

Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Law School

Keio University Law School



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2022	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2028)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Keio University Law School

Keio University Law School (“the Law School”) operates in accordance with Keio University’s founding philosophy, aiming to develop students’ deep knowledge and superior skills required of highly specialized professions in law through education and research of both theory and practice, and strives to produce a wide range of human resources that the legal profession requires in the 21st century through a curriculum grounded in the principles of internationalism, multidisciplinaryism and pioneerism.

Under the concept of “independence and self-respect” advocated by Keio University’s founding father, Yukichi Fukuzawa, the Law School provides legal education by drawing on its history and tradition of creating leaders of the times, and in keeping with the University’s overarching mission of contributing to the betterment of the international community through training competent professionals who can lead the 21st century. To achieve its educational objectives, the Law School implements the following unique strategies.

First, in keeping with the three principles mentioned above, the curriculum provides a broad-based legal education, offering some 150 advanced and applied courses in the eight fields of public law, civil, criminal, social, international, interdisciplinary, basic foreign law, and global studies, including numerous themed exercise and research courses. The Research Paper course, in particular, imparts not simply standard knowledge required of legal practitioners but foundational education to develop lawyers with exceptional, more specialized expertise, namely aspiring scholars of jurisprudence. Advanced Research Paper I and II, writing-skills courses for students considering a career in research, are commendable initiatives that have contributed to the development of skilled legal practitioners and jurisprudence scholars. The Law School also offers a wide variety of externship opportunities to meet student needs and interests, ranging from law firms and government offices to companies and overseas organizations, and many students take part in the externship program. Especially notable are the overseas externships, rare among Japanese law schools. Furthermore, courses such as the Basic Program, Workshop Program, Forum Program, and Themed Exercises taught by practitioner instructors demonstrate the curriculum’s emphasis on small classes and practice. In addition, there are a number of extracurricular learning support programs, for

example, a group-based learning support seminar for first-year students and a learning support seminar for second- and third-year students. Instructed by young alumni lawyers as fixed-term part-time associate professors, the seminars are conducted in collaboration with regular courses to promote the understanding of the regular course content, develop skills in preparing legal documents, and enhance the effectiveness of the graduate program by catering to individual student needs. The Law School also offers a support seminar for its graduates who fail to pass the bar exam. This is an admirable initiative providing follow-up support to graduates as an important responsibility of law schools.

As a result of the strong, broad-based education it provides, the Law School's bar exam success rate is excellent, consistently ranking among the top schools from AY2017 to AY2021.

There are several areas the Law School needs to improve, however, with the first being the grade inquiry process. It is the policy of the Law School that course instructors respond to student questions or concerns about the basis or objectivity of grading during office hours or other prearranged times, but there is no school-wide grade appeal process in place. Considering that course grades are published outside the regular class term, when it is difficult for students to take advantage of office hours, students who raise questions about their grades may be forced to abandon the appeal process. The current grade appeal process is clearly inadequate and needs to be reviewed and improved going forward.

The second area for improvement is the requirements for first-year students to advance to the next level. The Law School waives the grade point average (GPA) and other advancement requirements for a certain score on the Common Achievement Test. The use of test results in determining student advancement should be reviewed.

The third area for improvement concerns the inadequate rules and processes on information disclosure, an issue that requires coordination with other departments and offices of the university. This issue was pointed out during the AY2017 certified evaluation and accreditation, and should be reviewed taking into account the rules and regulations being developed across the institution.

To solve these issues, the Law School is expected to use the review's results to improve and continue its self-study efforts, thereby further enhancing and assuring the quality of its education while developing its unique characteristics.