



**Self-Assessment Report  
for the 2022 INQAAHE GGP alignment  
of the Japan University  
Accreditation Association**

 **Japan University Accreditation Association**  
July 1, 2022

## Foreword

Established in 1947 with the mission to “promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan through the voluntary efforts and mutual assistance of member institutions and to contribute to international cooperation such as educational and research activities in higher education institutions,” the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) undertakes various quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement activities to support Japanese universities. JUAA carried out self-assessment of its activities regularly between 2012 and 2014, and 2018 and 2019, under supervision of the Self-Assessment Committee. The results of these reviews were compiled into a report and published on the JUAA website. To ensure greater objectivity and relevance of the self-assessment process, JUAA invited officials from Japanese and international higher education institutions and other QA agencies to serve as External Review Committee members who provided assessments and advice based on objective, independent perspectives. The external review outcomes are also disclosed on the JUAA website in an effort to actively share the status of JUAA activities and the challenges it faces with its member institutions and the public at large.

With the progress of globalization, the rapid evolution of digital science, and the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the environment surrounding higher education around the world is undergoing dramatic changes. QA agencies must develop new visions for university education and ways to assure and improve the quality of universities in the post-pandemic world. These tasks cannot be accomplished on a country-by-country basis, making it essential that QA agencies work in partnership across international borders.

To demonstrate internationally JUAA’s credibility as a QA agency, the Board of Managing Trustees decided in September 2021 to undergo a Guidelines for Good Practice (GGP) review, which is an external review process conducted by the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), an organization of which JUAA is a member. The GGP is a self-reflective tool designed to help QA agencies enhance the transparency of their operations and improve performance. Recognition of alignment with the GGP enhances an organization’s credibility and promotes cross-border cooperation and the potential for mutual recognition of accreditation results with overseas agencies. As part of the GGP review process, the JUAA Board of Managing Trustees and Self-Assessment Committee conducted a self-assessment based on the GGP standards and reported on the outcomes. The information used for the self-assessment was for the most part as of January 31, 2022. JUAA hopes this undertaking will highlight once more JUAA’s significance and indicate the direction to aim for, as well as increase the international credibility and society’s understanding of its accreditation activities.

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## Glossary: Acronyms and abbreviations

AQPN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
GGP	Guidelines of Good Practice
iJAS	International Joint Accreditation Standards (Joint Accreditation Project)
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
JUAA	Japan University Accreditation Association
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MoU/A/C	Memorandum of Understanding/ Agreement/ Cooperation
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
QA	Quality Assurance
RIQAHE	Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, JUAA
TWAEA	Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association

## Part I

### 1. Brief History of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)

JUAA is an autonomous organization of universities founded in 1947 by 46 member institutions modeled after accreditation bodies in the United States. With the stated mission to “promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan through the voluntary efforts and mutual assistance of member institutions and to contribute to international cooperation such as educational and research activities in higher education institutions,” JUAA has strived to improve the quality of higher education by undertaking such activities as setting and revising the University Standards and other higher education quality standards, implementing various types of accreditation programs, conducting research, and engaging in international cooperation.

In 1951, JUAA began accreditation activities based on the verification of membership eligibility, and in 1996 began to undertake university accreditation based on self-studies. With the introduction in 2004 of a new national QA framework, or certified evaluation and accreditation, JUAA became Japan’s first certified evaluation and accreditation organization authorized by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

As of January 2022, JUAA’s full membership consists of 313 universities and 8 junior colleges, with an additional 124 universities registered as associate members. JUAA is an autonomous public interest incorporated foundation certified by the Prime Minister of Japan and financed solely through membership fees and accreditation fees.

### 2. Universities in Japan

In Japan, approximately 98 percent of the population advances to upper secondary schools after completing the mandatory primary and lower secondary levels. Of all 18-year-olds, around 57 percent go on to universities and 4 percent to junior colleges, according to 2020 data.

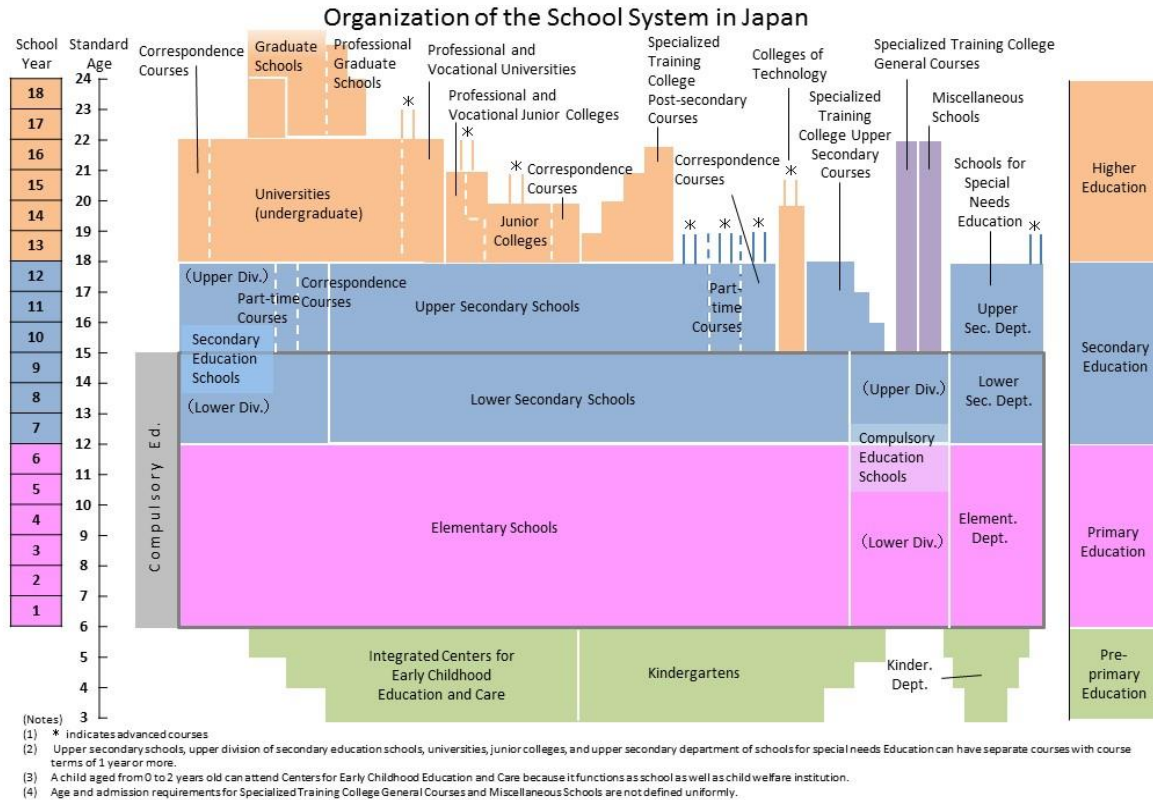
Universities in Japan are defined in the Basic Act of Education as follows: “Universities, as the core of scholarly activities, are to contribute to the development of society by cultivating advanced knowledge and specialized skills, inquiring deeply into the truth to create new knowledge, and broadly offering the fruits of these endeavors to society,” and “University autonomy, independence, and other unique characteristics of university education and research must be respected.”

Other legal regulations for educational institutions include Ministerial Orders stipulating such matters as the basic organization of education and research, teacher qualifications, student enrolment capacity, education programs, graduation requirements, facility and equipment, and administrative structures. These requirements are defined for each type of educational institution. There are, for instance, the Standards for Establishment of Universities and the Standards for Establishment of Junior Colleges. Government approval to establish a university in the higher education institution category is granted after the institution is determined to meet the Standards for Establishment of Universities and other requirements, as described later.

As of May 2021, there are 803 universities in Japan, of which 86 are national, 98 public, and 619 private. One notable feature of Japanese higher education is the far greater number of private

universities than other types. The number of universities with graduate schools is 652, of which 86 are national, 86 public, and 480 private. There are 315 junior colleges (14 public and 301 private) as well. These data are taken from the [Basic School Survey of MEXT](#).

Chart 1. School System in Japan



(Source: Website of the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology](#))

### 3. Overview of University Quality Assurance in Japan

The current QA system for universities and other educational institutions in Japan consists of the following processes.

#### 3.1 Approval of Establishment

In Japan, the establishment of universities and undergraduate/graduate programs requires authorization from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT Minister). The approval process involves the following steps:

- (1) Upon receiving an application to establish an institution or undergraduate/graduate program(s), the MEXT Minister asks the Council for University Chartering and School Juridical Person to deliver an opinion on whether the applicant is compliant with the required standards.
- (2) The Council evaluates the application in areas such as education programs, faculty organization, school site, school building, financial planning, and management and operation against the relevant laws and regulations and reports back to the MEXT Minister, who then



grants approval of establishment based on the Council's evaluation results.

### 3.2 Post-establishment Improvement Status Inspection

Until graduation of their first classes, the universities and undergraduate/graduate programs approved for establishment are required to undergo inspections conducted by the Post-establishment Improvement Status Inspection Committee under the Council for University Chartering and School Juridical Person. The inspection process involves submitting a progress report on implementing the establishment plans for the Committee's review, based on which the institution receives guidance and advice from the regulating authorities as appropriate.

### 3.3 Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

The certified evaluation and accreditation system requires all higher education institutions and some professional training programs in Japan to undergo periodic assessments by an external QA agency certified by the MEXT Minister. The system was introduced as part of the deregulation initiatives to relax the regulations on school establishment, shifting the focus of university quality control from pre-establishment screening to post-establishment inspection. Adopted in 2002 as part of the School Education Act revision, the certified evaluation and accreditation system took effect in 2004.

The target institutions, review cycle, and accreditation standards for each type of accreditation, as defined in the School Education Act and other regulations, are as follows:

#### a) Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

- Target: universities, junior colleges, and colleges of technology
- Cycle: every 7 years
- Accreditation standards should cover matters relating to
  - (i) Fundamental education and research organizations
  - (ii) Faculty organizations
  - (iii) Curriculum
  - (iv) Facility and equipment
  - (v) Administrative organizations
  - (vi) Diploma policy, curriculum design and implementation policy, and admission policy
  - (vii) Communication of information related to education and research activities
  - (viii) Mechanisms to consistently carry out improvements in education and research activities (Item of importance)
  - (ix) Finance
  - (x) Education and research activities not included in (i) through (ix) above

#### b) Specialized Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

- Target: professional and vocational universities and junior colleges, professional graduate schools
- Cycle: every 5 years
- Accreditation standards should cover matters relating to
  - (i) Faculty organizations
  - (ii) Curriculum
  - (iii) Facility and equipment

- (iv) Learning outcomes (including graduates' career paths)
- (v) Education and research activities not included in (i) through (iv) above

The School Education Act sets out regulations for the certified evaluation and accreditation process, requiring, for example, analysis of the self-study results by the institution and site-visit. The process also includes interviews with stakeholders such as the representatives of high schools, municipalities, private companies, as well as the opportunity for institutions to file an appeal against the accreditation results before publication.

The certified evaluation and accreditation agencies need to adopt not only accreditation standards that meet these requirements but also accreditation methods that ensure effective certified evaluation and accreditation, along with organizational structures that ensure fair and proper implementation of the accreditation process. Other requirements include being a corporation with the financial foundation necessary to carry out certified evaluation and accreditation appropriately and smoothly, and being free of any risks that could potentially impair the implementation of fair and effective accreditation.

As of 2021, there are five accreditation agencies in Japan, including JUAA, that undertake institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, and 13 agencies that carry out specialized certified evaluation and accreditation, according to [the List of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organizations for Universities](#) and [the List of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organizations for Professional Graduate Schools](#) posted on the MEXT website. Many of these accreditation agencies were established to undertake certified evaluation and accreditation, but as described earlier, JUAA was founded before the system was introduced. This means that the certified evaluation and accreditation system, for JUAA, is merely one of its many activities undertaken to achieve the goal of assisting universities with quality enhancement.

Under the certified evaluation and accreditation system, institutions and programs are free to obtain accreditation from an accreditation agency of their choice; in other words, in terms of institutional accreditation, agencies are in a competitive relationship with each other. Nevertheless, factors such as an institution's characteristics or university association affiliation largely determine the type of accreditation it will undergo as well as the choice of agency. The institutions for which JUAA performs accreditation tend to be public universities and members of the Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges. For specialized certified evaluation and accreditation, there is for most fields only one accreditation agency offering the service, although this is not the case for law schools, professional graduate business schools, and professional graduate schools of intellectual property studies.

### **3.4 Evaluation by Specialized Field of Study (not certified evaluation and accreditation)**

Apart from specialized certified evaluation and accreditation mentioned above, QA frameworks have been developed and implemented on a discretionary basis in several fields of study. Some examples of these programs include

- Medical education accreditation (Japan Accreditation Council for Medical Education)
- JABEE accreditation (Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education)



- Nursing education accreditation (Japan Accreditation Board for Nursing Education)
- Midwifery education accreditation (Japan Institute of Midwifery Evaluation)
- Pharmaceutical education accreditation (Japan Accreditation Board for Pharmaceutical Education)
- Veterinary education accreditation (JUAA)
- Dental education accreditation (JUAA)

While not legally mandated, these accreditations are nonetheless conducted to assure and improve the quality of education in their respective fields of study with the aim of helping the graduates of these educational institutions succeed.

## 4. JUAA Activities

### 4.1 Quality Assurance Activities

An overview of JUAA's QA activities as of 2021 and the numbers of each type of accreditation conducted over the past seven years are summarized in the table below.

#### a) Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

Table 1. Institutional accreditation conducted over the past seven years

Type/year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
University	53(52)	56(56)	48(45)	27(25)	30(30)	39(39)	49	302(292)
Junior college	5(5)	3(3)	4(4)	1(1)	1(1)	3(3)	2	19(17)

Note: Bracketed numbers indicate the number of institutions accredited.

#### b) Specialized Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

Table 2. Professional graduate school accreditation conducted over the past five years

Field of study/year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Law	2(1)	4(3)	1(1) *	0	0	7(5)
Business	1(1)	10(9)	8(8) *	7(7)	2	28(25)
Public Policy	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	1(1)	1	6(5)
Public Health	0	2(2)	0	1(1)	1	4(3)
Intellectual Property Studies	0	1(1)	0	0	0	1(1)
Global Communication	1(1)	0	0	0	1	2(1)
Digital Contents	1(1)	0	0	0	1	2(1)
Global Legal Studies	—	—	—	—	1	1
Public Relations	—	—	—	—	1	1

Note 1: Bracketed numbers indicate the number of institutions accredited.

Note 2: Accreditation for global legal studies and public relations began in FY2021.

Note 3: The asterisk indicates that the number includes additional reviews.

c) Evaluation by Specialized Field of Study (not certified evaluation and accreditation)

Table 3. Evaluation by specialized field of study conducted over the past five years

Field of study/year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Veterinary Medicine	1(1)	4(4) *	2(2)	0	2*	(7)
Dentistry	—	—	—	—	0	0

Note 1: Bracketed numbers indicate the number of institutions accredited.

Note 2: Dentistry accreditation began in FY2021, and applications are expected starting in FY2022.

Note 3: The numbers are the number of institutions that have applied for accreditation. The asterisk indicates that the number includes applications from joint degree programs.

d) International Joint Accreditation

In addition to the domestic QA activities listed in a) through c) above, JUAA engages in international accreditation activities. In 2018, JUAA and the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA) launched a joint accreditation project (International Joint Accreditation Standard: iJAS project) for universities in Japan and Taiwan with the goal of deepening the mutual understanding of the environment surrounding higher education in each other's country and promoting international cooperation. The project has accredited two universities to date, one from each country. With the addition of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Thailand in 2021, the joint accreditation project is set to operate as a three-country partnership.

All these QA activities are carried out with the goal of achieving JUAA's mission to "promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan and to contribute to international cooperation such as educational and research activities in higher education institutions." JUAA set up many of its specialized accreditation programs in response to requests from education organizations specializing in these fields. The decision to launch the programs was made by the Board of Trustees, comprised of Trustees selected by JUAA member institutions, based on discussions on whether these activities would benefit JUAA member institutions and contribute to improving the quality of universities in Japan.

#### 4.2 Quality Enhancement Activities

In addition to QA in higher education, JUAA undertakes activities designed to support universities in quality improvement through various events for university staff and personnel. The table below summarizes the events established as part of JUAA's official activities as of 2021.

Table 4. Events for university staff and personnel

Event	Target	Description	Schedule/format
Practical Guidance on University Accreditation	Staff of institutions planning to apply for university accreditation the following year	Information on the University Standards, policy of IQA, application preparations and schedules, reports of institutions that underwent the previous year's accreditation review	One session a year (until 2019, sessions held on average twice in Tokyo and once in Kansai-area; from 2020 onwards, sessions held on an on-demand basis and jointly with junior colleges)
Practical Guidance on Junior College Accreditation	Staff of institutions planning to apply for accreditation the following year	Information on junior college standards, policy of IQA, application preparations and schedules	One session a year (from 2020 onwards, sessions held on an on-demand basis and jointly with universities)
JUAA Staff Visits	Visits made in response to requests from institutions planning to apply for accreditation or wanting to conduct FD/SD	JUAA caters to individual requests, sessions generally cover topics discussed in the practical guidance sessions	20-30 sessions a year (mostly virtual since 2020)
University Accreditation Symposium	Members of the University Accreditation Committee, registered members of the University Review Subcommittee and Financial Affairs Subcommittee	Lectures and panel discussions with themes designed to develop the knowledge and skills of accreditation evaluators	One session a year (held online since 2020)
University and Junior College Study Program	Faculty and staff of member universities and junior colleges	Workshop focusing on QA themes tailored to participating institutions and featuring group work	Two sessions a year (held online since 2020)
Presidents' Seminar	Presidents and Vice Presidents of full-member universities	Lectures and panel discussions for Presidents to share leadership initiatives	One session a year (held online since 2020)
General Assembly/Symposium	Staff and personnel of full-member and associate-member institutions	Reports on JUAA activities and financial status, lectures, and panel discussions on the latest topics in higher education	One session a year (held online and on an on-demand basis since 2020)

### 4.3 Research Activities

JUAA undertakes various research activities to raise the level of its QA and quality enhancement activities. The research findings are published as appropriate for use by member institutions and Japanese universities in general. The table below summarizes JUAA’s research activities.

Table 5. Research activities

Activity	Description
Research projects of the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education	Research is conducted on specific themes considered important for QA in higher education. Themes are proposed by the Board of Trustees, Board of Managing Trustees, and the Institute’s researchers, discussed by the Institute’s steering committee, and decided by the Board of Managing Trustees. The maximum research duration is normally two years. Research reports are distributed to member institutions and partners, and published on the JUAA website.
Periodic research seminar of the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education	An open research seminar mainly for the Institute’s researchers generally held twice a year. Themes are discussed and decided by the steering committee. (The two most recent themes were “Revisiting Learning Outcomes of Universities” and “Contemplating the Future Directions of University Quality Assurance.”) Seminar materials are published post-event on the JUAA website.
Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education Annual Conference	Targeting mainly member institution staff, the annual conference is a public forum where the Institute’s research findings are presented and discussed. Topics are discussed and determined by the steering committee. The conference often serves as a forum to present the Institute’s research project results. The two most recent themes were “Contemplating Online Education” and “Learning Outcomes: Now and the Future.” Conference materials are published post-event on the JUAA website.
University Accreditation Effectiveness Survey	Annual written and interview surveys of institutions that have received their university accreditation results. The survey results are published on the JUAA website.
Publication of the Academic Bulletin and articles	JUAA publishes and distributes to member institutions and related organizations the annual peer-reviewed academic journal “University Evaluation Review” as well as a collection of articles intended to help develop university staff skills. These publications are made available on the members-only webpage after a certain period of time.

### 5. JUAA Internal Quality Assurance

JUAA establishes five-year medium-term goals and a five-year medium-term plan for each area of activity, for example, accreditation, research, internationalization, and corporate operation, with the current five-year block running from 2020 to 2024. In addition, based on the medium-term plan, JUAA develops an action plan that is annually assessed for attainment and revised as necessary.

To assess the attainment and effectiveness of each, JUAA has established a Self-Assessment Committee responsible for conducting a self-assessment every five years. JUAA also undergoes an external review based on the self-assessment results. The outcomes of these reviews are reported to the Board of Trustees to ensure that the current status and challenges of JUAA's activities are shared by all relevant people.

In accordance with the revised Ordinance on Details in Applying the Standards Established in Article 110 (2) of the School Education Act (Ordinance on Details) issued by MEXT, which required from 2018 onwards that all accreditation agencies conduct self-assessment and publish the results, JUAA posts its self-assessment and external review reports on its website.

Furthermore, JUAA conducts evaluation surveys after the completion of seminars and workshops, and uses the participants' feedback to improve the planning and organization of future events. The details are discussed in 2.1.2 of Part II.

## Part II

### 1. The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

#### 1.1 The agency's legitimacy and recognition

##### 1.1.1 EQAA has an established legal basis and is recognized by competent external body.

JUAA is an autonomous member-based organization founded in 1947 modeled after accreditation agencies in the United States. Since acquiring the status of an incorporated foundation in 1959, JUAA has carried out activities of public interest, including setting and revising higher education standards, implementing various accreditation programs, conducting research, and engaging in international cooperation.

In Japan, incorporated foundations established on the basis of the Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations whose activities are important and a benefit to society can be certified as public interest incorporated foundations pursuant to the Act on Authorization of Public Interest Incorporated Associations and Public Interest Incorporated Foundations. As JUAA considers its QA and other activities to be of significant benefit to Japan's higher education institutions and society as a whole, it applied for and was granted the status of a public interest incorporated foundation by the Prime Minister in 2012. To gain this status, an entity must not only objectively demonstrate that its activities serve the public good but also meet all 18 of the stringent criteria, including a solid financial foundation and technical capabilities required to maintain its activities. In other words, certification as a public interest incorporated foundation is a testament to the public interest nature of the entity's activities as well as its commitment to the transparency and integrity of its operations.

[Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations](#)

[Act on Authorization of Public Interest Incorporated Associations and Public Interest Incorporated Foundations](#)

JUAA was authorized by MEXT Minister as a certified evaluation and accreditation agency for universities in 2004, when its university accreditation system was approved as compliant with the required standards in terms of university accreditation standards, accreditation review methods, and other factors. Later, JUAA also acquired the status of a certified evaluation and accreditation agency for junior colleges and professional graduate schools.

##### 1.1.2 The EQAA takes into consideration relevant guidelines issued by international networks and other associations in formulating its policies and practices.

To ensure that its higher education QA is compatible with international standards, JUAA refers to the guidelines and accreditation standards issued by international networks when reviewing and improving its operations and activities. Specifically, before launching cycle two of its certified evaluation and accreditation, JUAA consulted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to develop an accreditation system that emphasizes IQA. JUAA also used INQAAHE GGP as a reference in drawing up its self-assessment



report released in January 2014.

Furthermore, JUAA implements the iJAS Project with TWAEA and ONESQA (see 6.2.1) in line with OECD's Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. The cross-border QA project, including the joint accreditation system with Taiwan, was developed based on the OECD Guidelines, which recommends that QA and accreditation bodies "undertake joint assessment projects to increase the comparability of evaluation activities of different QA and accreditation bodies." JUAA also takes into consideration the Guidelines' recommendation that QA and accreditation bodies should "ensure that QA and accreditation arrangements include cross-border education provision in its various modes," and adopt accreditation standards that do not discriminate against institution type and apply to institutions offering double degree programs in partnership with overseas institutions.

[OECD's Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education](#)

In addition, JUAA has consistently collected and analyzed information on overseas QA agencies to improve its own accreditation system. As a member of INQAAHE, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the CHEA International Quality Group, organizations under the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA-CIQG), JUAA attends annual meeting, conferences, and workshops of these networks to stay informed.

JUAA was commissioned by MEXT in 2004 to undertake an international research project on evaluator training, and in 2008 conducted research on the practices of IQA systems of universities in Japan and abroad. Using the information and knowledge gained through its research activities on overseas accreditation trends and connections with international networks, JUAA was one of the early Japanese accreditation agencies to adopt and implement the concept of IQA in its accreditation procedures. This was made possible because of JUAA's engagement in various activities requiring international trends to be closely observed.

JUAA's another globally-focused initiative is the research project to monitor overseas trends launched in 2018 by a study group of JUAA staff. Group members keep watch on the developments of QA agencies in the countries they are assigned, such as the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, and Taiwan, and give reports at presentation sessions to ensure the information is shared across JUAA. At one session, for example, the staff deepened their understanding about the Quality Code, the core reference point for UK quality standards. The session also included a report on the features of the UK QA system that differ from JUAA's, such as student representation on the review panel and its risk-based approach requiring QA agencies to intervene when risks inhibiting student learning become apparent. The session concluded with a discussion on ways to make QA more effective. In 2021, as part of this voluntary initiative, the team conducted a survey targeting overseas QA agencies on the use

of ICT with the aim of learning how they are coping amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey results are being examined by various departments, with team members involved in the survey serving as leaders, and this undertaking has proved a timely exercise to review how JUAA uses ICT. These initiatives have increased its staff's skills and knowledge, which are utilized in accreditation work and helping JUAA maintain consistency with domestic and international developments in higher education QA practices.

