

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

**Otani University**



<b>Basic Information of the Institution</b>	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kyoto, Japan
<b>Accreditation Status</b>	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2030)	

## **Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Otani University**

### **Overview**

Otani University is founded on the philosophy of “providing humane education based on the Buddhist spirit, and widely imparting the outcomes of its research on a range of disciplines related to the humanities.” Based on this philosophy, the University sets forth the purpose of its undergraduate education as “to cultivate good character consonant with the Buddhist spirit, and contribute to a broader global culture by teaching and researching Buddhism and the humanities,” while the graduate school’s purpose is “to contribute to cultural advancement by teaching, researching, and mastering the academic theories and applications of Buddhism and the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism.” The University defines its educational policy in the “Three Mottos,” which are “Fulfill your duties,” “Respect one another,” and “Be true to yourself.” Furthermore, in order to achieve the founding philosophy and purposes, the University has created “Grand Vision 130 (2022-2031)” as its second medium- to long-term plan, and is working to enhance its educational and research activities based on this plan.

With respect to internal quality assurance, the University Administrative Council, the body responsible for the management of teaching and learning, has also served as the university-wide internal quality assurance promotion organization since AY2020. It is commendable that the University is making efforts to link the individual PDCA cycles to the university as a whole. Moreover, the University has continued to enhance its internal quality assurance by regularly conducting self-studies on the appropriateness of the internal quality assurance system, making use of the self-study results for improvements, and establishing the Institutional Research Office(IR Office).

Regarding education, the University has designed its substantial curricula by offering “The Study of Being Human” as a university-wide common subject intended to encourage student contemplation of human beings in light of the fundamentals of the thought of the Buddha and Shinran that are directly connected to its founding philosophy, and appropriately organized groups of specialized subjects that coalesce the expertise of each faculty. The University also holds the FD Workshops on syllabus development, makes good use of the Student Evaluation Surveys, and seeks better ways to write syllabuses so as to encourage students’

independent learning. In addition, the University caps the number of credits a student can register in a year to ensure credit validity.

One distinctive effort is the establishment of the Buddhist Education Center in AY2018. With research outcomes accumulated for many years at the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute and other organizations, it is highly commendable that the center is able to play an important role in enhancing the University's education based on its founding philosophy and engage in various educational activities, including reviewing the content of the university-wide common subject "The Study of Being Human I" at the undergraduate level and compiling its own course textbooks. It is also notable that the Community Collaboration Room established in AY2015, working mainly with the Faculty of Sociology, contributes to community revitalization with students participating in projects coordinated with the regular curricula and focused on the specialized areas of the faculties. Going forward, JUAA hopes this effort will further develop into cross-faculty activities with the Community Collaboration Room at the core, and lead to more independent student learning.

There are several issues the University needs to address, however. First, in terms of the skills to be acquired (learning outcomes) by the time of graduation in line with the diploma policy, the Faculty of Letters and the university-wide common subjects share the same learning outcomes. This should be corrected. As the background to this situation, in the transitional period from a single-faculty college (Faculty of Letters) to a university with multiple faculties, the University valued policy consistency from enrollment to graduation on the basis of its founding philosophy. As the University is now reviewing the diploma policy in response to the external assessment results, the review should be completed and efforts made to establish a stronger educational base in accordance with its founding philosophy. In addition, despite the fact that each faculty has its own diploma policy, it cannot be said that the curriculum policy is appropriate for each degree awarded, and for the Master's Course of the Graduate School of Humanities, the diploma policy does not set out the skills to be acquired by the time of graduation. These also require improvements, as does student quota management of the graduate school.

Going forward, JUAA expects the University to progress further by addressing these issues through efforts of the University Administrative Council to improve internal quality assurance and by promoting a number of distinctive efforts based on its founding philosophy.

## **Notable Strengths**

### *Mission and Purpose*

- The Buddhist Education Center applies the outcomes of research on Buddhism built up over many years to provide humane education based on the Buddhist spirit that is the core of the University's philosophy and purpose. The center offers "The Study of Being Human I" as a university-wide common subject for first-year students, and compiles and uses its own unique textbooks. The center also offers subjects that connect the specialized areas of each faculty and Buddhism for second-year students, and organizes a variety of religious events. It is commendable that the University encourages students to deepen their understanding of its founding philosophy by promoting university-wide humane education and curricula.

### *Social Cooperation and Contribution*

- The University works mainly through the Community Collaboration Room with the local government and education board to engage in social contribution activities that take advantage of the faculties' areas of expertise and student participation. For example, the Faculty of Sociology contributes to solving regional issues through the Project to Rediscover Life in the Nakagawa School District, which seeks to revitalize depopulated areas, the Community Media Project, which aims to improve the capacity to transmit local information, and other projects linked to the regular curricula. Such activities are commendable as they are expected to become cross-faculty projects with the Community Collaboration Room playing a central role, and eventually develop into university-wide activities enhancing the independence and planning abilities of students.

## **Suggestions for Improvement**

### *Educational Program and Learning Outcomes*

- The diploma policy at the undergraduate level specifies the skills to be acquired (learning outcomes) by the time of graduation for the university-wide common subjects separately from the courses offered by individual faculties. However,

the learning outcomes required for the Faculty of Letters are same as those for the university-wide common subjects, and the policy does not clearly define the learning outcomes required for attaining a degree. This situation requires improvement. For the Master's Course of the Graduate School of Humanities, which awards multiple degrees, the diploma policy does not set out the skills to be acquired by the time of course completion for each degree. This also requires improvement.

- The curriculum policy for the undergraduate programs offers a broad view of undergraduate curriculum design and implementation, but does not clearly detail the curricula and educational methods of the individual faculties in accordance with the diploma policy. The curriculum policy outlines the curriculum matrix of the university-wide common subjects and those of individual faculties, which demonstrates differences among the faculties, but it cannot be said that it provides a clear curriculum policy for each degree awarded. This situation requires improvement.

#### *Student Enrollment*

- The ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is low at 0.36 in the Master's Course of the Graduate School of Letters (name changed to the Graduate School of Humane Studies in AY2022). This ratio should be improved with the graduate school's student quota thoroughly managed.