should be improved.

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University’s “self-study regulations” refer to the implementation of self-study based on the objectives and action plans set by all units related to education and research. Based on the regulations, the Faculty of Letters and the Administration Office have conducted self-studies every year; however, the Graduate School of Letters has not conducted self-studies. This should be improved. That is, the graduate school should conduct appropriate self-studies and evaluations based on the regulations and should evaluate achievements as they relate to the objectives and action plans from the perspective of the whole university.

Area of Serious Concern

Enrollment

- In the last five years, the average of the ratios of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap is low at 0.67, and the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is also low at 0.60 in the Department of Buddhist Studies in the Faculty of Letters,. This situation must be corrected.