It should be noted that the requirements for conducting certified evaluation and accreditation in Japan are established in the Ordinance on Details issued by MEXT, and that JUAA's accreditation activities adhere to these requirements.

### 1.1.3 The EQAA has a clear and published policy for the prevention of conflicts of interest that applies to its staff, its decision-making body, and the external reviewers.

To ensure the impartiality and integrity of the accreditation process, JUAA has adopted and published on its website the Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation that sets out the requirements for accreditation evaluators, JUAA staff, and parties related to the institutions under review. The regulations clearly state that the evaluators' missions are to fully understand the purpose and meaning of third-party evaluation, contribute to quality improvement of universities, and engage in accreditation activities with fairness and integrity. They also outline the responsibility of JUAA staff to assist, coordinate, and perform duties necessary to ensure smooth and fair implementation of third-party evaluations; parties related to the institutions being reviewed are required to perform self-studies with integrity, create or prepare accurate and factual self-study reports and other relevant documents, and cooperate with evaluators by facilitating site-visits and making arrangements as necessary for effective implementation of evaluations.

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Furthermore, the Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation prohibits any party related to the institutions under review from offering cash or gifts of any kind to accreditation evaluators or JUAA staff; nor can accreditation evaluators or JUAA staff demand cash or gifts from the institutions being reviewed. The regulations also explicitly require that evaluators and JUAA staff obtain permission from the Executive Director before accepting paid work from the institution being reviewed. This includes giving lectures, participating in debates, conducting workshops, instructing at training programs, or writing on the topic of accreditation reviews.

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

The regulations also prohibit the use of accreditation-related information for purposes other than the original intent. The confidentiality provision prohibits evaluators from disclosing to third parties any information provided by institutions being reviewed or obtained through site visits, and requires documents and

materials submitted for the purpose of accreditation be collected by JUAA after the accreditation is completed.

As well as publishing the Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation on its website, JUAA has summarized its key points in the Guidelines for Maintaining Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality for Evaluators and Institutions, based on which information sessions are conducted for evaluators and institutions separately (Evaluator Training Seminar and Practical Guidance Sessions are described later) with the aim of maintaining ethical accreditation practices.

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Guidelines for Maintaining Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality for Evaluators and Institutions](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In addition, as part of an effort to prevent conflicts of interest for decision-making bodies, the JUAA Articles of Incorporation requires the Boards of Councilors and Trustees to exclude from the relevant board meetings any members who have conflicts of interest with the matters being deliberated. All accreditation policies have a provision on the exclusion of individuals with conflicts of interest from accreditation discussions, stating that members of the Boards of Councilors and Trustees, Accreditation Committee, and review subcommittee should not sit in on deliberations concerning the institutions to which they belong.

To manage conflicts of interest involving JUAA staff, the Employment Regulations sets out a code of conduct banning such behaviors as “using the Agency’s name or job title for improper personal purposes, or taking advantage of one’s duties for personal gain,” and “disclosing confidential information obtained on the job.”

Employment Regulations  
[SD-JP01]

As described above, JUAA has appropriate policies in place to prevent conflicts of interest that apply to evaluators, staff, and parties related to the institutions under review, and to ensure the transparency of accreditation by disclosing the policies to the public.

## 1.2 Mission and Purposes

### 1.2.1 The EQAA has a written mission statement and a set of objectives that explicitly provide that external quality assurance of higher education is its major concern, describe the purpose and scope of its activities and can be translated into verifiable policies and measurable objectives.

JUAA’s Articles of Incorporation states JUAA’s purposes are to “conduct research on universities in Japan and abroad, improve the quality of Japanese universities, and contribute to the advancement of international cooperation in university education and research activities through voluntary efforts and mutual support of its members. In accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, JUAA

[Articles of Incorporation](#)

1. undertakes third-party evaluation of universities’ education and research activities;
2. develops, updates, and utilizes the University Standards and other tools designed to contribute to quality enhancement of universities;

3. collects information and undertakes surveys and research on universities in Japan and abroad;
4. provides guidance, assistance, and information to universities for improvement of education and research activities;
5. organizes seminars, conferences, and other events aimed at quality improvement of universities;
6. engages and cooperates in the international exchange of information on education and research activities of universities; and
7. publishes resources on education and research activities of universities.

[Activity Plan and Budget](#)  
[WEB-JP]

JUAA prepares an annual activity plan and income and expenditure budget for the activities listed above, and at the end of each fiscal year looks back at the year's results in its activity report and financial statements.

[Activity Report and Financial Statements](#)  
[WEB-JP]

The JUAA's 2018 self-assessment identified the need to develop goals and plans on a medium-term basis. As such, the medium-term goals and medium-term plan for the five years from April 2020 were adopted at the Board of Managing Trustees meeting held on January 28, 2020. Given the importance of reflecting on the level of goal achievement each year, JUAA formulated a five-year action plan road map at the Board of Managing Trustees meeting held on September 22, 2021. The JUAA's current operation is guided by its medium-term goals, medium-term plan, and action plan. (Details are provided in 1.3.4.)

[Self-Asseemsent Report \(September 27, 2019\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Medium-term Goals and Medium-term Plan  
[SD-JP02]

Action Plan  
[SD-JP03]

### 1.3 Governance and Organizational Structure

#### 1.3.1 The EQAA has a governance structure consistent with its mission and objectives, and, adequate mechanisms to involve relevant stakeholders in the definition of its standards and criteria.

JUAA's organizational structure consists of the Board of Councilors, Board of Trustees, Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (RIQAHE), various committees, and the Secretariat.

The Board of Councilors is the highest decision-making body of a public interest incorporated foundation; its responsibilities include making decisions on the corporation's basic governing structure (e.g., appointment and removal of directors and auditors), establishing and revising the general rules of operation (e.g., the Articles of Incorporation), and ensuring that the corporation operates autonomously in accordance with laws, regulations, and the Articles of Incorporation.

The Board of Trustees makes decisions on the execution of activities and supervises the directors in carrying out their duties. The board develops an annual activity plan and budget, monitors the execution of the planned activities and budget

through activity implementation reports, and presents the results in the yearend activity report and financial statements.

JUAA has two Auditors whose roles are to verify that JUAA undertakes activities of public interest as expected of a public interest incorporated foundation, and to inspect whether JUAA maintains the optimal operational structure and financial status. The Auditors scrutinize the execution of duties by the Board of Trustees as well as attend board meetings to offer opinions and present audit reports (See Chart 2.).

JUAA operates under the leadership of the Boards of Trustees and Councilors, which are supported by the Secretariat. JUAA also has committees responsible for implementing the activities described in Section 1.2.1 (see Chart 3.).

Chart 2. JUAA’s Governance Structure

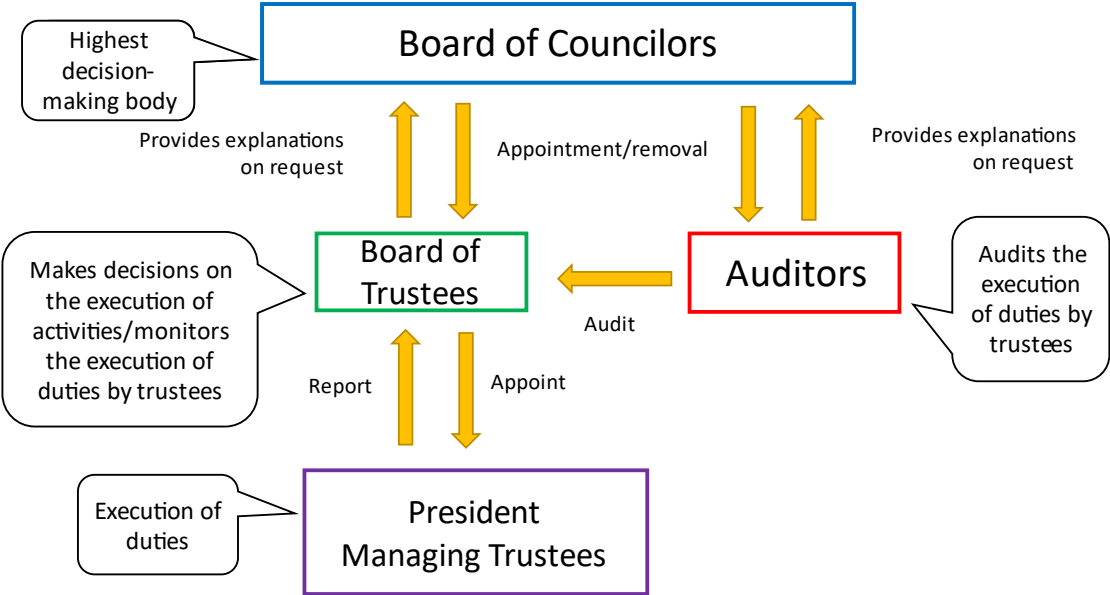


Chart 3. Organizational Chart





JUAA considers its stakeholders to include not only university personnel but also teachers and staff of high schools, which have a strong connection with university entrants, as well as people in industries that are the main career destinations of university graduates. Therefore, while its decision-making bodies, including various committees, are comprised primarily of university stakeholders, JUAA ensures that positions in these organizations are open to people associated with high schools and industry as well.

To secure a broad range of perspectives, JUAA appoints to its Board of Councilors university representatives (mostly presidents) who are academic officers with expertise in university management. The minimum number of Councilors is 15 and the maximum is 30. There are currently 30 Councilors serving on the board, of whom 27 are university representatives; the remainder include an accountant, a business owner, and a high school principal. The Councilors are selected and appointed by the Councilor Selection Committee from a field of candidates nominated by either the Board of Trustees or the Board of Councilors. In selecting the candidates from university representatives, consideration is given to such factors as institution type and size (national, public, or private), geographic location, and gender balance.

[Articles of Incorporation](#)

The Board of Trustees consists of representatives (mainly presidents) of Japan's leading universities who are academic officers with expertise in university management. The number of trustees is set at 15 to 30, and there are 28 members at present. The board comprises a President, two Vice Presidents, a Senior Managing Director, and a maximum of four Managing Trustees. As a member of the board, the roles of the Trustees are to participate in the decision-making process of JUAA's activities and to oversee the execution of duties by the President and other personnel. In selecting the Trustees and Auditors, the Selection Committee established in accordance with the Agreement on the Selection of Trustee and Auditor Candidates prepares a short list of candidates, with consideration given to such factors as institution type and size (national, public, or private), geographic location, and gender balance. The list of candidates is forwarded to the Board of Councilors, which then discusses and determines whether to appoint the candidates as Trustees and Auditors. Table 6 shows the organizational structure of the Boards of Trustees and Councilors.

Table 6. Number of Trustees and Councilors by institution type

Institution type	Trustees	Councilors	(Reference) Number of full-member institutions	
			university	junior college
National	9	5	16	—
Public	5	5	29	4
Private	14	17	268	4
Others	0	3	—	—
Total	28	30	313	8

Note: Number of full members as of December 1, 2021. The number of private member universities includes two institutions established by incorporated companies.

In accordance with the Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards, the creation of the accreditation system and the definition and revision of the accreditation standards are discussed by the Standards Committee before being forwarded to the Board of Trustees for recommendation for approval. Of the 20 members of the Standards Committee, 13 members belong to, and are recommended by, full-member institutions that are a university or junior college. When recommending committee members, JUAA asks the institutions to select candidates who (a) fully understand JUAA's activities and QA, (b) possess expert knowledge about higher education, and (c) expect to remain with the institution for the duration of their two-year tenure. Five of the Standards Committee members were selected from accreditation committees that perform accreditation and all are university teachers. The current Standards Committee also includes three people – a member of the media, a high school teacher, and a business owner – none of whom is a teacher or staff member of a university or junior college.

[Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards](#)

To promote efficient and effective committee deliberations, subcommittees are established. The Working Group on University Accreditation System, for example, was established to discuss the university accreditation system and the revised standards scheduled to take effect in April 2025. University personnel deeply involved in university accreditation serve on this subcommittee.

Furthermore, the Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards requires a public hearing process to extensively collect opinions when establishing and revising the Standards. The purposes of this process are to ensure fairness, improve the transparency of reviews, and help protect the rights and interests of the institutions being reviewed by soliciting and examining comments from a broad base of contributors, rather than a limited group of stakeholders. In 2021, JUAA solicited public feedback on the draft revision of the standards for Professional Graduate Business Schools and the standards for Professional Graduate Schools of Intellectual Property Studies through its website.

[Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards](#)

Based on the above explanations, JUAA considers its governance structure to be

consistent with its purposes and goals, with effective mechanisms in place to involve not only university personnel, whom JUAA considers as stakeholders, but also members of high schools and industries that have strong connections with universities in developing its standards.

*[Areas for Improvement]*

It has come to JUAA's attention that it lacks a mechanism to allow direct involvement of students as university stakeholders. Going forward, JUAA will need to consider building a process that reflects student perspectives in developing its standards and accreditation systems.

1.3.2 The composition of the decision-making body and/or its regulatory framework ensure its independence and impartiality.

JUAA's decision-making bodies are the Boards of Councilors and Trustees. The Board of Councilors is the highest decision-making body of a public interest incorporated foundation, while the Board of Trustees makes decisions on the foundation's execution of activities. The two bodies are independent of each other, and as such, have different agendas, member selection processes, and terms of office. As provided by the Articles of Incorporation, each body considers matters under its scope of authority and makes decisions by consensus (see Table 7.). The Articles of Incorporation and the current rosters of the Boards of Councilors and Trustees are available on the JUAA website.

[Articles of Incorporation](#)  
[Board of Trustees and Auditors](#)  
[Boards of Councilors](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Table 7. Difference between the Board of Trustees and the Board of Councilors

	Board of Trustees	Board of Councilors
Meetings	January, February, May, September	March, May
Composition	Trustees [Term of office] Two years with reappointment possible [Appointment] Board of Councilors	Councilors [Term of office] Four years [Appointment] Councilors Selection Committee
Quorum	Attendance of a majority of Trustees, excluding board members with conflicts of interest with the matters under consideration	Attendance of a majority of Councilors, excluding board members with conflicts of interest with the matters under consideration
Items for consideration	The board makes decisions on the execution of activities by the corporation, and oversees the execution of duties by Trustees as required by laws and regulations and the Articles of Incorporation, such as • Select Trustee candidates • Make Councilor candidate recommendations • Select the Board of Councilors Selection Committee members	1. Appoint and remove Trustees and Auditors 2. Determine compensation and expenses of the Trustees and Councilors 3. Revise the Articles of Incorporation 4. Approve the balance sheet and the profit and loss statement (statement of net assets) 5. Make decisions regarding long-term debts, acquisition, and disposal of important assets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call board meetings and propose meeting agendas</li> <li>• Establish committees</li> <li>• Revise rules and regulations</li> <li>• Select committee members</li> <li>• Handle JUAA membership withdrawals</li> <li>• Report on work status</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Make decisions on donations or disposal of the remaining property acquired for public interest purposes</li> <li>7. Approve the disposal or exclusion of basic property</li> <li>8. Consider matters forwarded by the Board of Trustees to the Board of Councilors</li> <li>9. Consider any other matters as required by laws and regulations and the Articles of Incorporation</li> </ol>
Resolution	Resolutions are considered passed when all Trustees, excluding those with conflicts of interest with the matters under consideration, indicate their agreement with the proposal, either in writing or magnetic recording (except when an Auditor objects to the proposal).	<p>Resolutions are passed by a majority of Councilors, excluding those with special conflicts of interest with the matters under consideration. Resolutions on the following matters, however, require a two-thirds majority of Councilors, excluding those with special conflicts of interest with the matters under consideration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Removal of Trustees and Auditors</li> <li>2. Remuneration payment standards for Trustees and Councilors</li> <li>3. Revisions to the Articles of Incorporation</li> <li>4. Approval or exclusion of basic property</li> <li>5. Long-term debts, acquisition, and disposal of important assets</li> <li>6. Mergers with other entities established based on the Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations, transfer all or part of the business, and termination of all business for public interest purposes</li> <li>7. Other matters defined by laws and regulations</li> </ol>

The President, Vice Presidents, Senior Managing Director, and Managing Trustees are selected from among the Trustees to form the Board of Managing Trustees, which is responsible for deliberating on matters forwarded to it by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Managing Trustees holds meetings six times a year for discussions before board deliberations and reporting.

The Trustee and Councilor positions are part-time roles, and JUAA's day-to-day duties are performed by full-time staff. Under the Executive Director, the Secretariat consists of three departments and six divisions (see Chart 3.), with each division headed by Director, Associate Director, and Assistant Director. In addition to adopting a layered decision-making process, the Secretariat holds cross-

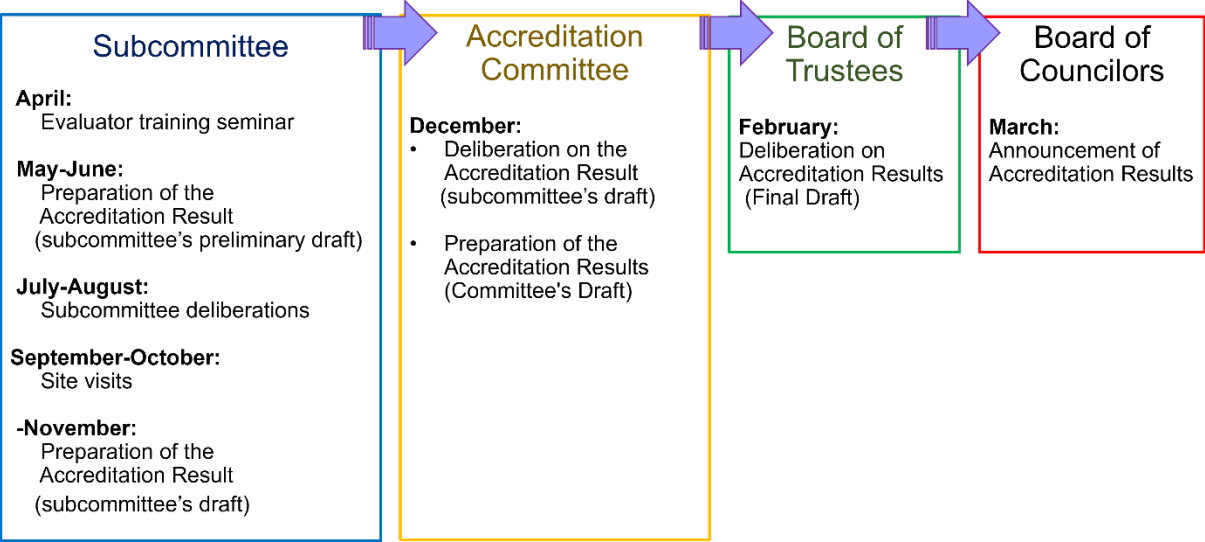
functional meetings for exchanging opinions. There is, for example, a weekly directors’ meeting for management personnel that serves as a forum for sharing information on individual divisions as well as the organization as a whole. JUAA also establishes task forces for specific activities or projects to quickly resolve issues that arise.

Based on the above, JUAA considers the composition of its decision-making bodies to ensure independence and impartiality.

1.3.3 The EQAA’s organizational structure makes it possible to carry out its external review processes effectively and efficiently.

JUAA’s accreditation is a layered process involving deliberations by the review subcommittees, the Accreditation Committee, and the Board of Trustees. Accreditation Committee members are selected from a list of candidates.

Chart 4. Accreditation Schedule



The accreditation procedures are carried out by the Accreditation Committee, the top recommendation-making body, and the review subcommittees underneath it. One review subcommittee is established for each institution under the Accreditation Committee. Committee members who serve as evaluators undergo evaluator training and receive an evaluator manual prepared and distributed by JUAA to ensure the integrity and fairness of accreditation. After completing its document analysis and site visit, the review subcommittee draws up and forwards a draft accreditation report to the Accreditation Committee for review. The Accreditation Committee considers the draft subcommittee report from various perspectives, then prepares and forwards the committee’s draft report to the Board of Trustees for a final decision.

To ensure a smooth accreditation process, academic or administrative staff members recommended by universities are registered as Accreditation Committee

member candidates every two years. When soliciting a candidate's recommendation, JUAA presents a number of qualification requirements, such as fully grasping all of the institution's activities and being well-versed in self-study activities. JUAA accepts and registers only recommended candidates who meet one or more criteria. The review subcommittee members are chosen from registered candidates to ensure consistency in accreditation. For the accreditation of professional graduate schools and specialized fields of study, JUAA invites specialists from relevant fields to serve as Accreditation Committee members. This allows for expert input in the evaluation process.

There is an appeal policy in place for institutions denied accreditation by JUAA, and it is the responsibility of the Appeal Committee to review the appeals filed by universities against an accreditation decision. The Appeal Committee is established under the Board of Trustees and is independent of the Accreditation Committee to ensure the appropriateness of the review process. Until the accreditation result is finalized, the opinions of the institution under review are respected.

As described above, JUAA's organizational structure makes it possible to carry out a layered accreditation review effectively and efficiently.

#### 1.3.4 The EQAA has a strategic plan that helps assess its progress and plan for future developments.

JUAA regularly monitors the progress of its activities. A monthly operational status report is drawn up under the direction of the Vice Presidents in charge of supervising operations and the Managing Trustees. Of the two Vice Presidents, one manages general affairs and finance and the other oversees individual activities. Each of the four Managing Trustees supervises one of four areas of responsibility: (a) general affairs and finance, (b) accreditation, (c) public relations, and (d) research and internationalization. Other tools to monitor progress include a duty status report prepared every six months and the activity report and financial statements produced yearly. To improve its organizations and activities, JUAA conducts periodic self-assessments and presents the results in a report.

Upon completing its 2018 self-assessment, JUAA recognized the importance of university stakeholders in formulating and implementing its goals and strategies with a medium-term vision for each of its activities to enhance the quality of Japan's universities and lead the accreditation system in Japan. With this realization, the Board of Managing Trustees developed, at the January 2020 meeting, a set of medium-term goals and plans outlining the issues to be addressed in each area of JUAA's activities (e.g., accreditation, research, international cooperation, and corporate operation) over the next five years starting April 2020. Furthermore, at its September 2021 meeting, the Board of Managing Trustees also developed an action plan based on the medium-term plan to ensure proper implementation.

[Self-Assessment Report \(September 27, 2019\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Medium-term Goals and Medium-term Plan  
[SD-JP02]

Action Plan  
[SD-JP03]



The action plan clearly sets out the actions to be considered and implemented, the deadlines or timelines for decision and implementation, the point at which the results should be assessed, and the organization(s) responsible for all these actions. The action plan for institutional accreditation, for example, establishes four goals that include enhancing the effectiveness of accreditation and raising the social awareness of accreditation. To meet these goals, JUAA has been developing strategies to train accreditation evaluators, inspect the accreditation system for improvement, and strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat, among other actions.

As described above, JUAA is rigorously performing accreditations and other activities in accordance with the medium-term goals and action plan.

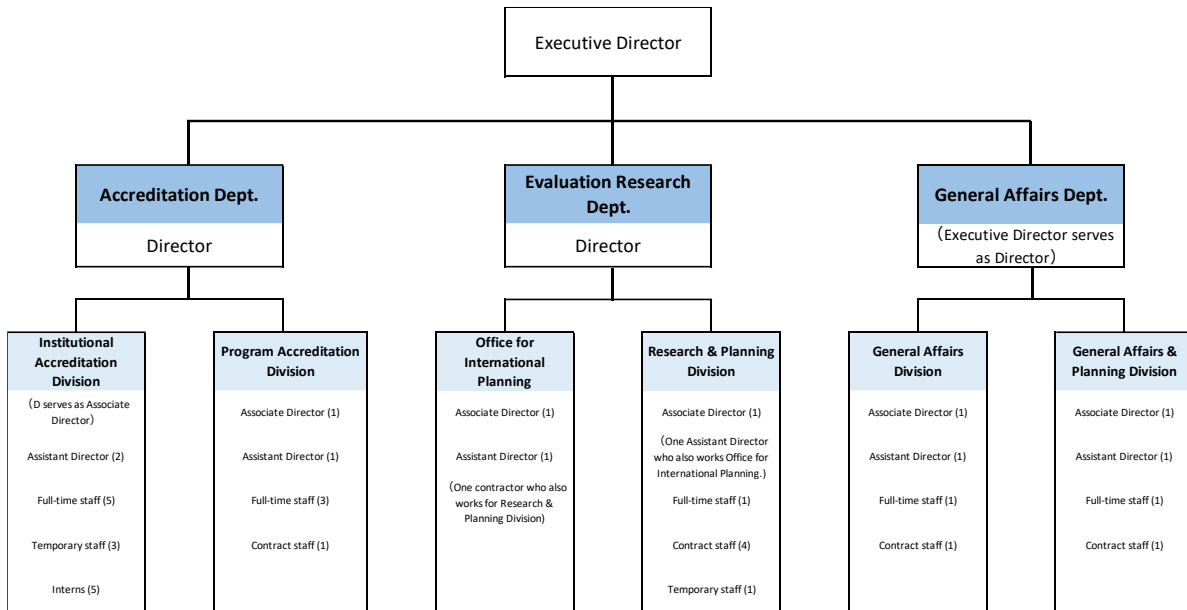
## 1.4 Resources

### 1.4.1 The EQAA has a well-trained, appropriately qualified staff able to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and methodological approach.

As described under Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, the operation of JUAA is managed by Trustees, Councilors, and committee members selected mainly from university stakeholders such as academic and administrative staff. As these people work for JUAA on a part-time basis, JUAA Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day operations to ensure smooth and effective execution of its activities. The Secretariat, under the Executive Director, consists of the departments of Accreditation, Evaluation and Research, and General Affairs, with each department divided into divisions (see Chart 5.). JUAA's functional organizational structure ensures that its operations are systematically conducted, with each department headed by director responsible for overall management of the departments, and associate director who supports the director and supervises the daily operations of their division. Each division also has an assistant director whose role is to assist the associate director and execute day-to-day operations.

Secretariat  
Organization  
Regulations  
[SD-JP04]

Chart 5. Organizational Chart of the Secretariat



Note: The supervisory positions (Executive Director, Director, Associate Director, Assistant Director) are full-time positions. Numbers in brackets indicate the number of persons in January 2022.

Table 8. Roles and responsibilities of departments

Accreditation	Evaluation Research	General Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plan and develop organizational structures and staffing for accreditation</li> <li>● Coordinate accreditation procedures</li> <li>● Plan and develop organizations and activities necessary for accreditation</li> <li>● Organize seminars, conferences, and other events</li> <li>● Handle other matters related to accreditation activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plan and develop accreditation standards, staffing, methods, etc.</li> <li>● Handle matters related to HE research</li> <li>● Plan and develop organizations and activities necessary to conduct research</li> <li>● Organize seminars, conferences, and other events</li> <li>● Handle matters related to international cooperation in HE QA</li> <li>● Prepare and publish research periodicals</li> <li>● Handle other matters related to research activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manage documents</li> <li>● Handle matters related to                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Boards of Trustees and Councilors</li> <li>-activity plans and activity reports</li> <li>-accounting, budget, and settlement</li> <li>-personnel affairs, hiring, labor management, and welfare packages</li> <li>-facility and equipment maintenance, control, and fire safety measures</li> <li>-procurement and management of goods</li> <li>-service contracts</li> <li>-public relations</li> <li>-management of membership and membership fees</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Handle other matters related to management and operation</li> </ul>

In January 2022, the Secretariat operated with twenty-five full-time employees, 7 contract employees, and 4 temporary employees. The full-time positions have job

rotation opportunities and require an understanding of the duties of all departments, along with the basic skills and ability to work flexibly and apply these skills in new situations. To recruit full-time staff with these qualities, JUAA accepts job applications from candidates who have graduated from a four-year university or higher, and emphasizes demonstrated writing skills, a critical competency for accreditation staff and other full-time staff, in the screening process. After joining JUAA, staff are provided opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to perform their duties through ongoing training. (Details on staff training are provided in 1.4.3.)

JUAA has established a list of competencies required of each full-time position by department. The list lays out the skills and abilities expected of QA agency staff, not to mention the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a working professional. These skills are taught mainly through on-the-job training. As the list of competencies is several years old, JUAA is in the process of updating the competencies to make them more relevant to changing social conditions and the environment surrounding JUAA.

As described above, JUAA has worked to enhance the knowledge and skills of its staff so they can conduct accreditation effectively and efficiently, but the recent expansion of our specialized accreditation programs and the development of research activities have resulted in the need for more staff members. To address this issue, JUAA plans to secure the necessary human effort by recruiting skilled staff over the next few years. At present, JUAA manages to carry out its activities as planned through the use of interns (details on interns are provided later) from member universities and contractors.

As mentioned above, JUAA has an Internship Program under which it accepts several employees from full-member universities every year as interns. Since its launch in 2002, the Internship Program has as of 2021 accepted 123 interns from 70 institutions. (In the early years, the program also accepted interns from non-member institutions, but currently intern positions are open only to full-member universities.)

Interns, under the guidance of JUAA staff in charge of accreditation, perform Secretariat duties for the institutions undergoing certified evaluation and accreditation. After completing their training, interns are expected to put their training experience to use in the self-study activities of their home institutions. University Staff Journal, a collection of articles on university staff published by JUAA, features the comments of interns who have completed their training, such as “I gained knowledge and experience in accreditation and a deeper understanding about IQA,” and “I acquired the ability to view my university from a comprehensive, objective perspective.” For JUAA, the internship program not only provides human effort but also represents a valuable opportunity to develop

mutual understanding with our member institutions regarding QA in higher education. To ensure that this occurs, JUAA invites past and present interns for joint training sessions with JUAA staff.

The Internship Program is widely advertised to all full-member universities to ensure the fairness of opportunity. It should be noted that rules are in place to prevent conflicts of interest. Interns are not authorized, for example, to access materials and data related to accreditation of the institution to which they belong, nor are they allowed to attend accreditation discussions concerning their home institutions.

JUAA also operates RIQAHE to conduct research on accreditation of institutions in Japan and abroad for the benefit of its various activities and share the research findings with member institutions. Some Research Institute staff members serve concurrently in the Secretariat, playing an organic role in returning the research results to JUAA’s activities. At present, four employees hold such concurrent posts.

1.4.2 The EQAA has the physical and financial resources needed to fulfill its goals and carry out the activities that emerge from its mission statement and purposes.

*[Physical Resources]*

JUAA’s office is located in Ichigaya, a highly accessible area in central Tokyo. Its proximity to the government district ensures convenient access to government ministries and agencies. The JUAA building of five floors above ground and one basement level is fully owned and occupied solely by JUAA. The building features three office floors, three private office rooms (two of which are occasionally used as reception rooms), four meeting rooms, a library, and storage areas (see Table 9.).

[JUAA Building Photograph](#)

Table 9. Overview of the JUAA building

Floor	Use	Area
5	1 meeting room, 2 private office/reception rooms	208.53 m <sup>2</sup>
4	3 meeting rooms	217.71 m <sup>2</sup>
3	Office space	217.71 m <sup>2</sup>
2	Office space, private office, library	252.57 m <sup>2</sup>
1	Office space	232.17 m <sup>2</sup>
Basement	4 storage areas, parking lot	253.99 m <sup>2</sup>

The first floor is occupied by the General Affairs Department, the second floor by the Evaluation Research Department, and the third floor by the Accreditation Department. The seating capacity and office space per person are sufficient for now, but as JUAA plans to increase the number of employees in the future, solutions to prevent overcrowding will need to be considered.

The three meeting rooms on the fourth floor are divided by sliding walls that can be removed to create a large conference room when needed. The annual accreditation schedule is such that there are times when the demand for meeting rooms exceeds the capacity, and external meeting rooms have to be rented temporarily. But these cases are not the norm, and overall, JUAA has sufficient space and meeting rooms throughout the year.

JUAA has over the years introduced various ICT infrastructure to make operations more efficient, and since 2020 it has invested in additional devices and systems in response to the new demand for remote working and online meetings that became inevitable with the COVID-19 pandemic. To meet the greater demand for ICT tools, JUAA will further upgrade and expand the ICT infrastructure in its offices and meeting rooms.

#### *[Academic Resources]*

The JUAA library houses books and journals on higher education and valuable archival materials on Japan's university reform during and after the postwar reform period. The library's collection of domestic books on higher education is updated through bulk-purchases twice a year. Japanese and international books requested by staff are also purchased on an as-needed basis. The library subscribes to Japanese and international journals on higher education to stay up-to-date with the latest information and research.

The archival materials include publications released after JUAA's establishment (e.g., newsletter, public relations magazines, various standards, and reports) and corporate documents (e.g., minutes of the board and committee meetings, resources, and notifications). These are historically valuable resources that provide information on the Japanese government's higher education policies since the end of World War II. JUAA is in the process of converting these materials into an electronic data format for lasting preservation and more effective use, and some materials are made public on JUAA's website with access limited to member institutions.

[JUAA website \(Research>Archives\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Regulations on Inspections of Archival Documents](#)  
[WEB-JP]

As for the materials that are not in a digital format, JUAA provides member university staff with access under its regulations on resource use. JUAA makes these valuable materials available not only to its staff but also member universities and researchers as part of its efforts to meet one of its overall goals, which, as stated clearly in the relevant regulations, is to "provide guidance, assistance, and information for improvement of university education and research."

#### *[Financial Resources]*

As an independent private entity, JUAA is not dependent on subsidies or other public financial support for its operation. Its income is derived almost entirely from

[Statement of Net Assets \(FY2016-FY2020\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

membership fees and accreditation fees, which make up the financial resources necessary to carry out its various activities.

[Regulations on Full Membership and Support Membership](#)  
[WEB-JP]

There are two types of membership fees collected annually: the full-member fee and the support-member fee. The full-member fee is classified into ten grades according to the institution's student capacity (see Table 10.), while the support-membership fee is a flat 100,000 yen regardless of the institution's size.

Table 10. Full-member fees

Student Capacity	Annual Fee	Membership Fees Collected in 2021
Less than 1,000	200,000 yen	51 universities, 6 junior colleges
Less than 2,000	350,000 yen	55 universities
Less than 3,000	500,000 yen	47 universities
Less than 5,000	600,000 yen	36 universities
Less than 8,000	700,000 yen	49 universities
Less than 10,000	800,000 yen	18 universities
Less than 15,000	900,000 yen	22 universities
Less than 20,000	1,000,000 yen	8 universities
Less than 30,000	1,100,000 yen	11 universities
30,000 or more	1,200,000 yen	8 universities

There are three types of accreditation fees: institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools, and specialized accreditation.

The institutional accreditation fee comprises the basic fee of 2 million yen, plus a variable component depending on the number of undergraduate and graduate schools for universities and the number of departments for junior colleges. The variable component is 350,000 yen per undergraduate or graduate school for universities and 200,000 yen per department for junior colleges. Non-full-member institutions are charged an additional amount equivalent to five years of full membership fees.

The fee for certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools is a flat 3.5 million yen for each field of study, with no additional charges for non-member institutions.

The specialized accreditation fee varies depending on whether the program being reviewed is offered by a single institution or multiple institutions. The fee for a program offered by a single institution is 2.2 million yen, while a program available at multiple institutions is 1.3 million yen per institution.

[Accreditation Fees Regulations](#)  
[WEB-JP]

JUAA maintains a stable financial position and generates an operating surplus most years, even if revenue and expenditure fluctuate from year to year depending on the number of accreditations performed and the size of the accreditation

[Statement of Net Assets \(FY2016-FY2020\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

applicants (Table 11.).

Table 11. Financial status over the past five years (JPY)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenue	474,182,696	473,801,403	423,194,158	390,202,856	511,333,015
Member-ship fee	193,500,000	191,800,000	192,750,000	193,950,000	189,600,000
Accreditation fee	274,470,332	268,416,163	221,146,065	191,627,889	286,142,048
Expenditure	422,323,335	419,431,520	416,598,763	399,196,519	323,775,234
Balance	51,859,361	54,369,883	6,595,395	-8,993,663	187,557,781

Note: The surplus was exceptionally large in FY2020 as a result of pandemic-induced changes in operations (especially reduced expenses for transportation and overseas travel).

As JUAA's revenue and expenditure fluctuate depending on the number of accreditations performed and the size of the accreditation applicants, as mentioned above, JUAA retains specified assets, or Operation Assets for University Accreditation and Other Programs, which it uses to balance its finances. Specifically, during the seven-year cycle, a surplus is deposited into the specified assets in the years when a large number of accreditations generate higher revenue, while in the years when the number of accreditation applications is small, and revenue is low with high expenses, the specified assets are used to make up the shortfall. This procedure allows JUAA to effectively balance its revenue and expenditure.

[FY2020 Balance Sheet](#)  
[WEB-JP]

As stated in 1.1.1, JUAA is a public interest corporation. JUAA operates in compliance with the stringent financial requirements imposed by laws and regulations under Japan's public interest corporation system, and is certified and periodically audited by the Cabinet Office. These facts clearly demonstrate JUAA has the financial capacity required to carry out its activities.

If there is a challenge that JUAA needs to address, it is how JUAA's sound and appropriate operations tend to leave it with a larger surplus than projected. The stringent financial requirements under the public interest corporation system do not allow entities to generate excessive surpluses. JUAA therefore has had to take care in recent years not to let this happen. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a growing or possibly permanent shift to online meetings and events, and with the expected drop in transportation and overseas travel costs, JUAA needs to consider more effective ways to use its financial resources by, for example, actively building up its human resource capacity, which has long been an area of improvement for JUAA, and investing in optimal ICT facilities.

### 1.4.3 The EQAA provides systematic opportunities for professional development of its staff.

JUAA offers the following training programs to improve the knowledge and skills of its staff (see Table 12.).

1. New employee and new intern training
2. Group training for the entire staff
  - Training to acquire knowledge on university accreditation and higher education
  - Training to develop basic skills and all-purpose skills
  - Joint training of university staff and JUAA staff (training for past and current interns and JUAA staff)
3. Individual training
  - Training for university staff offered by external training providers

Individuals can participate in the program of their choice from a lineup of programs offered. (The training programs focus on one of three topics: practical skills, generic skills, and management skills, with each topic having set target levels from new employees to managers.)

Table 12. FY2018-FY2021 Staff training over the past four years

FY	Target	Training content/topics
2018	New employees and new interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History of JUAA, committee activities, organizations, outline and characteristics of accreditation, tasks of university accreditation</li> <li>● Explanations on the Standards for Establishment of Universities</li> <li>● University Standards</li> </ul>
	All staff and interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finance and future challenges of private universities</li> <li>● Direction of certified evaluation and accreditation: Focusing on the preliminary draft of the Vision of the Central Council for Education</li> <li>● Desired competencies of future university staff</li> <li>● Compliance and risk management training</li> </ul>
	All staff, current and former interns	Joint training for university and JUAA staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Challenges and vision for the third cycle: Lessons to draw on from the summary of the second cycle of university accreditation</li> </ul>
2019	New employees and new interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History of JUAA, committee activities, organizations, outline and characteristics of accreditation, tasks of university accreditation</li> <li>● Explanations on the Standards for Establishment of Universities</li> <li>● University Standards</li> </ul>
	All staff and interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff training on professional graduate schools</li> <li>● Realities of high school-university transition</li> <li>● Business management training</li> </ul>
	New employees and new interns	Joint training for university and JUAA staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summary of the first year of the third cycle of university accreditation (certified evaluation and accreditation)</li> </ul>
2020	New employees and new interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History of JUAA, committee activities, organizations, outline and characteristics of accreditation, tasks of university accreditation</li> <li>● Explanations on the Standards for Establishment of Universities, Graduate Schools, and Professional Graduate Schools</li> <li>● University Standards and Internal Quality Assurance</li> </ul>



	All staff, current and former interns	Joint training for university and JUAA staff ● Reflecting on international recognition of quality assurance
2021	New employees and new interns	● History of JUAA, committee activities, organizations, outline and characteristics of accreditation, tasks of university accreditation ● Explanations on the Standards for Establishment of Universities, Graduate Schools, and Professional Graduate Schools ● University Standards and Internal Quality Assurance
	All staff, current and former interns	Joint training for university and JUAA staff ● Reflecting on the quality of online education

Note: The number of training opportunities decreased in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the above staff training, staff in charge of accreditation are required to attend the training program for accreditation staff offered by the Japan Network of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies, a network comprising 14 certified evaluation and accreditation agencies in Japan. This training program targeting staff of the network's member agencies is offered at two levels, beginners and experienced, and features lectures on higher education policies by MEXT senior officials and lectures on QA by accreditation agency senior officials as well as workshops conducted by the participants themselves. Furthermore, the Accreditation Department holds a yearend training session where participants look back on their year's work, study and give presentations on a topic of their choice, and exchange opinions.

JUAA also encourages its staff to attend symposiums and seminars offered by other organizations and universities, and actively provides training information. Furthermore, to stay current with higher education policy developments, staff from the Accreditation Department and the Research & Planning Division take turns attending the meetings of the Central Council for Education; they later write up reports on what they learned at these meetings and share the information with the entire organization. JUAA also holds joint training with partner QA agencies abroad with the aim of helping staff develop international perspectives. (See 2.2.2 for more details.)

Apart from these training programs, JUAA supports the self-directed efforts of staff to improve their skills by providing a financial incentive program for professional development.

*[Future Challenges]*

JUAA offers numerous training opportunities for staff as described above, but has yet to develop a job-level-specific systematic training framework linked to the competencies mentioned in 1.4.1. This issue needs to be addressed by linking its training programs to specific competencies. Moreover, while JUAA conducts post-internal training surveys to help plan future events, another area requiring improvement is the lack of sufficient mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of

training, such as monitoring improvements in staff knowledge and skills or assessing how this learning is put to use on the job. To ensure the effectiveness of training, JAAA needs to devise better post-training follow-up strategies and develop a systematic training framework.

## 2. Accountability of the EQAA

### 2.1 Quality Assurance of the EQAA

#### 2.1.1 The EQAA operates with transparency, integrity and professionalism and adheres to ethical and professional standards.

##### *[Management transparency]*

JUAA actively discloses information on its activities through its website, publications, and other media to ensure the transparency of its QA.

JUAA website  
[\[WEB-JP\]](#)  
[\[WEB-EN\]](#)

First, on its website, JUAA publishes the results of all certified evaluations and accreditations as well as the program accreditations it has implemented. In addition, JUAA releases information on its corporate management and activities to the public, including (1) Articles of Incorporation and regulations relating to accreditation and research activities, (2) annual activity plans and reports, and financial information, (3) lists of the Board of Trustees and committees involved in accreditation and research activities, and (4) reports on various events such as symposiums.

[Articles of Incorporation](#)

[Activity Plan and Budget](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Activity Report and Financial Statements](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Second, JUAA produces an annual newsletter to report information on its corporate management and activities to member universities and relevant parties, and publishes a biannual public relations magazine in print media and on its website to provide stakeholders with information on its certified evaluation and accreditation and other QA activities.

Newsletter  
[SD-JP05]

[Public Relations Magazine "JUAA"](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Through these proactive information disclosures, JUAA is committed to operating with transparency as a QA agency.

##### *[Management integrity]*

JUAA transitioned from an incorporated foundation to a public interest incorporated foundation in 2014 after authorization by the Cabinet Office. This means the national government has recognized the importance of JUAA's consistent QA activities conducted since its establishment as an incorporated foundation of high public interest.

[Website for Public Interest Corporation Information](#)  
[WEB-JP]

To obtain the status of a public interest corporation, foundations must meet the standards stipulated in the Act on Authorization of Public Interest Incorporated Associations and Public Interest Incorporated Foundations (Authorization Act) with respect to the public interest of businesses and corporate governance. JUAA's Articles of Incorporation, regulations on accreditation and research, and financial status satisfy these standards. JUAA has maintained its authorization since first granted in 2014 by submitting its annual activity plans and reports, and financial information to the Cabinet Office, and undergoing periodic on-site inspections.

JUAA also periodically collects the opinions of such stakeholders as member universities and relevant parties, and draws up and reviews its activity plans based on their views and other findings.

For example, to exchange views with member universities, JUAA holds an annual general meeting to explain its activity reports and plans, and financial status, and to solicit opinions on the appropriateness of its management. In early 2022, JUAA conducted a questionnaire survey of higher education institutions regarding its member services, aimed at further improvements by exploring more effective ways to provide services as a QA agency.

As another example, JUAA disseminates information in response to the needs of member universities by holding various events, including briefing sessions on application procedures for its certified evaluation and accreditation, and university and junior college study programs for relevant parties to exchange opinions on QA activities. JUAA also offers public study groups at the RIQAHE, as described later, and has established a system to dispatch its administrative staff as lecturers to universities upon request. These initiatives help JUAA understand the current status of universities' QA activities through opinion exchanges with relevant parties, while providing universities with information on JUAA's certified evaluation and accreditation procedures as well as updates on its QA activities. In addition, JUAA conducts a questionnaire survey of participants after each event to keep up with the needs of the participants and participating universities, and to further enhance its QA activities based on feedback and other findings.

Furthermore, to promote opinion exchanges with other certified evaluation and accreditation agencies, JUAA and other accreditation bodies have jointly established the Japan Network of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies (JNCEAA). The agencies periodically meet to discuss their QA activities and to jointly publish their evaluation results and conduct staff training sessions.

[JNCEAA website](#)  
[WEB-JP]

As described above, JUAA has consistently engaged in QA activities for higher education since its establishment, and constantly reviews and improves its activities to meet the needs of society and its stakeholders with the changing times.

#### *[Management professionalism]*

JUAA operates with sufficient professionalism in performing its higher education QA activities.

[Board of Trustees and Auditors](#)

First, JUAA's Board of Trustees, responsible for decision-making in all its activities, comprises the representatives of Japan's leading universities (mainly presidents) and academic staff with a high level of expertise in university management. In addition, Trustees are selected based on various elements that include the types of universities (national, public, and private), their locations, and gender balance.

[Board of Councilors](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Webpage for the Research Institute for Quality](#)

Next, JUAA has organizations conducting advanced research on QA in higher education. Specifically, the Research Group on Higher Education was formed between 2012 and 2017, and RIQAHE was set up in 2018 and beyond to conduct surveys on key topics related to QA of the times by inviting such experts as university faculty and staff in accreditation-related fields (Table 13.). The outcomes of these surveys are returned appropriately to JUAA’s accreditation activities, for example, presenting the outcomes at RIQAHE conferences, open workshops, and other meetings, sending them to universities and other institutions in the form of reports and publications, and using them as references when revising its evaluation criteria.

Table 13. List of surveys

Title	Period
Survey for Systematizing University Accreditation Theories	November 2011-March 2014
Survey on the Expected Role of Internal Quality Assurance	September 2013-March 2015
Survey on Articulation in Higher Education	September 2013-March 2015
Survey on International Quality Assurance	September 2015-March 2017
Survey on Student Learning Outcomes	June 2016-March 2018
Survey on Quality Assurance and Enhancement Initiatives in Teaching Programs	May 2017-March 2018
Survey on the Expected Role of Educational Program Evaluation	June 2018-March 2019
*Survey for Promoting Quality Assurance and Enhancement Initiatives in Teaching Programs	July 2018-March 2019
*Survey on the Expected Role of Achievement Level Evaluation	August 2019-July 2021
*Survey on Effective Online Education and Evaluation Criteria and Perspectives	July 2019-March 2022
*Survey on Teaching and Learning Management	October 2021-March 2023
*Survey on Developing Skills in Bachelor’s Degree Education to Meet the Challenges of Contemporary Society	October 2021-September 2023

\*Surveys by RIQAHE

Furthermore, JUAA strives to improve its QA activities by constantly reviewing its evaluation criteria and processes. JUAA’s accreditation standards are revised periodically, every five or seven years, based on the outcomes of the above-mentioned research and other activities, to reflect the universities’ roles that meet the needs of the times. JUAA also ameliorates its evaluation processes, including evaluator training and site visits, every fiscal year within the range of its specified regulations, based on the Survey on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation and questionnaire surveys of evaluators after their evaluations are completed.

Lastly, JUAA staff play an indispensable role in carrying out evaluation activities, and possess advanced knowledge and experience in higher education and QA, as described in 1.4.1.

All the above descriptions demonstrate that JUAA performs its activities with a high level of professionalism.

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

*[Compliance with ethical and professional standards]*

As mentioned earlier, authorized as a public interest incorporated foundation, JUAA operates in compliance with the Authorization Act and other relevant laws and regulations. In addition, certified as an accreditation agency by the MEXT Minister, JUAA conducts its evaluation activities in accordance with the stipulations of the Detailed Ministerial Order issued by of the MEXT.

[Regulations on the Protection of Personal Information](#)  
[WEB-JP]

To carry out fair and unbiased evaluations, JUAA has established rules and regulations for evaluators, staff, and related parties of universities applying for accreditation, and especially ensures that evaluators are thoroughly aware of the content through training and other means to prevent conflicts of interest.

Specific Personal Information Handling Regulations  
[SD-JP06]

In addition, JUAA operates under the rules and regulations established to handle personal information and prohibit all types of harassment for its Board members, administrative staff, and other personnel engaged in its operations (committee members, evaluators, etc.). JUAA also requires its staff to comply with its code of conduct, including the handling of confidential information, as stipulated in its employment regulations.

Regulations on the Prevention of Harassment  
[SD-JP07]

Employment Regulations  
[SD-JP01]

The establishment and appropriate dissemination of these necessary rules and regulations have resulted in no cases of ethical misconduct to date, which demonstrates that JUAA is conducting its operations smoothly, including the implementation of strict and rigorous evaluations.

Lastly, as is the case with the GGP application, JUAA considers the international recognition of its accreditation as an opportunity to expand its QA activities globally, and aims to meet globally accepted ethical and professional standards.

### 2.1.2 The EQAA has in place mechanisms that enable it to review its own activities in order to respond to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives.

JUAA operates the following improvement cycle based on its Articles of Incorporation, Self-Assessment Committee Regulations, External Review Committee Regulations, and other regulations as a mechanism for reviewing its QA activities.

Self-Assessment Committee Regulations  
[SD-JP08]

External Review Committee Regulations  
[SD-JP09]

*[Formulating the activity plan and budget]*

First, to set JUAA's activity goals, the Board of Trustees formulates an annual activity plan and budget in accordance with Article 9, Paragraph 1 of the Articles of Incorporation. The activity plan specifies the fiscal year's goals for four activities – accreditation, research, international cooperation, and corporate management. The budget provides the fiscal year's estimated membership and accreditation fees

[Articles of Incorporation](#)  
[Activity Plan and Budget](#)

as the main sources of revenue; projected operating expenditures for its accreditation, research, and international cooperation activities; operating expenses allocated to part of its corporate management activities; and administrative expenses allocated to the remaining part. JUAA undertakes activities based on the activity plan and budget as a general principle.

[WEB-JP]

[Roadmap](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Medium-term  
Goals and  
Medium-term  
Plan  
[SD-JP02]

Action Plan  
[SD-JP03]

JUAA's annual activity plan and budget are formulated based on a medium-term plan drawn up roughly every five years. The Board of Trustees or a working group set up under the Board discusses the medium-term plan in light of JUAA's self-assessment (as described later), with the "Medium-term Outlook – Roadmap for Achieving the Goal of Establishing an Organizational Structure" drawn up in 2014 and the medium-term goals and plan in 2019. The FY2021 action plan sets out specific measures to achieve the medium-term goals and plan, and is reviewed on a yearly basis.

*[Checking the achievement level of objectives and the effectiveness of activities]*

To check its activities in terms of achievement level and effectiveness, JUAA adopts such methods as monitoring the execution status of its activity plan and budget on a monthly, multi-month, and annual basis, and implements a self-assessment and external review (described below) every several years.

As a mechanism for monitoring the progress of its activities, JUAA first prepares an operational status report on a monthly basis. The directors and assistant directors draw up a report on the implementation status of each activity specified in the activity plan, and briefs the Managing Trustees in charge, depending on the content. After receiving the report, the Managing Trustees check the progress of activities under their respective departments every month, and brief the Board of Trustees in the form of a duty status report.

Next, the Managing Trustees' duty status report to the Board of Trustees takes place on a multi-month basis, in accordance with Article 25, Paragraph 4 of JUAA's Articles of Incorporation, which stipulates that the President, Vice Presidents, Senior Managing Directors, and Managing Trustees must report on their duty status at least twice each fiscal year, at an interval exceeding four months. Accordingly, the Managing Trustees, who are briefed on the above-mentioned operational status, present the execution status of the activity plan and budget and other information at the Board of Trustees meeting held semi-annually.

[Articles of  
Incorporation](#)

Then, the Board of Trustees prepares an annual activity report and financial statements in accordance with Article 11, Paragraph 1 of the Articles of Incorporation. This document outlines JUAA's monthly and multi-monthly activities conducted on a yearly basis, and consists of (1) an activity report, (2) annexed detailed statements of the activity report, (3) balance sheet, (4) income statement (statement of net assets), (5) income and expenditure statement, (6) balance sheet, (7) annexed detailed statements of the income statement (statement of net

[Articles of  
Incorporation](#)

[Activity Report  
and Financial  
Statements](#)

[WEB-JP]

assets), and (8) inventory of assets. The (1) activity report provides the fiscal year's implementation status of the four accreditation, research, international cooperation, and corporate management activities. Financial statements (2) through (8) present the status of income and expenditures, cash flow, and asset holdings for the fiscal year.

JUAA strives to keep abreast of the progress of its activities through the above monitoring process.

*[Periodic self-assessment]*

After confirming the implementation status of its four activities (accreditation, research, international cooperation, and corporate management) described above, JUAA carries out a self-assessment every five years, and an external review based on the results, as ways to assess the achievement of each goal, the effectiveness of the activities, and its response to the changing needs of higher education.

JUAA's self-assessments are implemented by the Self-Assessment Committee set up internally based on the Regulations on the Self-Assessment Committee. The Committee consists of (1) Managing Trustees, (2) an Auditor, (3) one current or previous Standards Committee member, (4) one current or previous member or secretary of the committees in charge of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, (5) one current or previous member or secretary of the committees responsible for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools, and (6) several personnel involved in other committees formed by JUAA, all of whom boast years of experience in JUAA's activities. Under the regulations, the Self-Assessment Committee specifies the evaluation criteria and items to carry out self-assessment, but the criteria must focus on assessing the status of legal compliance, including the Detailed Ministerial Order, and the effectiveness of JUAA's IQA in order to ensure its appropriateness as a certified evaluation and accreditation agency.

Self-Assessment  
Committee  
Regulations  
[SD-JP08]

The results of the self-assessment conducted by the Self- Assessment Committee are compiled into a report that presents the current status, strengths, issues to be addressed, measures for improvement and enhancement, and other findings in each evaluation category. The report is eventually given to the Board of Trustees and made public on the JUAA website. The Committee has implemented a comprehensive self-assessment covering JUAA's activities twice so far in FY2014 and FY2019.

[Self-Assessment  
Report \(January  
17, 2014\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Self-Assessment  
Report  
\(September 27,  
2019\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

*[Periodic external reviews]*

JUAA's external reviews are conducted based on the results of the above self-assessments. Under the Regulations on the External Review Committee, the External Review Committee is commissioned by the Board of Trustees to carry out the task aimed at enhancing the objectivity and validity of JUAA's self-assessments and contributing to the improvement of its structure and activities. The Committee

External Review  
Committee  
Regulations  
[SD-JP09]

[External Review  
Report](#)



comprises (1) up to three members who belong to Japanese universities, (2) up to three members who are currently working or previously worked for university accreditation agencies in Japan or overseas, and (3) several other external experts, to ensure that the Committee excludes JUAA's Board of Trustees, Councilors, committee members, and other staff.

[\(September 30, 2014\)](#)

[WEB-JP]

[External Review Report](#)

[\(February 26, 2021\)](#)

[WEB-JP]

Under the regulations, the External Review Committee conducts an external review by (1) examining the self-assessment results report and equivalent documents, (2) interviewing JUAA's Board of Trustees, staff, committee members, and other personnel, and (3) taking other necessary measures to assess the appropriateness of the self-assessment. The Committee briefs the Board of Trustees on the external review results report outlining the distinctive features, issues to be addressed, and future expectations regarding JUAA's activities. The Board of Trustees then carefully considers which improvements and other measures based on the results to reflect in the medium-term and annual activity plans.

Starting in FY2018, the revised Detailed Ministerial Order requires certified evaluation and accreditation agencies to implement and publish their self-assessments. In response, JUAA brought forward by one year part of its self-assessment scheduled for every five years.

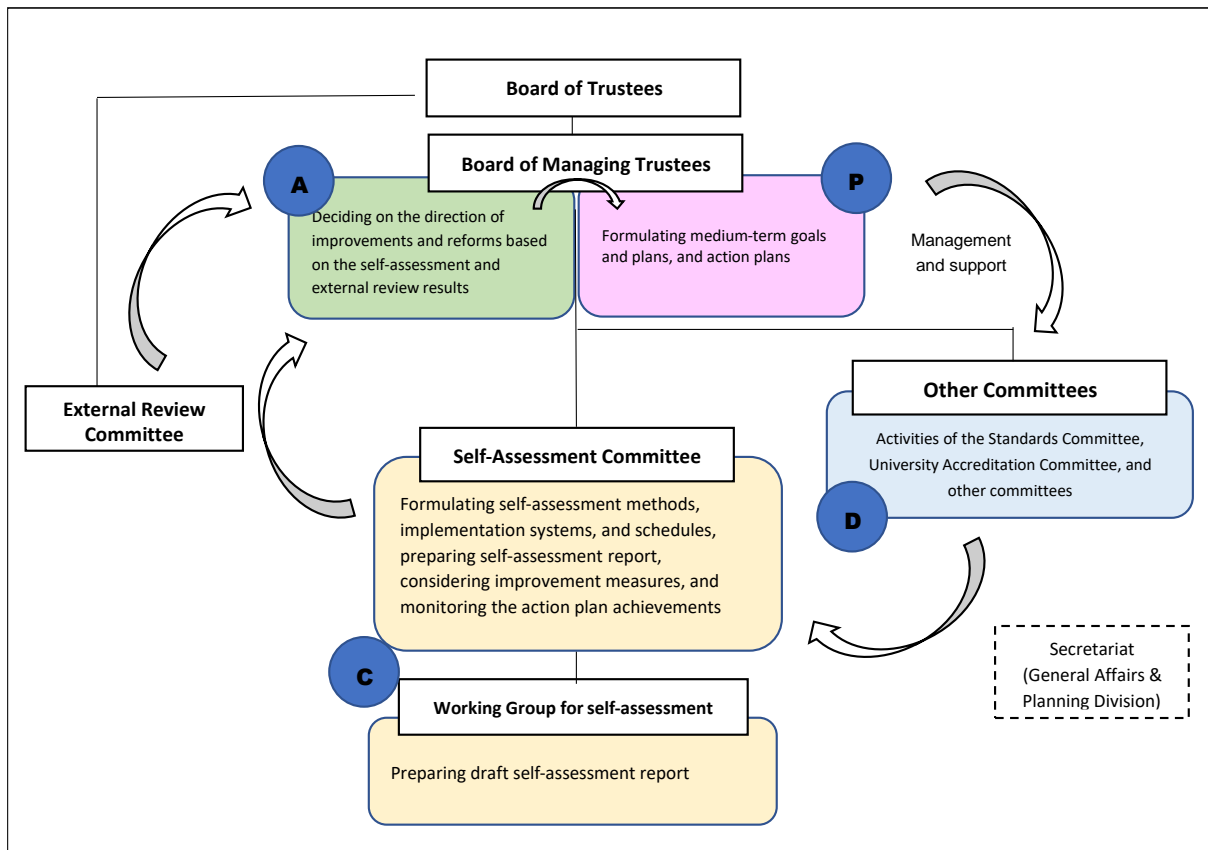
*[Future challenges of review system]*

As mentioned above, JUAA has a mechanism in place for appropriately assessing and improving its own activities through periodic self-assessment and external reviews. However, to systematically enhance this IQA system, JUAA must work to make improvements by presenting more concrete measures based on the results of these reviews in its medium-term goal plans and action plans.

Regulations on Internal Quality Assurance  
[SD-JP10]

To this end, JUAA newly established the Regulations on Internal Quality Assurance in January 2022 to set out the purpose, structure, and procedures of its IQA, and has recently built IQA system. The regulations define IQA as an appropriately managed mechanism based on systems and procedures to constantly operate an improvement cycle of regularly conducting self-assessment, linking the results to improvements and reforms, and formulating and implementing new goals and plans. The Board of Managing Trustees plays a central role in creating a new verification system. In order to establish an organic verification system, JUAA is currently in the process of creating a framework to more effectively formulate its medium-term goal and plans and action plans based on the results of its self-assessments and external reviews. The specific efforts include specifying a five-year cycle of self-assessments in the regulations, and upgrading the Self-Assessment Committee. Previously set up only when conducting a self-assessment, this body will serve as a standing committee to monitor the achievements of the action plans every fiscal year.

Chart 6. JUAA's IQA system



*[Verification Review of each activity]*

JUAA internally examines its activities in addition to implementing a verification system for the entire organizational management.

First, JUAA assesses its accreditation activities through the Survey on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation released to the public after completing each university accreditation cycle. The survey is aimed at assessing JUAA's overall evaluation system through questionnaires and interviews with evaluated universities. The Standards Committee reflects the results in the system operation for the next university accreditation cycle. All the survey results are released on the JUAA website.

Next, as mentioned in 2.1.1, JUAA revises its accreditation standards every five or seven years based primarily on the outcomes of surveys and research activities by RIQAHE and other institutes, as well as the results of the Survey on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation. JUAA is also establishing systems to improve its evaluator training, site visits, and other procedures based on the results of the questionnaire surveys of evaluators conducted after the accreditation is completed every fiscal year. For example, JUAA has improved evaluator training by streaming videos outlining its accreditation and reviewing the content and time allocation of practical training workshops. Site visits are reviewed to ensure that

[Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation \(1st Cycle\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation \(2nd Cycle\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

surveys are conducted appropriately in line with the revised evaluation criteria and other changes.

Furthermore, JUAA regularly conducts questionnaire surveys of people attending its briefing sessions and other events to better understand the needs of the participants and participating universities. Reflecting this feedback in future planning and management, JUAA is working to create an improvement cycle that can provide participants with useful information.

In addition, the Member Eligibility Committee carries out a questionnaire survey of higher education institutions to examine JUAA’s membership policies, and considers what kind of services are effective. JUAA will continue to review and further enhance its services as needed.

*[Response to the changing nature of higher education]*

It is important to pay careful attention to the changing nature of higher education, especially in terms of QA activities. JUAA formed the Research Group on Higher Education between 2012 and 2017, and set up RIQAHE from 2018 onward, to monitor trends and undertake surveys on key topics related to higher education QA. (See Table 13 in 2.1.1 for specific survey topics.)

2.1.3 The EQAA periodically conducts a self-study of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data collection and analysis, to inform decision-making and trigger improvements.

JUAA conducts periodic self-assessments based on its IQA system as indicated in 2.1.2.

JUAA prepares a monthly operational status report, a semi-annual duty status report, and an annual activity report and financial statements. Through these documents, JUAA monitors the progress of its activities and carries out a self-assessment every five years to examine the effectiveness and value of its activities.

In the 2014 self-assessment, the Self-Assessment Committee established the following standard items and evaluated the “current status,” “distinctive features,” “issues to be addressed,” and “future development policies”.

[Self-Assessment Report \(January 17, 2014\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Table 14. List of evaluation items in the FY2014 self-assessment report

Key item	Secondary item
1. Basic characteristics	(1) Purpose
	(2) Membership
2. Activities	(1) Standards setting, revision or abolition
	(2) Accreditation
	(3) Research
	(4) Archiving

	(5) International cooperation
	(6) Public relations
3. Management base	(1) Administration and management
	(2) Secretariat structure
	(3) Facilities and equipment
	(4) Financial affairs
4. Review and information disclosure	

JUAA has corrected the issues identified in the 2014 self-assessment report. For example, the Board of Councilors addressed the challenge of speeding up management decision-making by revising the Articles of Incorporation to hold a bimonthly meeting of the Board of Managing Trustees, starting in September 2015. The Board of Managing Trustees comprises a President, Vice Presidents, Senior Managing Director, and Managing Trustees.

[Self-Assessment Report \(September 27, 2019\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

A meeting of the Board of Trustees requires the attendance of more than half the Board members, as stipulated in the Authorization Act. However, considering the difficulty in scheduling meetings that gather all the members who are presidents of universities across the nation, JUAA has introduced an online meeting system using information and communications technology. This change has enabled the Trustees to attend meetings without physically travelling, leading to a significantly higher attendance rate.

In the 2019 self-assessment, the Self-Assessment Committee renewed the following standard items to evaluate “descriptions of the current status,” “strengths and issues to be addressed,” and “future enhancement and improvement measures”.

Table 15. List of evaluation items in the FY2019 self-assessment report

Key item	Secondary item
I. Accreditation activity	1. Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation
	2. Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools
	3. Program Accreditation (veterinary medicine)
II. Research activity	1. Research
	2. Initiative to archive materials
III. International cooperation activity	1. Response to international cooperation
IV. Corporate management activity	1. Membership
	2. Public relations activities
	3. Organizational governance and management
	4. Financial affairs
	5. Organizational management base

As with the 2014 self-assessment, JUAA has addressed the challenges identified in the 2019 self-assessment report. For instance, measures have been taken to reduce the evaluation workload, such as capping the number of pages of the self-study reports prepared by universities and introducing a system to have the universities' basic requirements for document analysis checked by JUAA staff so as to lessen the burden of evaluators.

In addition, ICT has been adopted for evaluation activities in part of the accreditation process since 2020. Specific approaches include conducting online evaluator training and document analyses using a web conferencing system, business messaging apps, and cloud storage. These initiatives have helped lighten the evaluators' workload to a certain extent by easing time and location constraints on evaluators who are university faculty and staff.

To objectively confirm and assess JUAA's overall activities, reviews are carried out based on reports and supporting documents prepared by the Working Group for self-assessment, which consists of JUAA staff, set up under the Self-Assessment Committee. Supporting documents are listed in the Self-assessment Report.

JUAA is committed to examining its own activities as described in 2.1.2 through the above self-assessment of its overall organizational management.

As a specific approach to assessing its accreditation activities, JUAA publishes the Survey on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation after completing each university accreditation cycle. The survey has been carried out so far during the first cycle (FY2004-FY2010) and the second cycle (FY2011-FY2017). For the third cycle (from FY2018), a survey with questionnaires and interviews is underway with universities evaluated each fiscal year and the previous fiscal year. In addition to an annual survey, JUAA plans a separate survey from the third cycle to assess the effectiveness for the next several years.

[Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation \(1st Cycle\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation \(2nd Cycle\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

As indicated in 2.1.2, JUAA has made improvements to evaluator training, site-visits, and other procedures based on the results of evaluator questionnaires after completing the evaluations every fiscal year.

Furthermore, to assess the services for JUAA members in terms of corporate management, JUAA conducts a questionnaire survey of higher education institutions, with a view to further upgrading its services by analyzing their effectiveness.

In response to the revised Detailed Ministerial Order, effective FY2018, that requires certified evaluation and accreditation agencies to implement and publish self-assessments, JUAA brought forward by one year part of its self-assessment implemented every five years. JUAA also published the results on its website and reported them to MEXT. JUAA received the following comments from MEXT: "Incorporating the concept of IQA early into certified evaluation and accreditation

[Comments to the Japan University Accreditation Association](#)  
[WEB-JP]

is commendable;” “It is expected that JUAA will enhance the assessment of whether IQA functions properly or not;” “It is expected that JUAA’s newly established research institute will promote research aimed at enhancing the evaluation quality and share the outcomes with other accreditation agencies;” and “It is expected that JUAA will pioneer measures to raise public awareness of certified evaluation and accreditation in coordination with other accreditation agencies and MEXT, and to engage in various activities, such as case analyses, that will serve as a model for other accreditation agencies”.

#### 2.1.4 The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals, ideally not exceeding five years. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.

As mentioned earlier, JUAA’s external reviews were implemented by the External Review Committee commissioned by the Board of Trustees in FY2014 and FY2020, based on the results of the self-assessment reports compiled in FY 2014 and FY 2019, respectively.

The External Review Committee’s FY2014 and FY2020 reports were compiled through document analyses of JUAA’s self-assessments and interviews with JUAA officials, including the President and Self-Assessment Committee Chair. The reports include the evaluators’ findings for such items as (1) JUAA’s distinctive features (areas for enhancement), (2) issues to be addressed by JUAA (areas for improvement), and (3) recommendations to JUAA (expectations).

The FY2014 external review results presented the following issues:

“It is considered necessary to pursue program accreditation based on the characteristics of study fields in order to review and enhance the quality of undergraduate programs as the basis of university education... It is expected that JUAA will take the initiative in promoting program-specific accreditation.”

[External Review Report \(September 30, 2014\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Based on these views and other findings, the Board of Trustees decided to implement accreditation by field of study in addition to the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools in coordination with MEXT and relevant bodies. JUAA introduced Accreditation for Schools of Veterinary Medicine in 2017 and Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education in 2021.

The FY2020 external review provided the following suggestions:

“Rapid globalization in recent years has had a significant impact in various ways on the development of professional graduate school education and international QA. As a leading QA agency in Japan, JUAA has joined international QA networks in an effort to collaborate with overseas QA agencies. Against this background, a comprehensive analysis of JUAA’s future activities would most likely become a useful policy for JUAA, and this analysis should include such key internal challenges as financial plans, human resource development, and internationalization

[External Review Report \(February 26, 2021\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

strategies, as well as analyses of long- to short-term management resources and social network designs.”

These comments have made JUAA aware of the need to create a more effective mechanism for undertaking improvement activities based on periodic self-assessments and external reviews along with their results.

In the FY2020 external review, a director of TWAEA was appointed as an evaluator to perform evaluations from a global perspective. JUAA formed a joint accreditation project partnership with TWAEA as part of recent efforts to advance its international cooperation activities.

The above external review results reports are made public on the JUAA website after being presented to the Board of Trustees.

## 2.2 Links to the QA Community

### 2.2.1 The EQAA is open to international developments in quality assurance and has mechanisms that enable it to learn about and analyze the main trends in the field.

#### *[Recognizing the importance of international cooperation]*

JUAA sets two objectives in its Articles of Incorporation: “to promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan” and “to contribute to international cooperation such as educational and research activities in higher education institutions.” In order for Japanese universities to develop and further enhance advanced education and research with the progress of globalization, it is necessary for JUAA to actively engage in the internationalization of its activities, and to accurately understand higher education in other countries in terms of QA as well as other trends and interests. With the internationalization of higher education already in mind, JUAA has joined various international networks of QA agencies, including INQAAHE, to interact with other agencies in different countries and regions, thereby connecting this experience to its accreditation activities.

For example, JUAA was established based on a model of accreditation agencies in the United States, with its accreditation system developed after studying the country’s systems, such as translating publications and other materials published by regional accrediting bodies, visiting US QA organizations, and participating in evaluator training and site visits. JUAA officials have visited various organizations not only in the United States but also many other countries to conduct overseas surveys, including research projects commissioned by MEXT. It is no exaggeration to say that the accumulation of these steady research efforts has laid the foundation of JUAA’s university accreditation.

[Articles of Incorporation](#)

[Report on the Survey of University Accreditation by US Accrediting Organizations and Other Bodies \(interim report\) \(FY1997\) \[WEB-JP\]](#)

[Report on the Survey of University Accreditation by US Accrediting](#)

JUAA currently positions international cooperation as one of its main pillars, and has set the following three targets as its medium-term goals (2020-2024).

- 1) Carry out activities to enhance the international compatibility of JUAA's accreditation and ensure its international credibility.
- 2) Engage in activities to promote collaboration with overseas accreditation agencies.
- 3) Disseminate information on JUAA's activities to increase its international recognition, and gather the latest accreditation information by participating in international conferences and other events.

[Organizations and Other Bodies \(second interim report\) \(FY1998\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Medium-term Goals and Medium-term Plan  
[SD-JP02]

To steadily achieve these targets, JUAA remains open to international developments in QA and has a mechanism in place for following and analyzing the trends of QA as indicated below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Membership in international QA networks           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Full member of INAQQHE, APQN, and CHEA-CIQG</li> <li>— Supporting member of AAPBS</li> <li>— Following international QA trends by attending annual general meetings and other gatherings held by member institutions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reciprocal visits and training with overseas QA agencies           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Training for MQA, MNCEA, and other agencies</li> <li>— Collaborative projects based on MOUs (international student surveys, international staff exchange programs)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research on QA trends in foreign countries           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Surveys focusing on IQA</li> <li>— Research projects by RIQAHE</li> <li>— Surveys on the trends of overseas accreditation agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*[Membership in international QA networks]*

As mentioned earlier, JUAA has become a full member of INQAAHE and APQN, and appropriately monitors the QA trends in higher education by participating in conferences organized by these agencies and gathering information disseminated by the networking organizations. In recent years, JUAA staff from the Office for International Planning and the Research and Planning Division took part in the APQN Academic Conference in March 2019; staff from the Office for International Planning also participated in the INQAAHE Conference and workshops in June 2021 and the APQN Annual General Meeting in November 2021. JUAA was scheduled to present a joint accreditation project and student questionnaire surveys jointly conducted with TWAEA and ONESQA at the APQN Academic Conference in March 2020, but the event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Registered as a presenter, JUAA expects to deliver the presentations at the conference if rescheduled.

In addition, in response to rapidly changing business education with the advent of globalization, JUAA has joined the Association of Asia-Pacific Business School (AAPBS) as a supporting member, with the aim of contributing to the international



development of professional graduate business schools covered by JUAA's accreditation. JUAA regularly participates in AAPBS's annual general meetings and academic conferences to interact with business schools in the Asia-Pacific region and keep abreast of the latest trends. In November 2019, JUAA became a full member of CHEA-CIQG. The group's general meetings and other events have been held online since FY2020. JUAA was unable to attend some meetings due to time differences, but plans to actively participate in future meetings to further promote cooperation with overseas higher education institutions and QA agencies.

*[Reciprocal visits and training with overseas QA agencies]*

As a QA agency with the longest history and accreditation experience in Japan, JUAA receives many visit requests from overseas accreditation agencies and other bodies conducting surveys on Japan's higher education QA. JUAA welcomes as many visitors from abroad as possible in order to disseminate its efforts to overseas agencies while learning about trends in other countries. These visits have created the opportunity for JUAA to sign partnership agreements.

For example, JUAA planned and implemented training sessions for the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) in 2010 as requested by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, as part of the Economic Partnership Program (EPP) under the Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Based on requests from MQA, which was newly established at the time, JUAA conducted training covering a wide range of topics on Japan's QA systems and JUAA's university accreditation. JUAA also provided MQA with the opportunity to observe Japan's university initiatives firsthand in cooperation with its member universities. These training sessions were held for three consecutive years, and JUAA also visited MQA to continue the exchanges. The two sides eventually signed a partnership agreement in 2013. Since then, JUAA staff have participated in MQA's training activities and conducted site visits to universities introduced by MQA, thereby acquiring extensive knowledge about Malaysia's higher education policies and QA activities.

More recently, at the request of the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA), a QA agency in Mongolia, JUAA offered MNCEA staff a two-day training session in May 2019. The training covered such topics as Japan's higher education and QA systems, JUAA's university accreditation, and evaluator training. In August of the same year, MNCEA asked JUAA to provide its evaluators and staff with a training session on IQA and the roles of staff. JUAA's associate directors of the Office for International Planning and the Institutional Accreditation Division visited MNCEA to hold the session. These activities have helped Japan and Mongolia deepen their mutual understanding of QA.

Furthermore, in terms of external training, JUAA's associate director of the Research and Planning Division gave a presentation on Japan's QA and university accreditation at the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), a QA

agency in India, in April 2021. These requests reflect JUAA’s position as a leader in assuring and enhancing the quality of higher education in Japan.

Currently, JUAA has signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and other agreements with the following nine agencies in seven countries to exchange information on the trends of higher education systems and QA. Asia represents a high percentage of international students studying at Japanese universities.

Table 16. List of agencies signing MOUs and other agreements with JUAA

Agency	Year of signing	Location
European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD)	2012	Belgium
Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)	2013	Malaysia
Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT)	2013	Taiwan
Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA)	2013	Taiwan
Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI)	2015	South Korea
Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)	2017	Thailand
Center for Education Accreditation, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (CEA VNU-HCM)	2020	Vietnam
Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA)	2020	Mongolia

As for connections with ASEAN countries, JUAA received an invitation from its MOU partner ONESQA in Thailand to attend the ASEAN Young Quality Assurance Officers Network (AYQON) Forum hosted by the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network in November 2019, and JUAA staff from the Office for International Planning participated in the event. The AYQON Forum is a network designed for young staff members with emphasis on international cooperation in QA. With JUAA’s young staff having few opportunities to give presentations at international conferences, this event made JUAA aware of the need for its staff members to improve their knowledge and presentation skills as QA personnel. JUAA also learned about the latest trends of QA in ASEAN countries.

In addition, JUAA has signed a trilateral agreement with TWAEA and ONESQA as part of its separate initiatives with its MOU partners. Specifically, the three agencies have conducted international student surveys and organized international staff exchange programs, thereby building stronger partnerships (see 2.2.2 for details).

*[Research on the trends of QA in foreign countries]*

JUAA monitors and analyzes the latest trends of QA in other countries and returns the outcomes to its accreditation system. The specifics of the surveys and studies are described in Item 2.1.1. It is notable that JUAA is the first organization in Japan

[MEXT-Commissioned Project “Establishment](#)

to advocate the importance of IQA based on site visits to overseas universities and accreditation agencies, and has built and introduced its university accreditation system focusing on IQA. JUAA also defines IQA, which was considered synonymous with self-study, to be aligned with the international understanding of a series of processes starting with educational planning and design. Other research outcomes include improving evaluator training by incorporating mock evaluation workshops based on the knowledge gained from participating in evaluator training sessions held by overseas QA agencies.

As well, a study group of JUAA staff has carried out surveys on overseas QA systems, QA agencies' evaluation criteria and processes, and evaluator training since FY2018. The surveys cover QA agencies in the United States, Britain, Germany, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Malaysia, as well as ENQA, with briefing sessions held periodically. At the end of each fiscal year, members of the study group exchange opinions on activity policies and decide on topics for the following fiscal year. In FY2020, the study group conducted research on the surveyed countries and a questionnaire survey on ICT use in evaluations. The survey report is shared within JUAA, and discussions are underway on the specific use of ICT to make evaluations more efficient. In FY2021, the group plans to explore such topics as the accountability of US accreditation agencies and universities, viability of Germany's IQA, and collaboration among Malaysia's accreditation agencies. It will also study examples useful for the next cycle (fourth cycle) of the university accreditation system and the current status of IQA systems of overseas universities as common themes.

In these ways, the knowledge and knowhow gained through surveys and studies are utilized for revising JUAA's accreditation standards and reviewing its accreditation system, and are indispensable in maintaining and improving JUAA's evaluation quality. Established as a sustainable research institute, RIQAHE plays an important role in analyzing the QA trends and the current status of universities both in Japan and abroad. (See 2.2.1 for RIQAHE's activities.)

As described above, JUAA constantly monitors and analyzes QA trends through its membership in international QA agency networks, various activities based on international cooperation, and surveys from multifaceted perspectives.

However, there is room for improvement in examining the QA systems in foreign countries. From the perspective of the significance and continuity of these activities, it is necessary for JUAA to pursue overseas research more systematically, rather than with a study group of its staff members. While enlarging the achievements of RIQAHE's research projects, JUAA needs to actively present the outcomes at international conferences.

2.2.2 The EQAA collaborates with other QA agencies where possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, and review of decisions, joint projects, or staff exchanges.

JUAA has various opportunities to interact, collaborate, and cooperate with QA agencies in Japan and abroad. Specific examples of its initiatives are as follows.

Domestic agencies	Overseas agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meetings and training among certified evaluation and accreditation agencies</li> <li>● Announcement of university accreditation good practices on the JUAA website</li> <li>● Publication and distribution of newsletters, research journals, and PR magazines as communication tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Joint initiatives based on MOUs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— International staff exchange programs</li> <li>— International student surveys</li> </ul> </li> <li>● English translation and disclosure of accreditation standards and results</li> <li>● Joint accreditation projects</li> </ul>

First, JUAA exchanges information and opinions with domestic QA agencies, as appropriate, through multiple meetings that include the JNCEAA meeting, management meeting of the Japanese College and University Portraits, and the liaison meeting on the institutional certified evaluation and accreditation system. For example, certified evaluation and accreditation agencies share their accreditation results and good practices at the JNCEAA meeting held at the end of every fiscal year, and publish the details on the JNCEAA website. The agencies also hold annual joint staff training to update their knowledge on QA and to promote interactions among staff members (see 1.4.3 for details).

[JNCEAA website](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In terms of sharing good practices, JUAA undertakes its own initiative to publish on its website the outstanding efforts of universities identified as “commendations” and “distinctive features” in JUAA’s accreditation results. The website includes not only JUAA’s evaluations but also comments from evaluated universities, and provides tags and keyword searches for easy access to information on the distinctive features and outstanding efforts.

[Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In addition, as communication tools JUAA publishes various publications, including (1) “Newsletter,” which also serves as JUAA’s activity reports, (2) RIQAHE’s “University Evaluation Review”, (3) “University Staff Journal,” aimed at enhancing staff members’ skills and abilities, and for other practical uses, (4) its public relations magazine “JUAA,” and (5) “JUAA Library.” These publications are sent to JUAA’s member universities and other relevant bodies.

Newsletter  
[SD-JP05]

[Public relations magazine “JUAA”](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[University Evaluation Review](#)

[University Staff Journal](#)

[JUAA Library](#)

Next, as part of its efforts to collaborate and cooperate with overseas QA agencies, JUAA has signed partnership agreements with nine agencies in seven countries, as mentioned earlier, with activities including information sharing on QA and staff exchanges. JUAA aims to maintain contact with its MOU partners at least several times a year, and actively responds to surveys requested by INQAAHE and APQN members.

JUAA, TWAEA, and ONESQA in particular have concluded a trilateral international partnership agreement on information sharing related to QA and staff exchanges, and jointly implement staff training and student surveys. JUAA's collaboration activities with other agencies have been expanding, with its MOU partner in Vietnam, CEA VNU-HCM, joining the international student surveys since FY2021.

Furthermore, to increase its international recognition, JUAA actively disseminates information about its activities by publishing its accreditation results and evaluation criteria translated into English, and posting them on the INQAAHE Bulletin.

*[International staff exchange program]*

It is essential for staff members of QA agencies to monitor and understand the international QA trends. In addition to being knowledgeable about higher education and QA in Japan and abroad, the staff's problem-solving, communication, and social skills, along with teamwork ability, are important qualities in carrying out activities smoothly. JUAA's joint international staff exchange program with TWAEA and ONESQA has been held annually since 2018, with the aim of learning from one another about the trends of higher education systems and QA in each country, as well as developing and enhancing the abilities and skills required as QA agency personnel.

Table 17. List of international staff exchange program themes

Training theme		Participant
March 2018	QA Systems Accreditation Systems IQA	Mid-level
June 2018	Evaluator Training Toward the Efficiency of Evaluation	Mid-level
February 2019	Status of Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Universities and QA Agencies Support for Quality Enhancement of Universities Relationship Building with Society Exchange Information & Perspectives on IT in Evaluation	Mid-level
July 2019	Evaluation Standards Document Reviews Site-Visits	Entry-level
June 2020	Strengths and Weaknesses of QA Systems Analysis Methods for the Self-Assessment Report	Mid/entry-level
December 2020	Development of a Training Program for Assessors Evaluation Mechanism of Assessors	Mid/entry-level
July 2021	QA System: Retrospect in 2020 and Prospect for the Future	Accreditation Department

Staff training is organized by the three agencies in rotation. The three-day program features presentations and discussions by participants, as well as visits to local

universities and relevant organizations. The training sessions have so far focused on the current status of higher education in each country, accreditation systems, evaluator training, improving evaluation efficiency, IT use in evaluation, and other topics, as shown in Table 17. The participants have reflected on the current status and challenges of their agencies, and applied the knowledge acquired during the sessions to their evaluation work.

The FY2020 and FY2021 sessions were held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the online format also allowed other overseas QA agencies to participate as observers. The sixth staff exchange program in FY2020, for example, invited the Vietnamese accreditation agency CEA VNU-HCM to join as an observer in a training session themed on the “Development of a Training Program for Assessors” and “Evaluation Mechanism of Assessors.” The FY2021 program welcomed Croatia’s Agency for Science and Higher Education as an observer, which provided an opportunity to learn directly about trends in higher education systems and QA not only in the Asian region but in EU countries as well. The next training session designed for senior officials and mid-level staff is scheduled to take place in Thailand with the themes of “QF vs QA” and “Internationalization of Quality Assurance and Universities.” The session date is currently under consideration, depending on the COVID-19 infection situation and travel restrictions. CEA VNU-HCM plans to participate again in the program.

As far as the effectiveness of this training is concerned, the international staff exchange program asks the participants to set goals in advance by specifying the abilities and skills they want to acquire through the training, and to reflect on their achievements when the session ends. Questionnaire surveys are also conducted, and the program is reviewed in terms of training approaches and content based on the results. JUAA’s questionnaire survey of the participants revealed that many were able to understand the accreditation systems in other countries, along with government policies and other aspects, and to improve their presentation skills, including how to prepare presentation materials. The survey found that many participants enjoyed the opportunity to interact with staff from other agencies. These responses suggest that the training program was conducted in line with its original purpose, and that it had a positive impact on staff development.

*[International student surveys]*

JUAA, TWAEA, and ONESQA have conducted joint questionnaire surveys of university students in Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan since 2016 to explore ways to promote qualitative improvement in universities. Specifically, the online surveys ask university students in these countries about their level of satisfaction studying at university. The results are compared and analyzed, compiled into a report, and fed back to schools cooperating with the surveys. The first joint survey in FY2016 asked university graduates about the relationship between their studies and employability. From FY2018 onward, the annual survey has targeted enrolled

[2019 Survey Report](#)

[2020 Survey Report](#)

[2021 Survey Report](#)

students to examine their learning outcomes and levels of satisfaction with their studies. JUAA publishes the survey reports on its member-only website; it also provides a comparative analysis of Japanese universities and other surveyed institutions to the cooperating schools as reference data. With Vietnam (CEA VNU-HCM as a contact point) participating in FY2021, the joint survey covered students in four countries. These surveys have raised some challenges, such as differences in the number of cooperating schools and samples among the participating countries, but it is significant that the accreditation agencies and cooperating schools share the list of surveyed schools, and that the comparative analysis serves as evidence materials for education QA of universities.

*[English translation and disclosure of accreditation standards and results]*

JUAA monitors trends and gathers information on QA in other countries and actively disseminates information. Specifically, JUAA prepares a summary of the accreditation results for each fiscal year and sends the summary to its MOU partners; its evaluation criteria translated into English can also be accessed on its website. JUAA posts its accreditation and survey results on the INQAAHE Bulletin (digital edition) in an effort to increase its international recognition. In these ways, JUAA seeks international understanding of the significance and concept of its university accreditation.

[Webpage for Accreditation Results Search](#)

[INQAAHE Bulletin \(December 2021 iJAS, September 2021 Accreditation Results, March 2021 International Student Survey, etc.\)](#)

*[Joint accreditation projects]*

In 2018, JUAA launched a joint accreditation project in mutual cooperation with TWAEA, as part of its initiatives for the international QA of universities. The aim is to contribute to the development and internationalization of universities through accreditation jointly conducted by JUAA and TWAEA. The project particularly targets universities aiming to become internationalized. The joint project has expanded with ONESQA taking part in 2021 (see 6.2.1 for details).

As mentioned above, JUAA has created opportunities to interact with domestic and overseas QA agencies, and actively collaborates and coordinates with other agencies to share good practices and promote staff development. It is particularly notable that JUAA, TWAEA, and ONESQA continue productive exchanges, ranging from information sharing to international staff exchange programs and student surveys, based on trilateral MOUs. JUAA also exchanges views with the two agencies on possible joint research and symposiums, such as research on student learning outcomes and symposiums on international QA. JUAA plans to consider themes in FY2022 and seeks cooperation from its research institute RIQAHE.

JUAA hopes to further expand its exchanges and activities as needed, and to deepen its cooperation and partnerships in ways that contribute to QA of higher education institutions in Japan.

### 3. The EQAA's Framework for the External Review of Quality in Higher Education Institutions

#### 3.1 The Relationship between the EQAA and Higher Education Institutions

3.1.1 The EQAA recognizes that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions (HEIs) themselves, and respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions and programs.

##### *[JUAA's accreditation]*

JUAA designs a cycle of accreditation to be implemented every seven years for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, and every five years for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools.

On the other hand, the Program Accreditation examines QA through each university's self-study as a general principle with no requirements for third-party evaluation. However, in response to the requests of universities providing specialized education programs, JUAA has introduced field-specific evaluation criteria based on its knowledge and experience. As of FY2021, third-party evaluations have been implemented for veterinary medicine (from FY2017) and dental education (from FY2021). (See pages 9 to 10 for accreditation performance.)

##### *[Evaluation focusing on IQA]*

JUAA shifted its focus to IQA starting with the second cycle of certified evaluation and accreditation in FY2011, based on its basic concept that universities are primarily responsible for assuring the quality of education. This change was due to the first-cycle accreditation results revealing that self-studies were not necessarily linked to improvements and reform of university education. JUAA called for the establishment of a university-wide IQA system based on autonomy to ensure that universities appropriately implement self-studies and improve education to achieve their learning outcomes. These approaches to reform are also in line with JUAA's traditional stance of seeking to have universities assure their own quality while respecting their autonomy. Furthermore, JUAA's emphasis on IQA corresponds to international trends that have promoted reform.

Since the third cycle of certified evaluation and accreditation in FY2018, JUAA has moved a step beyond the second cycle to develop IQA system with an emphasis on functional effectiveness. JUAA's University Accreditation Handbook states that the primary responsibility for QA of university education rests with the university itself, and that JUAA carries out evaluations focusing on whether the university has in place and effectively operates IQA system.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

##### *[Evaluation in line with mission and purpose]*

JUAA evaluates universities in line with their missions and purposes to respect their individuality and contribute to developing their distinctive features. Accordingly, JUAA's accreditation standards require universities to establish criteria for their missions and purposes, as well as formulate and implement medium- and long-

[Website for Accreditation Standards](#)

[University Standards and](#)



term plans to clarify and realize their missions and purposes as appropriate higher education institutions. These standards have paved the way for universities to specify their missions and objectives of human resource development, formulate action plans, and undertake educational and research activities. JUAA's field-specific standards for professional graduate schools require universities to clarify the objectives of their educational programs. In addition, JUAA's Program Accreditation Standards stipulates that universities clearly define the objectives of their educational programs in line with their missions and purpose.

[its Rationale](#)

[Junior College Standards and its Rationale](#)

JUAA considers self-study reports by universities as important materials, as universities use their self-studies to undergo third-party evaluations of their methods in addition to their definition of evaluation criteria. Similar evaluation methods are adopted for the Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation, suggesting that these methods help universities strengthen their self-improvement and explanatory capabilities.

### 3.1.2 The EQAA promotes the development and appropriate implementation of IQA processes in accordance with the understanding that the primary responsibility for assuring quality resides with the institutions and its programs.

JUAA's University Standards defines IQA as a constant and continuous process within universities to improve quality and responsibly explain and verify that their education and studies meet appropriate standards by effectively operating Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles and other functions. Standard 2. "Internal Quality Assurance" requires universities to set out their policies and procedures for IQA, and to establish systems linked to improving and enhancing their quality through such evaluations as internal and external reviews. The University Standards stipulates that universities must operate their IQA systems and carry out activities to assure their educational quality, thereby enhancing student learning outcomes. The Standards also states that universities must assess for themselves whether their IQA system fully functions and make improvements as needed. The University Standards is designed for universities to make comprehensive efforts to assure educational quality and fulfill their social responsibilities.

[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

For accreditation, JUAA evaluates whether universities clearly state their policies and procedures for IQA, how they maintain their IQA systems, and whether they are capable of making improvements and enhancements by implementing appropriate self-studies. JUAA also considers external reviews and other approaches as important to ensure the objectivity of self-studies. From the perspective of educational QA, Standards 4. "Curricula and Learning Outcomes" stipulates that universities must formulate three policies (diploma, curriculum, and admission policies), design and implement curricula based on these policies, and monitor and assess student learning outcomes to demonstrate their effectiveness.

[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

These requirements stress the need for universities to commit themselves to IQA of their education. (See 3.2.1 for the structure of the University Standards.)

JUAA's accreditation standards for professional graduate schools and specialized fields are designed primarily to evaluate educational programs with no university-wide IQA standards in place; but JUAA requires universities to design and implement curricula based on the three policies, and to monitor and assess the learning outcomes. In addition, JUAA attaches importance to the QA of educational programs, and requests that self-studies be implemented at the program level, with improvements and enhancements made based on the findings. These two types of accreditations now require universities to submit their self-study reports to JUAA, and evaluators conduct evaluations based on the reports, data, and supporting evidence. JUAA considers this process as one that helps confirm the universities' self-improvement abilities as described above. (See 3.3.1 for JUAA's evaluation methods.)

[Website for Accreditation Standards](#)

### 3.1.3 The EQAA bears in mind the level of workload and cost that its procedures will place on institutions, and, strives to make them as time and cost effective as possible.

#### *[Measures to reduce evaluation workload]*

To help universities prepare efficiently for accreditation, JUAA has developed specified formats for legal compliance items and numerical data among its evaluation materials so that all universities can compile a uniform collection of data. The input data require no written explanations to be included in the self-study reports unless otherwise noted. This measure is aimed at easing the burden on universities preparing accreditation applications by organizing the items and numerical data requiring written descriptions and compliance status. As for supporting evidence, JUAA requests that universities submit supporting evidence materials in PDF or other digital formats, and starting in FY2018, evaluation materials are to be submitted in a digital format via a designated cloud computing platform so as to lighten the physical workload. JUAA recommends that universities planning to apply for accreditation attend a briefing session on the outline, preparation, and process one year before filing, and secure time for the application procedures.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

Compiling self-study reports requires a significant amount of time and effort for applicant universities. To help them implement self-studies efficiently, JUAA has taken steps to increase their understanding of the University Standards. Specifically, JUAA asks the universities to evaluate their initiatives by setting up review items in line with the University Standards. In terms of empirical evaluations, JUAA specifies the type of evidence for submission.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

*[Appropriateness of accreditation time]*

JUAA's accreditation for each institution and program takes one year to complete from receiving the universities' evaluation materials to notifying them of the accreditation results. JUAA's review subcommittees (accreditation teams) conduct document analyses and site visits, with their draft evaluation results reviewed by the accreditation committees to produce the draft results. After receiving feedback from the applicant universities, the committees prepare their opinions before the Board of Trustees discusses them and makes the final decision. In light of these procedures, and review of the evaluation results according to the decision-making process, JUAA considers the time required for accreditation as appropriate. This process also applies to the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation, and the time required for these evaluations is also considered appropriate. (See 3.3.1 for JUAA's accreditation process.)

[Accreditation Fees Regulations](#)  
[WEB-JP]

*[Appropriateness of accreditation costs]*

JUAA charges a fee for each type of accreditation as shown below, with the fees determined based on expenses that include payments to evaluators for meetings, site visits, and document analyses; travel and accommodations during site visits and other activities; meals and other miscellaneous charges; and personnel costs for JUAA staff. The accreditation fees also include the expenses of the follow-up system subsequent to the accreditation results, with accredited universities incurring no additional costs until they apply for the next accreditation. Taking all these factors into account, JUAA considers its accreditation fees as appropriate and reasonable compared with the accreditation fees charged by other accreditation agencies as indicated in Table 19.

Table 18. JUAA's accreditation fees

Type of accreditation	Accreditation fees
University Accreditation	2,000,000 yen per university 350,000 yen per faculty 350,000 yen per graduate school *Universities that are not JUAA full members are charged an annual membership fee for five years in addition to the above accreditation fees.
Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Junior Colleges	2,000,000 yen per junior college 200,000 yen per department *Junior colleges that are not JUAA full members are charged an annual membership fee for five years in addition to the above accreditation fees.
Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools	3,500,000 yen per faculty

Program Accreditation	2,200,000 yen per program *1,300,000 yen per program for a joint degree program (2,600,000 yen for two programs)
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Table 19. Comparison of accreditation fees with other agencies (institutional accreditation)

	JUAA	JIHEE	NIAD-QE	JAQUE	JACA
Base fee	2,000,000 yen	2,000,000 yen	3,762,000 yen	1,600,000 yen	1,800,000 yen
Faculty	350,000 yen	500,000 yen	660,000 yen	350,000 yen	400,000 yen
Graduate school	350,000 yen	250,000 yen	660,000 yen	200,000 yen	200,000 yen
None	Non-members are charged membership fees (by admission capacity) for five years.	Non-members are charged membership fees (by admission capacity) for seven years.	Universities applying for the Institutional Thematic Assessment are charged additional fees.	Non-members are separately charged specified fees.	Non-members are charged membership fees (by admission capacity) for seven years.
*Calculation example	4,800,000 yen	5,000,000 yen	9,042,000 yen	3,800,000 yen	4,200,000 yen

\*Each amount is calculated for four faculties and four graduate schools.

\*This table is based on each EQAA's website.

### 3.2 Definition of Criteria for External Reviews

#### 3.2.1 The EQAA recognizes and values institutional diversity and translates this valuation into criteria and procedures that take into account the identity and goals of higher education institutions.

JUAA's accreditation specifies the following three objectives.

1. Assuring the public of the quality of university education and research through a comprehensive evaluation of various aspects of universities based on the JUAA University Standards.
2. Continuously supporting the improvement and enhancement of universities through the process of notifying universities of the accreditation results, reviewing the progress made in addressing the issues identified by the evaluations, and presenting the review results to the universities.
3. Contributing to clarifying the social roles of universities through accreditation, and supporting universities in fulfilling their social accountability.

JUAA also conducts evaluation activities based on the same objectives in the University Accreditation, Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Junior Colleges (Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation), and Program Accreditation for 11 schools (including the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools).

The Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation features five evaluation items to achieve its objectives.

1. Evaluation focusing on the effectiveness of IQA.
2. Evaluation focusing on self-improvement functions.

3. Evaluation focusing on initiatives to realize the mission and purpose, and supporting improvement and enhancement.
4. Evaluation supporting continuous improvement and enhancement.
5. Evaluation focusing on peer reviews.

To achieve the above items, JUAA's accreditation requires universities to establish and operate IQA systems aimed at improving and enhancing their education, and eventually connecting to better student learning outcomes. Accordingly, JUAA has added IQA standards to the University Standards to assess the effectiveness and functionality. (Detailed in the "Overview of accreditation standards" below.) Peer reviews are also conducted, in principle, by evaluators consisting primarily of faculty and staff members recommended by universities (see 3.3.3).

*[Overview of accreditation standards]*

JUAA has established different sets of standards for each type of accreditation. Currently, the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation adopts two sets of standards for universities and junior colleges, while the Program Accreditation provides standards for nine professional graduate schools (law, business, public policy, public health, intellectual property studies, global communications, digital contents, global legal studies, and public relations) and two standards for two specialized fields (veterinary medicine and dental education).

[Website for Accreditation Standards](#)

*<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>*

The Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation stipulates ten standards each for universities and junior colleges. The standards also include their rationales, with the content applicable to all universities, regardless of the type of institution, in order to provide a general outline of the schools' expected roles. To evaluate the missions and purposes of universities, for example, Standard 1. "Mission and Purpose" states that universities appropriately define and disclose their purposes for education, research, and human resource development based on their missions, and that universities clarify their medium- to long-term plans and other policies to realize their missions. These standards indicate that JUAA focuses on the appropriateness and effectiveness of each university's efforts to realize its mission and purpose rather than conducting uniform evaluations.

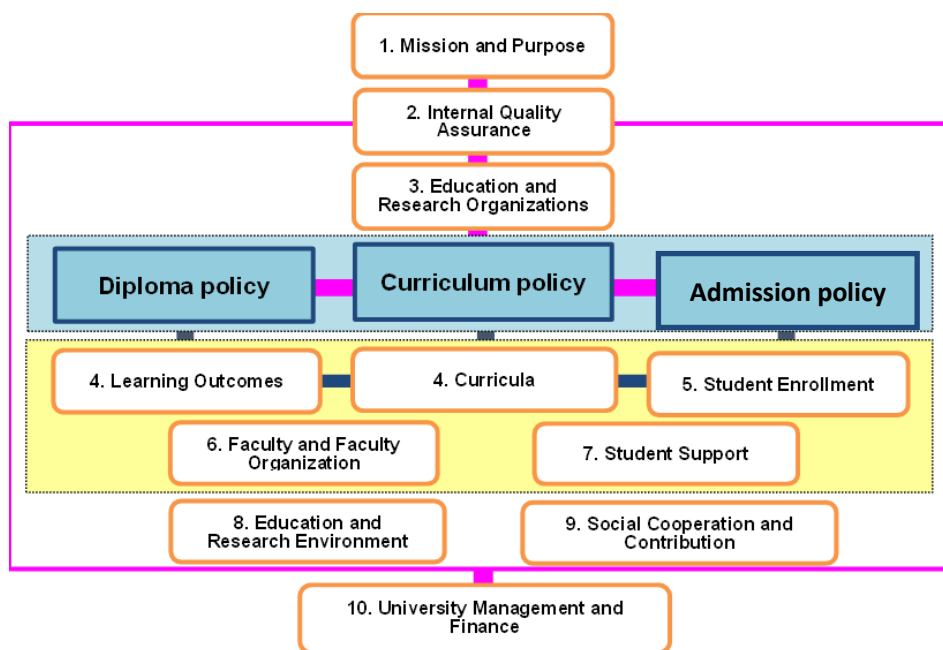
[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

JUAA's accreditation also requires universities to establish diploma, curriculum, and admission policies, as well as draw up implementation plans for faculty and faculty organizations, student support, education and research environment, and other aspects, with a view to realizing their missions and purposes. JUAA then evaluates whether the universities carry out these activities appropriately according to their plans. These approaches demonstrate that JUAA values the identity and objectives of higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the ten standards are interconnected. In other words, universities are

required to establish appropriate education and research organizations (Standard 3), conduct educational and research activities based on the three policies (Standard 4), accept students suited to this educational level (Standard 5), and form a faculty organization by assigning appropriate faculty members supporting their curricula (Standard 6), with the aim of realizing their missions and purposes (Standard 1). Universities must also provide the necessary support and environment for educational and research activities (Standards 7 and 8), and contribute to society by returning the outcomes of their activities and acquired knowledge to demonstrate their social responsibilities (Standard 9), while securing the necessary financial resources through appropriate management to support these activities (Standard 10). Furthermore, universities must fulfill their social accountability (IQA) by assuring their educational quality through activities focusing on this education and by making improvements and enhancements based on the results of self-studies and external reviews (Standard 2).

Chart 7. Structure of the University Standards



*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools>*

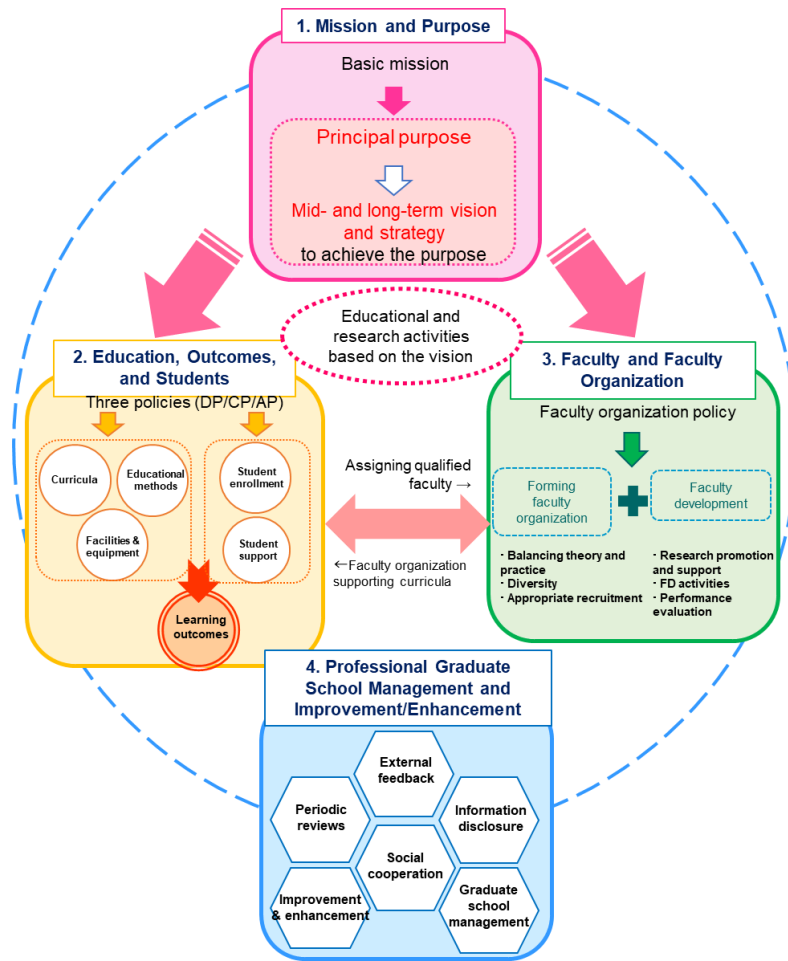
JUAA has established accreditation standards for professional graduate schools by study field to evaluate whether appropriate education is provided in each field. When the standards were first introduced, JUAA’s evaluation focused mainly on specialized programs, but it also covered all aspects of graduate schools including management. It was soon realized, however, that the standards overlapped those of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation in terms of student support and education and research environment, as professional graduate schools and graduate schools often share courses under the same university-wide systems.

As a result, JUAA has progressively revised the field-specific standards focusing exclusively on educational programs since FY2019, and aims to clarify the distinction between the two types of certified evaluation and accreditations.

JUAA's revised standards for professional graduate schools consist of four key items with texts, basic requirements, and evaluation perspectives. The texts outline the requirements for graduate schools to meet, with multiple evaluation perspectives provided in each item to explain the details of the requirements. The basic requirements refer to legal and other minimum external requirements for each key item, and the content of the basic requirement data is separately organized in a worksheet format. The standards require graduate schools to clearly define their purposes and formulate medium- and long-term visions or professional graduate school management strategies to achieve the purposes (Key Item 1). To this end, the schools must establish three policies (diploma, curriculum, and admission), design appropriate curricula, develop educational methods for students to acquire knowledge and skills more effectively, accept students suited to this educational level, and provide student learning support and other assistance (Key Item 2). In addition, the schools must form a faculty organization supporting their curricula, assign qualified faculty members, and promote their research (Key Item 3). Lastly, the standards require the schools to commit themselves to making improvements and enhancements based on the self-studies, as well as external reviews from industries and other entities, so as to maintain and improve their educational standards (Key Item 4).

JUAA's certified evaluation and accreditation standards for professional graduate schools respect the schools' objectives, with JUAA stating that it evaluates their educational and research activities to achieve their clearly defined missions and purposes.

Chart 8. Structure of the Professional Graduate School Standards



<Program Accreditation>

JUAA introduced the Accreditation for Schools of Veterinary Medicine in FY2017 and the Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education in FY2021. The standards for veterinary medicine comprise eight key standard items (1. Mission and Purpose, 2. Curricula and Learning Outcomes, 3. Student Enrollment, 4. Faculty and Faculty Organization, 5. Student Support, 6. Education and Research Environment, 7. Social Cooperation and Contribution, and 8. Self-study and Information Disclosure). For the accreditation structure and system, JUAA provides easy-to-understand, detailed evaluation perspectives for universities undergoing the evaluations for the first time. On the other hand, the Program Accreditation Standards, which covers the entire university, overlaps to some degree with the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, as with the Professional Graduate School Standards. JUAA plans to reorganize and streamline the Program Accreditation Standards for the second cycle starting in FY2024.

The Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education specifies the standards comprising five key items (1. Mission and Purpose, 2. Educational Content,



Methods, and Outcomes, 3. Student Enrollment, 4. Faculty and Faculty Organization, and 5. Self-study), with clearly defined categories established under the key items, and multiple evaluation perspectives provided in each item. The standards for both veterinary medicine and dental education place importance on offering students hands-on clinical experience, and require the schools to provide seamless education from undergraduate program studies to residency training and general practice as veterinarians or dentists. In light of these conditions, JUAA's standards set out the evaluation items and perspectives to assess whether the necessary systems and education are provided for clinical clerkships.

*[Overview of accreditation procedures]*

In terms of accreditation procedures, JUAA generally conducts its evaluations based on self-study reports prepared by universities, faculties, and other institutions, with respect for their missions and purposes. JUAA requires universities to carry out self-studies in accordance with its University Standards. While JUAA's standards are used by evaluators as evaluation criteria, JUAA urges universities to use them for their self-studies to help promote autonomous standard assurance and enhancement.

When conducting site visits, JUAA's evaluators send questions to the universities five weeks prior to their visits, and begin the two-day on-site evaluation after obtaining the written responses. Meetings and interviews during the site visits are aimed at hearing opinions directly from university officials, and questions are asked regarding their views and current status based on the written responses. As for the Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools (excluding law schools) and the Program Accreditation, JUAA sends the universities the draft results of the evaluators' document analysis prior to the site visits, allowing the universities to point out factual errors and express their views on the draft during the visits (see Chart 9.).

Furthermore, for all types of accreditations, JUAA sends the universities its draft evaluation results compiled after completing its document analyses and site visits, and sets a certain timeframe for the universities to respond with opinion statements on factual errors and other matters, in order to ensure the appropriateness of its evaluation results.

[Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

The universities judged to have failed to meet the standards in their evaluation results are provided with an opportunity to file an appeal against the results (denial of accreditation) within two weeks after receiving the notification. (See 3.3 for details of the accreditation procedures.)

Chart 9. Timetable of document analyses and site visits

Period	Period before site visits	Type of evaluation work
<April-May> ↓	Around 4 months	... Evaluator training seminars
<May-July> ↓	Around 3 months	... Document analyses by evaluators (about 2 months)
<August> ↓	7 to 10 weeks	... Evaluation team meetings (subcommittees)
<Early September> ↓	5 weeks	... Sending evaluators' questions to universities
<October> ↓	10 days	... Submitting responses to evaluators' questions
<October>	Site visits	... Site visits (2 days)

3.2.2 The standards or criteria developed by the EQAA have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders and are revised at regular intervals to ensure relevance to the needs of the system.

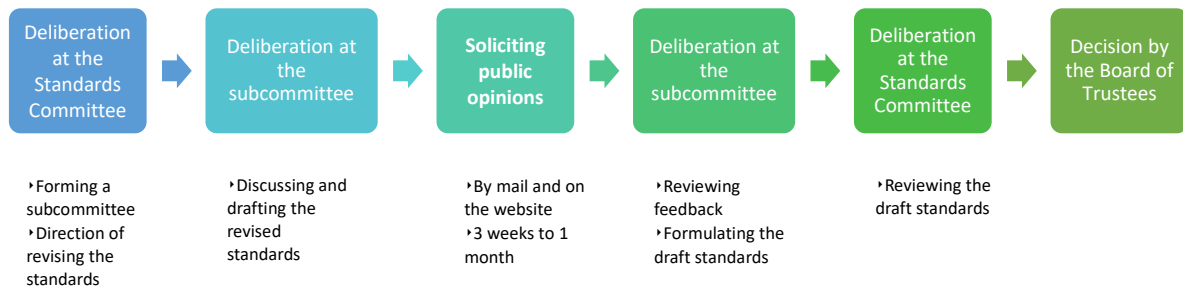
*[Standards revision process]*

JUAA reviews its standards in line with each accreditation cycle. In addition, when laws and regulations on higher education are amended, JUAA needs to revise its standards for the certified evaluation and accreditation that include legal compliance, even in the midst of its accreditation cycle.

To revise JUAA's standards, the Standards Committee first deliberates on the revision before setting up a working group to discuss and draft the revised standards. While providing an update to the Standards Committee, the working group draws up draft standards and solicits opinions from various parties. Specifically, when revising the standards for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, the Standard Committee collects various opinions for a period of more than three weeks by sending the draft to all universities and junior colleges and posting it on the JUAA website. As for the Professional Graduate School Accreditation and the Program Accreditation, the Standard Committee sends the draft to the applicable faculties, graduate schools, and JUAA's full members, and seeks opinions through the JUAA website. The draft is also sent to other relevant accreditation agencies and professional organizations as necessary. After the working group reflects the feedback in the draft standards, the Standards Committee undertakes deliberations, and the Board of Trustees meets to make the final decision. In these ways, JUAA revises its standards by reflecting public comments from not only university officials but also a wide variety of individuals and groups.

[Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards](#)

Chart 10. Standards revision process



*[Future challenges]*

With the draft standards sent mainly to university officials, many opinions are expressed by faculty and staff members. To actively reflect the views of industry it is necessary to seek opinions from business organizations and other entities. It is also important to consider ways to gather opinions from other university stakeholders, including students and graduates. JUAA's challenge ahead is to strengthen its mechanism for reflecting the views of industry and university stakeholders (including students and graduates) in its accreditation standards.

3.2.3 Standards or criteria take into consideration the specific aspects related to different modes of provision, such as transnational education, distance or online programs or other non-traditional approaches to higher education as relevant to the context in which they operate.

*[Evaluation of distance and online education]*

As mentioned earlier, JUAA implements its evaluations focusing on the efforts of universities to realize their missions and purposes; it also supports their improvement and enhancement efforts, and ensures that the evaluations are consistent with non-traditional higher education as well. In other words, JUAA evaluates universities in terms of whether they specify the learning outcomes expected to be acquired by students in their diploma policy, clarify the necessary curricula and educational methods to achieve the outcomes in their curriculum policy, and provide education in accordance with these policies. JUAA considers these approaches to also apply to non-traditional approaches to higher education.

*[Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation]*

In Japan, correspondence educational programs must be established in accordance with the Standards for Establishment of University Correspondence Education and approved by the MEXT Minister. Accordingly, to evaluate universities with correspondence education programs in the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, JUAA confirms whether the universities comply with the national correspondence education standards, and examines the appropriateness of their faculty organizations and management for correspondence education.

However, many universities in Japan have introduced online lessons since 2020 to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infections, and JUAA has also taken steps to check the status of anti-infection measures when conducting the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. With online classes held as a temporary response to the pandemic, JUAA examines various anti-coronavirus measures taken by universities, such as online education, through site visit interviews and other means, without revising its evaluation criteria. At the same time, as more universities adopt distance and online education as new educational methods, JUAA's RIQAHE conducted a survey on online education and compiled a report describing the various methods and challenges of online education introduced by universities as well as future outlooks based on the examples of other countries.

Based on the above survey and other research, JUAA reviewed the items used by universities as references for conducting self-studies in line with the University Standards in 2021. As a result, the requirement of operating an appropriate communications system for online education and entrance examinations was added to JUAA's evaluation criteria.

*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools>*

Japan's Standards for Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools states that "professional graduate schools may have their students take classes at places other than classrooms where classes are conducted using various types of media in an advanced way as long as the classes are recognized as effective in specialized fields that are expected to produce the full effects of education" (Article 8, Paragraph 2), and that "professional graduate schools may provide correspondence courses using various types of media in an advanced way as long as classes are recognized as effective in specialized fields that are expected to produce the full effects of education through correspondence education" (Article 9). These clauses indicate that ICT-based education is permitted for school systems.

In response to the above decree, JUAA's standards for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Standards for Professional Graduate Schools stipulate in all nine specialized fields that classes in various temporal and spatial settings, such as remote classes and e-learning, should produce the full effects of education by providing appropriate content and methods. Accordingly, to evaluate graduate schools adopting such educational methods as remote classes and e-learning, JUAA evaluates their approaches to ensuring appropriate educational standards and the effectiveness of their education, while examining whether the schools use methods that reflect the content and characteristics of class subjects, based on their self-study reports.

*[Program Accreditation]*

JUAA's Program Accreditation (veterinary medicine and dental education) covers undergraduate programs, and generally evaluates distance education among

[FY2022 Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Universities and Junior Colleges](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Survey on Effective Approaches, Evaluation Standards and Perspectives of Online Education](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Professional Graduate Business School Standards](#)  
(Perspective No. 2-22)

[Veterinary Educational](#)

various educational methods as part of its accreditation that values the universities' efforts to realize their missions and purposes, and supports their improvement and enhancement measures, as in the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. With training essential in the two fields to acquire practical skills, the universities conduct in-person practical training sessions in small groups, while providing lectures in an online or on-demand format to prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

As for veterinary medicine, there are four cases where two universities jointly established a veterinary education program (eight universities and four programs). Since their establishment, students enrolled in these joint programs visit each other's campus to take classes and practical training sessions, and faculty members from both universities also travel between the two campuses for lessons and training. In addition, these universities have developed a distance education system using ICT to jointly conduct classes, which prompted JUAA's standards for the Program Accreditation to include the requirement of establishing an ICT-based remote learning system.

*[Evaluation of transnational education and other new educational methods]*

JUAA evaluates transnational education and other new educational methods as part of the universities' educational activities to realize their missions and purposes, just in the same way as above, rather than developing criteria for each approach. JUAA believes it can evaluate newly developed educational methods using advanced ICT from this standpoint. To deal with a growing number of non-traditional approaches to higher education in Japan, JUAA will seek evaluation methods that can respond more flexibly and appropriately to diverse forms of higher education, while maintaining its evaluation focusing on universities' efforts to realize their missions and purposes.

*[Future challenges]*

As mentioned above, JUAA does not generally regard online and distance education as special educational methods and evaluates these approaches as part of the educational methods adopted by universities based on their diploma and curriculum policies to realize their missions and purposes. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020, many universities and graduate schools have introduced online education, and are expected to continue online lessons, combine online and in-person classes, or provide education in an on-demand format, even after the pandemic ends. Some professional graduate schools have started on-line lessons on weekdays and in-person classes on weekends to accommodate working students. JUAA needs to gather and analyze examples based on the aforementioned surveys and future trends, and weigh the points to consider regarding the implementation and evaluation of online education.

3.2.4 Standards or criteria explicitly address the areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA's scope, (e.g., institutional governance and management, program design and approval, teaching and learning, student admission, progression and certification, research, community engagement) and on the availability of necessary resources (e.g., finances, staff and learning resources).

*[Appropriateness of accreditation standards]*

*<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>*

JUAA's University Standards place importance on IQA (Standard 2) as described in 3.2.1. The Standards also requires universities to conduct educational and other activities based on three policies (diploma, curriculum, and admission) to realize their missions and purposes (Standard 4), provide student support (Standard 7) and education and research environment (Standard 8), commit themselves to social cooperation and contribution (Standard 9), and ensure robust management and finance to support these activities (Standard 10).

These standards explicitly refer to the activities of higher education institutions and the availability of necessary resources. Some standards mention two elements, for example, in Standards 6, 8, and 10. Standard 6. "Faculty and Faculty Organization" points to such activities as faculty development to promote educational quality; Standard 8. "Education and Research Environment" refers to measures to ensure research ethics for faculty members and graduate students; and Standard 10. "University Management and Finance" partially includes university activities related to the appropriateness of university management and the implementation of staff development for university management.

These specifications demonstrate that JUAA's University Standards sets out appropriate criteria related to the activities of higher education institutions and the availability of necessary resources.

JUAA's Junior College Standards also comprises the same criteria and are therefore considered appropriate.

*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation>*

JUAA's standards for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation examine educational programs consisting primarily of the key items related to the activities of higher education institutions. However, the professional graduate school standards regarding the necessary organizations and regulations for the management of faculties and programs are included in Key Item 4. "Professional Graduate School Management and Improvement/Enhancement."

Evaluation items regarding education and research environment and finance are not included in the standards, but all higher education institutions with

professional graduate schools as well as universities with veterinary or dental schools subject to the Program Accreditation are required by law to undergo the aforementioned Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. Taking this requirement into consideration, JUAA has arranged the standards to avoid the overlapping of evaluations and to help reduce the workload of universities.

Table 20. Professional Graduate School Standards  
(Standards for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health)

Key Item 1: Mission and Purpose	Key Item 3: Faculty and Faculty Organization
Key Item 2: Curricula, Learning Outcomes, and Students	Key Item 4: Professional Graduate School Management and Improvement/Enhancement

Table 21. Program Accreditation Standards (Dental Education Standards)

Key Item 1: Mission and Purpose	Key Item 4: Faculty and Faculty Organization
Key Item 2: Educational Content, Methods, and Outcomes	Key Item 5: Self-study
Key Item 3: Student Enrollment	

3.2.5 Criteria or standards and procedures take into account internal follow-up mechanisms, and provide effective follow-up of the outcomes of external reviews.

JUAA notifies the universities of their accreditation results consisting of the following content listed in the table below, and releases the results on its website as well.

[Webpage for Accreditation Results Search](#)

The results of JUAA’s Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation are also released in the same format, but the comments are classified into four categories (commendations, distinctive features, suggestions for improvement, and areas of serious concern). Commendations represent outstanding efforts that serve as a model for other universities, while distinctive features refer to efforts short of notable outcomes, but the approaches are considered useful in achieving objectives. The comments on distinctive features are effective especially for professional graduate schools whose accreditation takes place on a five-year cycle, with some of their initiatives requiring a longer period of time to produce outcomes.

Table 22. Structure of accreditation results (University Accreditation)

Decision	Decisions on whether the universities meet the University Standards (accredited) or not (unaccredited) are made based on a comprehensive evaluation of their status. The accredited universities have the period of accreditation indicated.
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	Accredited	The universities meet the University Standards due to their appropriate standards as a university and initiatives undertaken to realize their missions and purposes.
	Unaccredited	The universities fail to meet the University Standards due to serious problems* that make their standards inappropriate as a university as well as their failure to make efforts to realize their missions and purposes. *Serious problems refer to matters, among the items identified as areas of serious concern, that make it difficult to ensure appropriate educational standards and quality as a university unless improvements are made.
Overview		Summary of the overall evaluation.
General remarks		Overview of the universities' initiatives and their evaluations in the ten University Standards (Standard 10 is divided into (1) University Management and (2) Finance).
Comments		The items pointed out by evaluators as notable among the initiatives mentioned in the general remarks for the ten University Standards are described, with notable efforts and problems presented in three categories.
	Commendations	1 : Items that contribute to realizing the universities' missions and purposes and (are expected to) produce positive outcomes. 2 : Items that are pioneering or unique in Japan's higher education and (are expected to) produce positive outcomes.
	Suggestions for improvement	1 : Minor deficiencies in basic requirements or problems in ensuring appropriate standards as a university, with improvements required. 2 : Other matters requiring improvement to realize the mission and purpose.
	Areas of serious concern	1 : Major deficiencies in basic requirements or serious problems in ensuring appropriate standards as a university, with improvements required. 2 : Other matters requiring substantial improvement to realize the mission and purpose.

*[Improvement follow-up mechanism]*

*<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>*

JUAA's Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation requires the accredited universities to report on the progress in addressing all the comments (suggestions for improvement and areas of serious concern) identified as problems in their accreditation results. JUAA requests that universities submit a report by the end of July, three years after receiving their results, with consideration given to the time expected to make improvements. JUAA evaluates the progress based on their reports and notifies the universities of the results, and releases them to the public through its website. If the areas of serious concern remain unaddressed, JUAA strongly urges universities to make improvements by submitting another report when undergoing the next cycle of certified evaluation and accreditation.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

The unaccredited universities are allowed to request another evaluation to determine whether they meet the University Standards by undergoing a follow-up

[University Accreditation](#)



review between the next fiscal year after accreditation and the fiscal year before the next accreditation. The follow-up review requires a progress report on addressing the comments (suggestions for improvement and areas of serious concern) pointed out in the accreditation results. The decision is made based on how the universities have corrected the items that led to accreditation being denied. JUAA considers providing a simplified follow-up review for the universities that failed to be accredited due to specific factors such as the shortage of full-time faculty members.

[Handbook](#)

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

On the other hand, the unaccredited universities are also permitted to present a progress report to be reviewed by the University Accreditation Committee regarding the issues identified as suggestions for improvement or areas of serious concern, instead of applying for a follow-up review to seek accreditation.

In these ways, the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation has a mechanism for various forms of follow-up that enables JUAA to appropriately monitor the degree of progress the universities have made in addressing the issues identified in the accreditation results, and to urge them to make further improvements as needed, in light of the improvement systems in place.

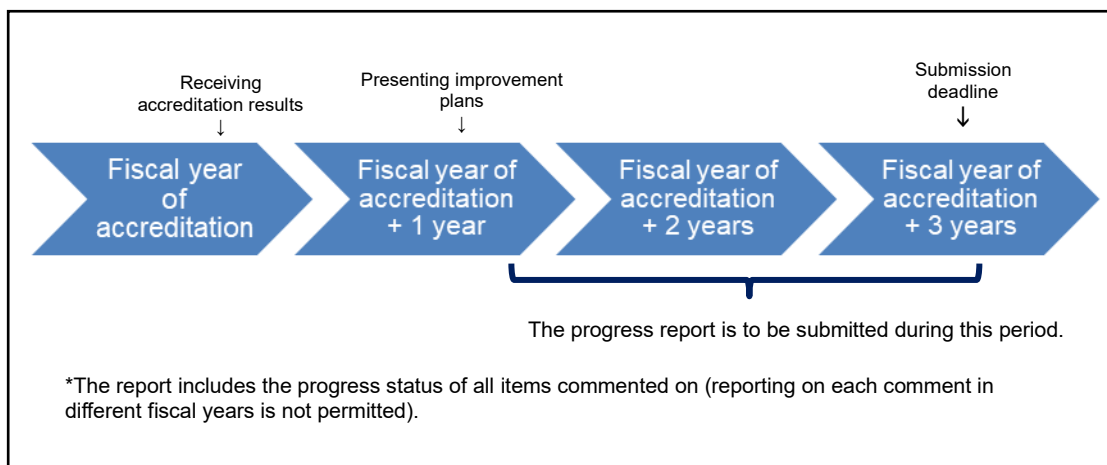
*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools>*

The graduate schools accredited in the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools must submit to JUAA a report on their improvement plans to address the comments (suggestions for improvement and areas of serious concern) in September of the year after their accreditation application (six months after receiving the accreditation results). The schools are also required to give a presentation at the Accreditation Committee and exchange opinions with evaluators on making their improvement plans more appropriate. The schools must then compile and submit a report describing the progress and completion of their improvement initiatives by the end of July, three years after applying for accreditation, in order to ensure that the items pointed out as areas of serious concern have been corrected. Upon receiving the report, JUAA sets up the Progress Report Review Subcommittee under the Accreditation Committee to confirm the completion of improvements, and informs the schools of the review results.

[Handbook of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Chart 11. Improvement follow-up in the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools



JUAA has a mechanism in place for allowing the unaccredited universities to apply for a follow-up review, as in the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. However, the application period is limited to one or two fiscal years after accreditation in consideration of the five-year accreditation cycle.

<Program Accreditation>

As for the Program Accreditation, which grants accreditation to universities for a term of seven years, JUAA accepts a progress report submitted in the same manner and timeline as it does for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. The report is reviewed by the Progress Report Review Subcommittee set up under the Accreditation Committee, with the results notified to the universities.

JUAA also has a mechanism in place for allowing the unaccredited universities to file for a follow-up review, as is the case with the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation.

[Handbook of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Regulations on the Program Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

3.2.6 The EQAA procedures specify the way in which criteria will be applied and the types of evidence needed to demonstrate that they are met.

[Operational guidelines and decision methods on accreditation standards]

<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>

JUAA has provided various materials to specify how to apply its standards in the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

The Decision Criteria and Their Operational Guidelines sets out the guidelines and key points to consider regarding the decision criteria for accreditation and their operations. The decisions on the University Accreditation are made based on these

[Decision Criteria and Their Operational Guidelines](#)  
[WEB-JP]

criteria and guidelines, with comprehensive consideration given to the issues identified as areas of serious concern in the accreditation results. JUAA denies accreditation to universities with matters of particular concern that include (1) problems that prevent students from receiving education suitable for their degrees, (2) problems that make it difficult for universities to conduct educational and research activities in a stable and sustainable manner, and (3) matters that cause other serious problems significantly affecting the universities' educational quality and management.

In other words, the anticipated serious cases represent (1) serious problems arising from the ineffective operation of an IQA system (Standard 2. "IQA"), (2) failure to appropriately manage student quotas (Standard 5. "Student Enrollment"), (3) failure to provide the legally required number of full-time faculty members (Standard 6. "Faculty and Faculty Organization), and (4) financial problems affecting the educational environment and faculty allocations.

The "Guidelines for Accreditation" has been developed for evaluators to make unified decisions. These materials consist of guidelines for evaluating the basic requirements related to laws and regulations and other matters with reference to the decisions made in past fiscal years. Additions and revisions are made as necessary in light of each year's evaluation performance and other aspects.

[Guidelines for Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

JUAA has also provided the "Evaluators' Perspectives" describing the details of the evaluators' tasks item by item based on the University Standards to show what evaluators focus on.

[Evaluators' Perspectives](#)

*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation>*

JUAA clearly states in the introduction of its accreditation standards for each program that decisions on whether universities meet the standards are made based on a comprehensive evaluation of the progress achieved in addressing the comments presented as areas of serious concern, such as failure to meet legal requirements and other serious problems. In addition, the introduction mentions the types and definitions of comments in the accreditation results, as the decision to deny accreditation involves areas of serious concern among the comments. JUAA's handbooks also explain that accreditation decisions are made based on a comprehensive assessment of the procedures of the accreditation results, types, and definitions of comments, descriptions of areas of serious concern, and impact of the identified problems on education.

[Standards for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)

[Accreditation Handbook for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Table 23. Types and definitions of comments in the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools

Type of item	Basic requirements for professional graduate school programs	Legal matters related to professional graduate schools	Matters responding to each professional graduate school's purpose
Comments in the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commendations</li> <li>• Areas of serious concern</li> <li>• Suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of serious concern</li> <li>• Suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commendations</li> <li>• Distinctive features</li> <li>• Suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>

*[Materials required when applying for accreditation]*

*<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>*

Universities must prepare the following types of materials when applying for JUAA's Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. Of these materials, JUAA places the utmost importance on the "self-study report" compiled by universities based on their self-studies. In addition, as mentioned earlier, JUAA urges universities to carry out efficient self-studies by preparing a separate data collection of numerical information and legal compliance status.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

Table 24. Materials required when applying for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

Self-study Report	A report on the self-study conducted by the university using JUAA's University Standards consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion. The body must list the ten standards to describe the current status and reviews (strengths and problems) based on the evaluation items in each chapter. A list of evaluations showing how each standard is met on a 4-point scale must also be attached to the report.
Basic university data	A collection of data including the numbers of students (applicants, entrants, and enrolled students), dropouts, leaves of absence, and faculty members.
Basic requirements check sheet	A collection of data presenting the current status of legal requirements to ensure the university's compliance.
Supporting evidence materials	Materials serving as supporting evidence for the Review Report include any materials produced and used by the university on a daily basis. They are indicated in the list of materials to be submitted, along with their supporting evidence.

*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation>*

The Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation require submission of the following materials. JUAA considers the self-study report as important as it does for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. JUAA urges universities to write an appropriate

[Accreditation Handbook for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

report by explaining in its handbooks how to outline the evaluation criteria, and providing points to consider before preparing the report.

To help make preparation work more efficient, JUAA asks the universities to separately submit a document on their legal compliance status and numerical data in the prescribed form.

Table 25. Materials necessary when applying for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools

Self-study Report	A report on the self-study conducted by the university using JUAA's standards for each program consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion. The body must list the key standard items to describe the current status and reviews (strengths, problems, and improvement measures) in each chapter.
Basic School data	A collection of data including the numbers of students (applicants, entrants, and enrolled students), dropouts, leaves of absence, and faculty members, as well as presenting the current legal compliance status.
Supporting evidence materials	Materials serving as supporting evidence for the Review Report include any materials produced and used by the university on a daily basis. They are indicated in the list of materials to be submitted, along with their supporting evidence.

*[Efforts to implement self-studies]*

<Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation>

JUAA attaches importance to self-studies by universities, with its University Accreditation Handbook carefully explaining how to write a self-study report, which is a report compiled by universities based on their self-studies. The third-cycle University Accreditation especially requires universities to conduct self-studies from a university-wide perspective. To this end, JUAA requests that undergraduate and graduate schools carry out self-studies for each program, before the university executive board compiles the results and identifies the distinctive features and issues to be addressed from a boarder perspective.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

Furthermore, the handbook provides applicant universities with the evaluation items required for self-studies in ten standard categories, along with evaluation perspectives (reference materials) including specific examples. Evaluators also use these items for their evaluations.

[Evaluation Items and Perspectives](#)

JUAA requires universities to submit supporting evidence materials to show that their initiatives meet the standards, and clarifies the types of evidence by providing examples of supporting evidence required or expected to be required for each evaluation item. JUAA also publicly releases a list of these materials

[Self-study Report: Notes and Examples of Supporting Evidence Materials](#)  
[WEB-JP]

All this information is accessible to universities in JUAA's handbooks and on its website.

[List of Materials to Be Submitted](#)  
[WEB-JP]

*<Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Program Accreditation>*

The Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation categorize the key standard items, with multiple evaluation perspectives provided for each item. To conduct self-studies, graduate schools are required to describe the current status of these items, including strengths, issues to be addressed, and improvement measures, based on the evaluation perspectives. JUAA also specifies legal and other minimum requirements for the key items and organizes them quantitatively and qualitatively as a separate set of basic requirement data.

[Standards for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)

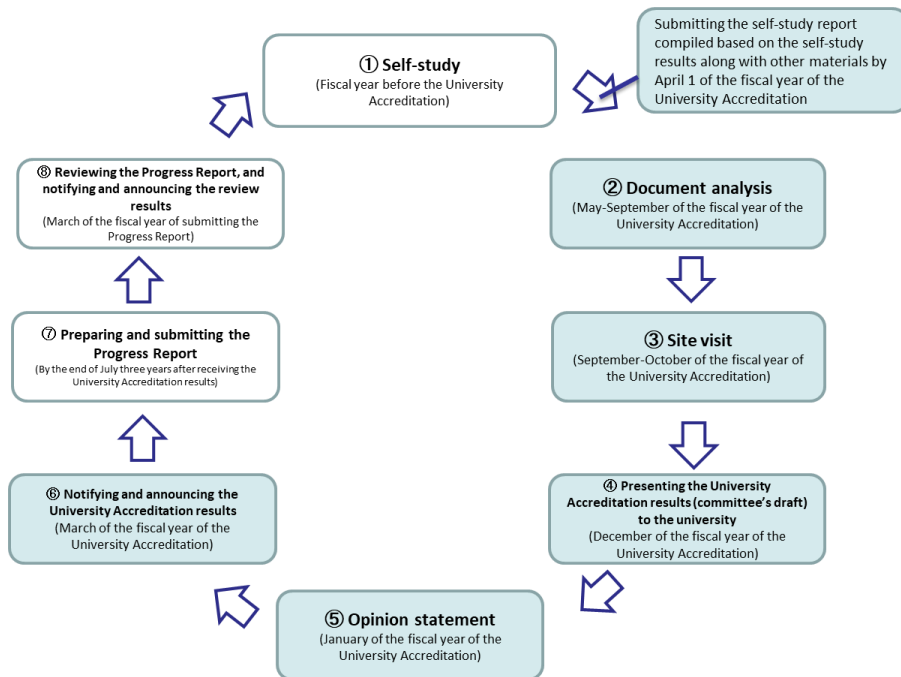
### **3.3 The External Review Process**

3.3.1 The EQAA carries out an external review process that is reliable and based on published criteria and procedures. It follows a self-assessment or equivalent, and includes an external review (normally including a site visit or visits) and a consistent follow-up of the recommendations resulting from the external review.

*[Accreditation process]*

JUAA has established the same accreditation process for its Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools, and Program Accreditation. As mentioned in 3.2 regarding its accreditation standards, JUAA conducts evaluations with a focus on the universities' self-improvement capabilities based on the results of their self-studies (self-study report). JUAA has created an eight-step process starting with self-studies, as shown in the chart below. The process features document analyses, site visits, and improvement follow-up systems subsequent to notification and announcement of the accreditation results.

Chart 12. University Accreditation process



First, a university applying for the University Accreditation conducts a self-study based on JUAA’s University Standards, and summarizes the results in the self-study report. The university generally completes these tasks by the year before undergoing the accreditation process, and submits the self-study report and other necessary materials to JUAA by April of the year of accreditation.

Next, JUAA’s review subcommittee conducts a document analysis between May and September. Evaluators examine the materials submitted by the university to write up their findings. Then the review subcommittee holds a meeting (evaluator meeting) to discuss the findings while hearing the evaluators’ opinions on the document analysis, and identifies questions and matters requiring confirmation based on the university’s materials.

After the document analysis, the review subcommittee conducts a site visit between September and October. During the two-day visit arranged for all applying universities, information is collected through an opinion exchange with faculty and staff members, including the president and students.

Table 26. Example of a site-visit schedule

Day 1		Day2	
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
9:30~12:00	Evaluator meeting	9:30~10:00	Evaluator meeting
12:00~13:00	Lunch time	10:00~10:45	Individual interviews (2)
13:00~14:30	General meeting (1)	10:45~10:55	Break
14:30~14:40	Break	10:55~11:55	Student interviews
14:40~16:10	General meeting (2)	11:55~12:55	Lunch time
16:10~16:20	Break	12:55~13:40	Individual interviews (3)
16:20~17:05	Individual interviews (1)	13:40~14:25	Evaluator meeting
17:05~17:30	Evaluator meeting	14:25~16:00	General meeting (3) / opinion exchange
		16:00~17:30	Evaluator meeting

After the site visit, the University Accreditation Committee reviews the evaluation results produced by the review subcommittees, determines the accreditation results (Committee’s draft), and sends them to the university around December. If the draft results contain any factual errors or other inconsistencies, the university is allowed to file an opinion statement during a designated period. In this case, the University Accreditation Committee deliberates on whether to adopt the opinion, with the results reflected in the accreditation results. This process takes roughly one month.

After the University Accreditation Committee’s review is completed, the Board of Trustees discusses the accreditation results and makes the final decision. JUAA notifies the university of the finalized accreditation results in March and announces them on its website after reporting to the MEXT Minister.

As for the subsequent follow-up support for improvement, as described in 3.2.5, JUAA asks the accredited universities to review their improvement reports and notifies them of the results, while offering the unaccredited universities a supplementary review (optional). The evaluation results of the progress reports and supplementary reviews since FY2018 are published on the JUAA website.

JUAA widely disseminates the above accreditation process through its accreditation handbooks and website. JUAA also provides detailed explanations at briefing sessions for universities planning to apply for accreditation, and holds training seminars for evaluators before they begin their evaluation work.

The above descriptions demonstrate the high reliability of JUAA’s accreditation process, as JUAA is certified by the MEXT Minister as an accreditation agency operating in accordance with Japan’s certified evaluation and accreditation system. JUAA also conducts a questionnaire survey of the evaluated universities to assess the validity of its accreditation process, and uses the results to improve its

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation](#)



accreditation methods and process as necessary, such as improving the functions of its committees involved in accreditation.

### 3.3.2 The EQAA has published documents, which clearly state what it expects from higher education institutions, in the form of quality criteria, or standards and procedures, for self-assessment and external review.

#### *[Standards and documents related to the standards]*

JUAA publishes its accreditation standards described in 3.2 in both Japanese and English on its website. The accreditation standards are also included as a reference in JUAA's handbooks for universities applying for accreditation and for evaluators to fully understand the standards before carrying out their evaluation.

[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Evaluation Items and Perspectives](#)

[Decision Criteria and Their Operational Guidelines](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In addition, to promote efficient self-studies using the accreditation standards for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, JUAA presents the evaluation items and perspectives as references, which are made public on its website and included in its handbooks. JUAA's website and handbooks also provide materials linking evaluators' perspectives to evaluation items, decision criteria and operational guidelines for accreditation results, and other guidelines for comments (suggestions for improvement and areas of serious concern).

#### *[Regulations on accreditation procedures]*

JUAA has established regulations for each type of accreditation to specify the evaluation systems and procedures. Based on these regulations, JUAA sets up evaluation committees as bodies responsible for accreditation, under which the fiscal year's evaluation systems and policies are discussed and reviewed. The draft evaluation results are then submitted to JUAA's Board of Trustees for finalization of the accreditation results. In these ways, JUAA operates its accreditation process based on the regulations.

[Guidelines for Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

As described in 3.2.2, JUAA's regulations also include systems and procedures for revising its standards, accreditation fees, and code of ethics for parties involved in accreditation (applicant universities, evaluators, and JUAA staff).

[Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards](#)

These regulations are made public on the JUAA website. As for its code of ethics for accreditation parties, JUAA has drawn up ethical guidelines based on its regulations, and distributes and explains them at briefing sessions for universities planning to apply for accreditation; the guidelines are handed out to evaluators, and ethical violations are outlined using specific examples during the training sessions.

[Accreditation Fees Regulations](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

#### *[Accreditation handbooks]*

JUAA has produced handbooks for all types of accreditations to systematically explain its accreditation standards and processes. JUAA's handbooks stress that universities bear the primary responsibility for assuring educational quality and the

social background in which the QA of education is required. The handbooks also emphasize that universities establish and operate IQA system to enhance student learning outcomes. The materials describe the structure and system of accreditation standards, evaluation methods using the standards, a detailed timeline from application preparation to notification and announcement of accreditation results, and improvement follow-up systems subsequent to the results. The handbooks also contain separate chapters for applicant universities and evaluators that explain the accreditation process and materials used for evaluations. JUAA is therefore committed to the transparency of its accreditation system by disclosing the instructions to both sides.

JUAA's accreditation handbooks provide evaluation criteria, guidelines, and other instructions as references, in addition to the formats of documents required to apply for accreditation and the evaluation forms used by evaluators. JUAA offers the handbooks in a digital format, with all texts, materials, and formats made public and available for download on its website.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

3.3.3 The external review process is carried out by teams of experts consistent with the characteristics of the institution/program being reviewed. Experts can provide input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students, employers or professional practitioners.

*[Accreditation structure]*

JUAA has formed accreditation committees responsible for evaluating different types of accreditations under the Board of Trustees. As of 2021, JUAA has two committees in charge of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (University Accreditation and Junior College Accreditation); eight committees overseeing the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools (law (law schools and global legal studies), business, public policy, public health, intellectual property studies, global communications, digital contents, and public relations); and two committees supervising the Program Accreditation (veterinary medicine and dental education).

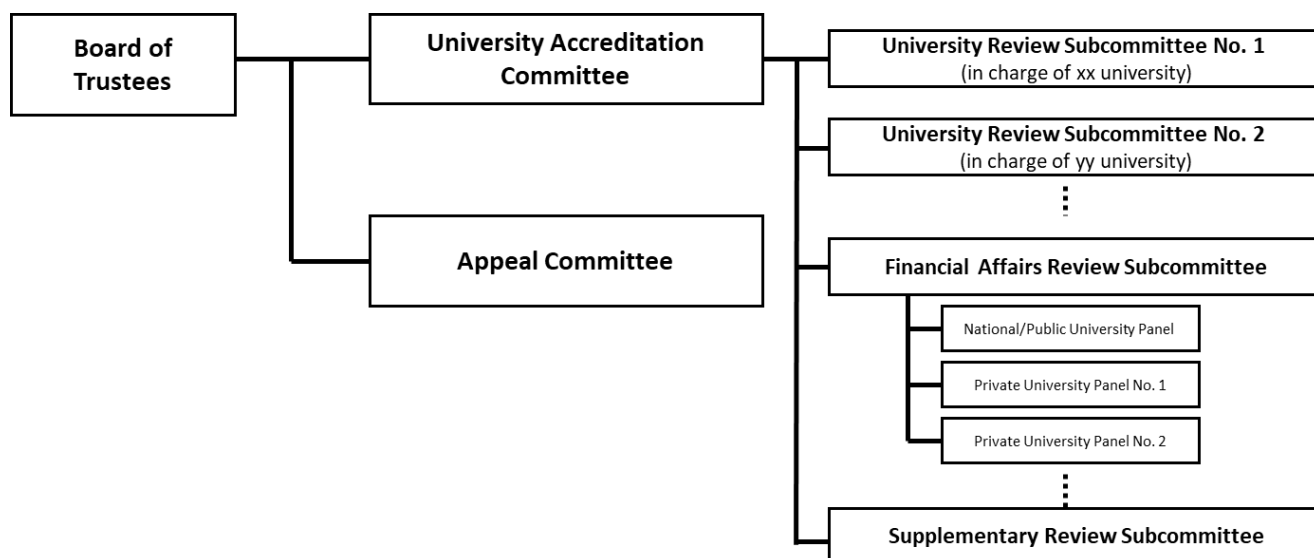
The accreditation committees are operated based on JUAA's regulations that specify the members of each accreditation committee, their responsibilities, decision-making bodies organized under the committees, and accreditation procedures. The committees consist mainly of faculty members recommended by their universities and selected by the Board of Trustees; they also include external experts who ensure the transparency of the evaluations and reflect the needs of industry and other entities when conducting peer reviews. Among the external experts are corporate executives and media representatives.

For example, the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation is implemented under the accreditation structure shown in the chart below. JUAA's accreditation regulations specify the number of members of each decision-making

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

body and their qualifications. The University Accreditation Committee has the authority to set up the University Review Subcommittees (five members each in principle) in charge of document analyses and site visits of the applicant universities; the Financial Affairs Review Subcommittee (number of members determined based on the number of applicant universities, types of universities, and their faculties and programs) responsible for evaluating the universities' financial status; the Progress Report Review Subcommittee (number of members determined based on the number of universities submitting progress reports) tasked with reviewing the improvement status through progress reports made under the accreditation follow-up system; and the Supplementary Review Subcommittee in charge of reevaluating the unaccredited universities applying for a follow-up review with their improvement plans.

Chart 13. Structure of JUAA's Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (University Accreditation)



**Structure of the University Accreditation Committee (20 members)**

1. Ten people selected by the Board of Trustees from candidates recommended by JUAA's full-member universities.
2. Five external experts.
3. Five people named by the Board of Trustees.

\*The term of office is two years. Members may be reappointed.

\*A chair will be chosen by the members, with a vice-chair appointed by the chair.

\*A non-member may be appointed assistant secretary for a term of one year.

**Structure of the University Review Subcommittee (five members in principle)**

1. The subcommittee comprises members of the University Accreditation Committee and other committee members.
2. One of the members serves as the subcommittee chief.

3. The members include four faculty members recommended by universities and one administrative staff member, with consideration given to membership balance in terms of university type, specialized fields, gender, and other aspects.

\*The term of office for the subcommittee chief and other members is one year. They may be reappointed.

\*The Financial Affairs Review Subcommittee may set up a panel as necessary.

*[Emphasis on peer review]*

Peer review is one of the features in JUAA's accreditation, as mentioned in 3.2.

JUAA's review committees and subcommittees include university faculty and staff recruited through recommendations from universities based on the following qualifications.

<Nomination requirements for University Accreditation Committee candidates>

1. A person in a position overseeing university-wide activities.

E.g., president, vice president, board member (or a person previously holding one of the posts)

2. A person in a position overseeing the overall educational and research activities.

E.g., chief, or assistant chief of a university-wide academic affairs committee, dean (or a person previously holding one of the posts)

3. A person well-versed in university self-study activities.

E.g., chief, or assistant chief of a self-study committee, director of a review, institutional research, or other office (or a person previously holding one of the posts)

4. A person playing an active role and taking charge of university reform (especially teaching and learning).

E.g., chief, or assistant chief of a university reform or teaching and learning reform committee (or a person previously holding either of the posts)

Based on the Regulations on University Accreditation, each subcommittee is made up of five members, in principle, who are all selected from candidates recommended by universities, and must include one administrative staff member. The recommended candidates must meet the following qualifications, and evaluators are selected based primarily on their work experience at universities and junior colleges.

< Nomination requirements for subcommittee candidates>

(Faculty)

1. A person in a position overseeing university-wide activities.

E.g., president, vice president, board member (including a person previously holding one of the posts)

2. A person in a position overseeing the overall educational and research activities.

E.g., dean (including a former dean)

3. A person well-versed in university self-study activities.

- E.g., member (including a former member) of a self-study or relevant committee
4. A person playing an active role and taking charge of teaching and learning management.  
E.g., member (including a former member) of a body responsible for promoting IQA or faculty development committee, or a person knowledgeable about teaching and learning management and planning (a person with experience working for a university reform promotion or relevant office)
- (Administrative staff)
1. A person in a position overseeing university-wide activities.  
E.g., director, executive director, general manager, or supervisor of a specific administrative department (including a person previously holding one of the posts, excluding the head of a finance-related department)
2. A person in a position overseeing the overall educational and research activities.  
E.g., member (including a former member) of a self-study committee, a person knowledgeable about certified evaluation and accreditation work (a person with experience working for a review or relevant office)

The number of accreditation committee members for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools varies for the type of school, but the committees have a similar structure to the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation. Each committee comprises members selected by the Board of Trustees from candidates recommended by universities, people with professional experience in the accreditation field, and those belonging to professional bodies (corporations, organizations, municipalities, public agencies, and other entities). The subcommittees responsible for document analyses and site visits consist of four to five evaluators each, all of whom are university faculty members. The subcommittees also allow external experts (from professional bodies) involved in the accreditation committee to participate as observers in order to ensure the transparency of their evaluations.

*[Involvement of industry, students, and graduates in evaluation]*

As mentioned above, the committees operating JUAA's accreditation include external experts from industry and relevant bodies, while the subcommittees tasked with evaluating the applicant universities consist of university faculty and staff in principle. As for the Program Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education, one dentist recommended by the Japan Dental Association is to be included among the subcommittee members (four people).

Table 27. Participation of external experts in committees

	Type of accreditation	Number of committee members	Number of external experts	Number of practitioners	Outline of external experts and practitioners
Institutional	University Accreditation	20	5	—	High school teachers, media representatives, certified accountants
	Junior College Accreditation	10	3	—	High school teachers, media representatives, municipality officials
Professional graduate schools	Law	15	5		Legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers), media representatives, corporate and intellectual property legal professionals
	Business	20	5	2	Corporate executives and outside directors, media representatives, think tank researchers
	Public policy	15	2	3	NPO, public agency, municipality officials
	Public health	12	2	2	Medical company officials, media representatives
	Intellectual property studies	12	2	4	Public agency, corporate officials
	Global communications	6	1	2	Organization officials, media representatives
	Digital contents	6	1	2	Corporate, organization officials
	Public relations	6	1	2	Advertising company executives, organization officials
Programs	Veterinary medicine	8	1	2	Veterinarians, Japan Veterinary Medical Association
	Dental education	10	1	1	Dentists, Japan Dental Association, dental-related business organizations

JUAA has not established a system for such university stakeholders as students and graduates to participate in its evaluations, but it conducts student interviews during site visits at universities applying for accreditation. University officials are barred from attending the interviews so that students can express their opinions openly about the education and learning environments at their schools. This approach helps to evaluate the universities' education from a student perspective. To prepare the accreditation results, JUAA evaluates the universities based on the facts confirmed through interviews with university officials and material reviews while referring to the opinions of interviewed students.

*[Future challenges]*

JUAA considers there are issues to be addressed regarding the current involvement of industry and other relevant parties in its accreditation process.

While industry professionals are included in JUAA’s accreditation committees as external experts, they do not participate in the subcommittees in charge of document analyses and site visits. The external experts of the committees can participate in the subcommittees’ activities as observers, but it is impossible for them to take part in all the activities, given the number of such experts. JUAA will consider creating a system for external experts to join the subcommittees so as to reflect the views of industry professionals in its accreditation process as well as provide an opportunity for university and industry officials to exchange opinions. However, with many universities applying for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, it is necessary to build up relations with industry to secure a sufficient number of external experts for the subcommittees. As for the Program Accreditation, the subcommittees for the dental education evaluation include dentists recommended by the Japan Dental Association. With this case in mind, JUAA will work toward involving external experts in the subcommittees for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation while deepening its cooperation with professional organizations.

3.3.4 The EQAA has clear specifications on the characteristics and selection of external reviewers, who must be supported by appropriate training and good supporting materials such as handbooks or manuals.

*[Establishment of regulations on selecting evaluators]*

The necessary items for conducting evaluations in all categories are stipulated in JUAA’s regulations. The members of the accreditation committees and subcommittees are also clearly specified. JUAA selects evaluators through recommendations from higher education institutions based on its nomination guidelines, as mentioned earlier.

*[Evaluator training]*

Evaluator training for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation provides two types of sessions for (1) candidates recommended by universities and (2) evaluators selected as subcommittee chairs and members. The training for those recommended by universities is conducted in accordance with the “University Accreditation Regulations: Detailed Rules on the Qualifications and Nomination of Subcommittee Members Candidates.” The regulations state that potential evaluators recommended by universities may participate in training sessions organized by JUAA. JUAA invites the recommended candidates to its annual university accreditation symposium as an opportunity for them to acquire the necessary knowledge of higher education as evaluators. Among the symposium themes are the importance of IQA and efforts to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes. Participation is voluntary, but many recommended candidates have

University Accreditation Regulations: Detailed Rules on the Qualifications and Nomination of Subcommittee Members Candidates [SD-JP11]

attended the gatherings. A questionnaire survey of the participants conducted each year reveals that around 90 percent of the respondents find the content useful, suggesting that JUAA’s symposiums help train evaluators. To improve the participation rates, JUAA began in 2020 to video stream the events for those unable to take part, in an effort to raise awareness of their role as evaluators. The symposium held online in 2021 saw a significant increase in the participation rate. In addition, JUAA made the on-demand video of these events available exclusively for evaluators scheduled to attend the subcommittee meetings, thereby helping them increase their knowledge of accreditation.

Table 28. JUAA’s University Accreditation Symposiums

Year	Theme	Number of participants	Participation rate*
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Key points of newly revised university standards”</li> <li>• “IQA and new evaluation systems”</li> <li>• “Views on university accreditation based on experience as an evaluator”</li> <li>• Panel discussion: “What role should evaluators play in the third cycle of university accreditation”</li> </ul>	264	34.5%
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “IQA defined by JUAA and its evaluation”</li> <li>• “Evaluation of curriculum – IQA of Standard 4. ‘Curricula and Learning Outcomes’”</li> <li>• Panel discussion: “Toward the second year of the third-cycle university accreditation”</li> </ul>	249	33.8%
2020	<p><b>A fresh Look at Peer Review – Toward Evaluation Leading to the Development of Universities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Role of university accreditation as peer review”</li> <li>• “Experience as an evaluator – from the perspective of administrative staff”</li> <li>• Panel discussion: “What attitude and mindset should a peer reviewer have”</li> </ul>	192	26.1%
2021	<p><b>Appropriate Ways to Conduct the Third-Cycle University Accreditation – Based on Past Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Preparation for university accreditation: Points to consider as an evaluator”</li> <li>• “Art and science of university accreditation: Seeking better approaches to universities as teams”</li> </ul>	335	51.6%

\*The participation rate is calculated based on the ratio of the number of participants attending the symposium to the number registered as recommended candidates.

JUAA holds seminars every year to train evaluators selected as subcommittee chairs and members, as evaluator training is required as a legal obligation for certified evaluation and accreditation agencies. JUAA’s regulations for all types of accreditations also stipulate that training related to evaluation practices must be provided in an appropriate manner. The evaluator training seminars for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation provide evaluation methods,



processes, and schedules based on the evaluator manual described later. The group work of the subcommittees offers evaluators an opportunity to simulate accreditation through case studies and other activities.

Evaluator training has taken place online since FY2020 when JUAA made an urgent decision to hold the sessions online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. JUAA distributed a video on-demand to explain the evaluation system and evaluation criteria. The evaluators expressed mixed reactions, with some saying they were able to adjust their schedules easily and watch the videos repeatedly, while others said they could not ask questions and had a hard time focusing. A survey of the evaluators found that 64 percent preferred in-person training seminars. In response, JUAA introduced an online meeting system in addition to the video on-demand for the FY2021 seminar to provide subcommittee evaluators with an opportunity to communicate directly with each other.

Table 29. Evaluator training seminar programs in FY2021

Program	Outline
Lecture 1: "JUAA's evaluators"	The vice chair of the University Accreditation Committee instructs evaluators on the mindset of university accreditation and the key points to consider.
Lecture 2: "Evaluators' experiences"	A person who served as a subcommittee chair teaches evaluators the key points in document analyses, ways to find commendations, and tips on information gathering during site visits.
Case study: "Ichigaya University – Evaluation of its IQA"	Group work evaluating the IQA system of a fictitious university is conducted with the University Accreditation Committee's vice chair as a facilitator so as to learn about JUAA's stance on IQA.
Briefing on evaluator ethics and administrative matters, and a questionnaire	Explanations of evaluator ethics, administrative procedures, and other matters by the secretariat.

\*A briefing on the evaluation methods, processes, and schedules will be video streamed on demand.

A questionnaire survey of the participants in the FY2021 evaluator training showed that 96 percent of the respondents said the online training was appropriate, with comments including the online format allowing them to take part from remote locations. JUAA plans to continue using online platforms for its training. On the other hand, some participants noted that in-person gatherings would ease communication among subcommittee members. JUAA will consider ways to improve the situation.

Regarding its training seminars, JUAA staff are discussing ways to enhance the content for evaluators to acquire more practical evaluation methods to upgrade their skills and abilities, while studying training sessions conducted by overseas accreditation agencies. The adoption of a case study approach represents part of

these efforts. Specifically, in response to a number of comments from evaluators who have had difficulties evaluating IQA systems, JUAA uses a fictitious university's self-study report to hold group discussions during which evaluators can exchange opinions about questions to universities and check points for evaluations. The case study materials are revised each year to make them easier to understand based on the findings frequently reported in past evaluations. JUAA aims to make these case studies more effective so that participants can acquire evaluators' perspectives by presenting the results of their group work, with the chair, vice chair, and secretary of the University Accreditation Committee playing their roles as facilitators. Meanwhile, JUAA recognizes the need to further enhance its training related to site visits, and will work to develop various approaches to make site visits easy to visualize even for new evaluators. These approaches will include role-playing interviews and opinion exchanges with officials of the universities under review.

JUAA holds training seminars annually for the selected evaluators of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation. The seminars for evaluations by multiple subcommittees (including professional graduate business schools) provide training for subcommittee chairs to fulfill their leadership role in accreditation. JUAA also plans to hold similar sessions targeting the subcommittee chairs in the Program Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education to promote opinion exchanges among them, given that the accreditation process requires the formation of multiple subcommittees every year. Furthermore, with the evaluations of professional graduate schools and programs involving experts in various fields, JUAA attaches importance to providing opportunities for these experts to meet and share the evaluation objectives and policies. For example, when evaluating professional graduate business schools, the subcommittee chiefs prepare memos outlining the universities under review (purpose, key strategic points, numbers of students and faculty members, degrees to be awarded, completion requirements, curricula, etc.), and share the key points to check among their members.

*[Materials supporting evaluations]*

JUAA has produced an evaluator manual for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation in addition to the aforementioned handbooks to facilitate smooth evaluation activities by evaluators. The manual is designed to help deepen the understanding of the evaluation criteria from the evaluators' point of view; it provides materials describing the university standards, evaluation items, and evaluators' perspectives, and specifies the structure of the criteria and key points to check. The manual also includes other points for conducting evaluations from a university-wide perspective and assessing the appropriateness of the universities' initiatives, along with examples of describing the evaluation content more clearly and points to note during site visits.

Evaluator  
Manual  
[SD-JP12]

In addition, the evaluator manual contains all the evaluation tools used in the previously-mentioned decision criteria, operational guidelines, and other instructions; namely, all the necessary information for evaluators is collected in a single volume to support their evaluation activities.

3.3.5 External review procedures include effective and comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts of interest, and ensure that any judgments resulting from external reviews are based on explicit and published criteria.

*[Exclusion of interested parties]*

To ensure the fairness of third-party evaluation, JUAA explicitly states the exclusion of interested parties to carry out its evaluations. Its regulations on all types of accreditations stipulate that members and secretaries of the University Accreditation Committee, as well as members of the University Review Subcommittee and the Financial Affairs Review Subcommittee (including panel members), may not participate in evaluating the universities to which they belong. The formation of subcommittees is reviewed by the accreditation committee based on its subcommittee formation policy, which also states that no interested parties will be appointed as subcommittee members.

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

<Policy on the formation of subcommittees for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools>

1. One subcommittee is in charge of one program.
2. No interested parties of the applicant universities will be appointed as chairs or members of subcommittees responsible for their professional graduate public policy schools. Interested parties refer to persons who fall under any of the following.
  - (1) Persons employed or expected to be employed as full-time faculty members, adjunct faculty members (part-time lecturers), or board members of universities subject to accreditation.
  - (2) Persons who have been employed as either full-time faculty members or board members of universities subject to accreditation within the past three years.
3. Members of the Accreditation Committee for Public Policy Schools who are recommended by universities with graduate schools of public policy will be appointed as subcommittee chiefs in principle.
4. Persons recommended by universities with graduate schools of public policy will be appointed as subcommittee members, with consideration given to the balance of specialized fields as well as national, public, and private universities.
5. Each subcommittee will select at least one member who belongs to a professional graduate school.
6. The participation of external experts in the subcommittees will be left to their own discretion. Those wishing to take part in the evaluation subcommittees must submit a request regarding their choice of subcommittee and evaluation methods ((a) document analyses and site visits, (b) site visits only, etc.) to the subcommittee chair through JUAA Secretariat after the schedules of the subcommittee meetings and site visits are finalized. External expert members are allowed to

participate in the evaluation subcommittees as observers; they can express their views and offer advice to the applicant graduate schools, but are not permitted to express their opinions on decisions made by the review subcommittees.

*[Ethics of evaluation personnel]*

To ensure the fairness of accreditation, JUAA conducts evaluations in accordance with its regulations on each type of accreditation, and publicly releases the Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation on its website. (See 1.1.3 for conflicts of interest and ethics.)

[Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

3.3.6 The EQAA's system ensures that each institution or program will be evaluated in a consistent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees are different.

*[Evaluation based on accreditation standards]*

All evaluations are reviewed by JUAA's subcommittees and accreditation committees. The accuracy of the accreditation results is ensured through consistent evaluations based on their respective criteria, with the final review and decision made by the Board of Trustees. (See 1.3.1-1.3.3 for JUAA's decision-making process.)

In addition, in order for evaluators to conduct uniform evaluations based on the evaluation criteria, JUAA has drawn up the Guidelines for Accreditation by compiling specific cases of past evaluations. Items covered by the guidelines are reviewed by the subcommittees, while the accreditation committees confirm the items are addressed as indicated in the guidelines.

Furthermore, as mentioned in 3.3.4, JUAA supports the evaluators' task to implement a consistent evaluation method by informing them of its criteria and evaluators' perspectives, while publishing and distributing the evaluator manual that provides specific examples of describing evaluation results.

*[Evaluator training]*

JUAA's evaluator training, as described in 3.3.4, offers all evaluators the same program, which JUAA considers an effective approach to ensure that its evaluations are conducted in a consistent way without creating differences among evaluators. JUAA believes that training enables evaluators to acquire the same level of knowledge and skills by understanding JUAA's evaluation purpose, gaining knowledge of the evaluation procedures and materials necessary for evaluations, and holding mock subcommittee meetings (opinion exchanges among evaluation team members). To assess the effectiveness of its evaluator training, JUAA carries out a questionnaire survey of the participants after the training is complete to measure the level of their acquired knowledge and skills. Another survey conducted at the end of the fiscal year asks evaluators about how effective the training is for their tasks. The surveys conducted over the past three fiscal years

from FY2018 to FY2020 revealed that roughly 80 percent of the respondents described the training as effective (83% in 2020, 79% in 2019, and 87% in 2018), suggesting that the current training is effective to some extent.

In addition, JUAA's evaluator manual is used for evaluators to share their mindset by specifying the structure of the evaluation criteria and check points. The manual allows evaluators to review these instructions at any time and helps prevent differences from arising among evaluation teams.

*[Support by JUAA staff]*

JUAA staff attend subcommittee meetings for document analyses and accompany evaluators during site visits to provide support as necessary, such as facilitating discussions among evaluators based on the Guidelines for Accreditation and explaining past evaluation cases. The staff also serve as coordinators between evaluators and applicant universities, contacting the universities evaluated by subcommittees, and arranging schedules for site visits. Staff support for evaluators (subcommittees) and applicant universities helps ensure a smooth accreditation process.

**3.3.7 The EQAA carries out the external review within a reasonable timeframe after the completion of a self-assessment report, to ensure that information is current and updated.**

JUAA's accreditation results are announced approximately one year after the completion of the self-study reports. Considering the period of time required for document analyses and site visits, followed by the review of opinion statements, JUAA's accreditation is carried out within a reasonable timeframe.

The results of all types of accreditations are produced based on the findings up to the time of site visits as a general principle, and JUAA makes the utmost effort to eliminate any time lag between self-studies and site visits. However, in the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, the following items will be reflected in the accreditation results even after the site visits, if improvements are confirmed before an opinion statement is submitted or the draft evaluation results are reviewed by the Board of Trustees. All exceptions are related to legal requirements, and the failure to comply is a serious issue, but JUAA considers this matter as an exceptional measure because it only requires meeting external conditions.

<Items reflected as exceptions in the accreditation results>  
The following items are reflected in the accreditation results even after improvements are made following the site visits.

1. School rules and regulations are revised to articulate the mission and purpose.
2. The missing information required to be disclosed by law is made public on the university's website.
3. The shortage of faculty members required by law has been corrected through recruitment and appointment.

### 3.3.8 The EQAA provides the higher education institutions with an opportunity to correct any factual errors that may appear in the external review report.

#### *[Opinion gathering from universities during site visits]*

In all types of accreditations, JUAA sends a list of questions raised during the document analyses to the universities prior to site visits. If there are mistaken views in the subcommittees' findings, the universities can ask for corrections in their responses. The site visits provide an opportunity not only for evaluators to ask questions but also for the evaluated universities to convey their opinions. The universities can also request corrections or changes regarding the self-study report.

As for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation, JUAA attaches the evaluation results of document analyses to the list of questions sent to universities before conducting site visits. The universities are allowed to present their views based on the results when answering the questions.

#### *[Opinions statements]*

JUAA provides all universities, junior colleges, and professional graduate schools with an opportunity to submit opinion statements to correct factual errors in their evaluation results (see 3.3.1 for details). Universities and other institutions are allowed to request corrections if their evaluation results include factual errors or expressions that could be misleading to the public. Upon receiving an opinion statement, the Accreditation Committee reviews and revises the results as necessary.

#### *[Appeal against accreditation results]*

JUAA has a system in place for universities denied accreditation in their finalized results to file an appeal against the decision. When an appeal is lodged, both the Accreditation Committee involved in the accreditation process and the Appeal Committee, an independent body that is not affiliated with the accreditation subcommittees, examine whether there are any flaws in the evaluation procedures or factual errors affecting the decision. Based on the examination, the Board of Trustees makes the final decision on the accreditation results. (The appeal review system and process are described below in 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.)

### 3.4 The Requirements for Self-evaluation

3.4.1 The EQAA provides clear guidance to the institution or program in the application of the procedures for self-evaluation, the solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents, or the preparation for external review as necessary and appropriate.

*[JUAA's requirements for universities]*

As mentioned above, JUAA requires universities to establish a mechanism for assuring and enhancing the quality of their education and other activities, and to provide QA to the public; namely, universities must establish and operate an IQA system.

While it is important to develop an appropriate IQA system based on the types, sizes, and characteristics of universities, JUAA places importance on operating PDCA and other improvement cycles at the class, educational program, and institution levels. JUAA thus requires universities to carry out university-wide self-studies from a comprehensive perspective in addition to operating a class improvement mechanism (e.g., faculty development activities based on class survey results) and conducting program reviews. JUAA also stresses the importance of utilizing the results of self-studies to clarify the direction of universities, connect to educational improvement, and eventually enhance student learning outcomes.

In terms of self-studies, JUAA especially recommends that universities undergo external and third-party reviews to ensure objectivity. JUAA's accreditation standards state that universities must take such measures as adopting external reviews to increase the objectivity and validity of their self-studies.

[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

To enhance quality through IQA system, it is essential to understand and assess the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and other elements acquired by university students on campus. With this perspective in mind, JUAA requires universities to monitor the learning outcomes (e.g., knowledge and skills to be acquired by the time of graduation or course completion) presented in their diploma policy and evaluate their appropriateness. JUAA also urges universities to utilize the evaluations by their stakeholders, including students, graduates, and employers of graduates, as these evaluations can be useful in analyzing learning outcomes. As for professional graduate schools, which serve as higher educational institutions tasked with cultivating advanced professionals, an FY2018 law stipulates that the reviewers of professional graduate schools must include industry experts in the schools' fields, and if possible, other parties from local municipalities and communities. The schools are now required to establish a mechanism for gathering opinions from these stakeholders to reflect their needs in the curricula. In response, JUAA also requires professional graduate schools to collect opinions from their stakeholders in terms of legal compliance. JUAA's accreditation standards for professional graduate schools have added evaluation perspectives for the system to gather

[Self-study Report: Notes and Examples of Supporting Evidence Materials](#)  
[WEB-JP]

opinions from industry and other professionals, the appropriateness of reviewers, and the status of curricula with their opinions reflected.

*[Explanation and dissemination to universities]*

JUAA provides universities planning to apply for its accreditation with information by publishing handbooks for each type of accreditation on its website, holding briefing sessions, and offering individual consultations upon request. JUAA's website also gives the universities easy access to the necessary materials to prepare their accreditation applications, including evaluation criteria, handbooks, and accreditation processes, as well as its regulations and past accreditation results. The results can be searched by, for example, fiscal year, category, and keywords. Starting in FY2021, JUAA has introduced a system that enables the search for items identified as commendations and distinctive features in the accreditation results, as part of its efforts to disseminate good practices.

[Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In the briefing session for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, JUAA stresses the importance of IQA in its third-cycle accreditation, in light of the social context and the need for higher education institutions. During the session, JUAA describes the evaluation criteria, processes, and materials that need to be prepared, and distributes its guidelines to explain the ethics required of the applicant universities. In recent briefings, JUAA has offered points to consider to appropriately prepare the self-study report, expecting universities to increase the accuracy of their evaluation materials. To share other universities' initiatives, the sessions use case reports by universities that demonstrated good practices and creative approaches to their IQA in the previous fiscal year's accreditation.

Until FY2019, the sessions for universities planning to apply for accreditation took place in person, with four venues used for the same content to accommodate the participants (different venues and schedules for universities for case reports). But from FY2020 onward, JUAA has released briefing videos and materials on its website, and responded to questions from universities using an on-demand format for a limited period of time, in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

[Briefing Videos for Universities Planning to Apply for Accreditation in FY2022](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In addition, JUAA arranges individual briefings for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation by sending its staff to universities upon request. JUAA responds to 20 to 30 requests a year either in person or online. The individual briefings have become an effective way for JUAA to address questions and provide consultations based on each case.

With a relatively small number of schools applying for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and the Program Accreditation, JUAA offers individual briefings to the above universities upon request. A briefing session for the Accreditation for Schools of Dental Education, which started in

[Webpage for Program Accreditation Application Procedures](#)  
[WEB-JP]



FY2021, was held online in July 2021 for all dental universities and faculties, with the video made available later on the JUAA website.

When asked about the effectiveness of JUAA's handbooks and briefing sessions, about 98 percent of the applicant universities described the handbooks as useful, and roughly 96 percent answered the guidance was beneficial. This suggests that JUAA's briefings are effective. JUAA will intensify its efforts to promote the understanding of its accreditations by offering more on-demand materials, including online and video resources, and creating an environment for university officials to access them at any time.

Results of the  
Questionnaire  
Survey on the  
Effectiveness of  
University  
Accreditation  
(2018-2020)  
[SD-JP13]

*[Future challenges]*

As mentioned above, JUAA's evaluation criteria require the adoption of external reviews to ensure the objectivity of self-studies, but do not mention the participation of students and industry leaders who may become employers of graduates in the self-studies. JUAA requires universities to conduct class evaluation surveys of students and have the results analyzed by faculty and staff members to improve their education as part of education QA, but these requirements do not include the involvement of students in evaluating university-wide activities.

However, to meet social needs universities must communicate and collaborate with industry. JUAA will consider requiring universities to gather opinions from employers and other industry professionals, and to reflect these opinions in their education. Meanwhile, international trends show students participating as evaluators in their universities' self-studies. JUAA will examine the effects and challenges of including students as evaluators, and present how students might take part in evaluating universities.

## 4. The EQAA and Its Relationship to the Public

### 4.1 Public Reports on EQAA Policies and Decisions

#### 4.1.1 The EQAA provides full and clear disclosure of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.

To ensure the transparency and accountability of its accreditation, JUAA is committed to actively disclosing information on its evaluation policies and procedures by establishing the Internal Rules on Information Disclosure. Specifically, the article pertaining to third-party evaluation (evaluation targets, criteria, items, implementation systems, methods, schedules, cycles, results announcement methods, costs, results, and others) stipulates that information will be disclosed in an appropriate manner through publications, the internet, and other media. Accordingly, JUAA makes the necessary information public through its website and other means.

Internal Rules  
on Information  
Disclosure  
[SD-JP14]

While the details of the evaluation criteria and procedures are described in Section 3., JUAA has compiled them into handbooks for each type of accreditation as a communication tool. These handbooks describe the features of JUAA's accreditations and what specific procedures are necessary to undergo the evaluations. They also include JUAA's accreditation standards, evaluation regulations, and related documents, with a comprehensive collection of the necessary information serving as a handy reference book.

For example, the University Accreditation Handbook explains the objectives and characteristics of university accreditation, and explicitly describes the evaluations focusing on the effectiveness of IQA system as the characteristics of JUAA's University Accreditation. The handbook provides the details of IQA, including fundamental concepts, approaches, and key points in the University Standards. In terms of JUAA's specific procedures, the handbook added JUAA's accreditation framework, "University Accreditation Regulations," at the end of the text, while offering detailed explanations to help universities undergo the accreditation process from preparation (including self-studies) to application and support during and after the evaluations. In addition, the handbook contains JUAA's "University Standards and its Rationale" and other relevant materials, such as "Evaluation Items and Perspectives (References)," "Decision Criteria and Their Operational Guidelines," "Guidelines for Accreditation," and "Evaluators' Perspectives."

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

As mentioned above, JUAA's handbooks are designed primarily for universities undergoing accreditation as well as evaluators, but are also accessible on the JUAA website to disclose all the content to relevant parties and the general public in a clear and comprehensive manner, thereby ensuring the transparency and accountability of JUAA's accreditation. JUAA's evaluation policies, processes, regulations, and criteria are also provided separately on its website, with changes

[Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Handbook](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Webpage for the Handbook](#)

swiftly updated.

[of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Webpage for the Program Accreditation Handbook](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

#### 4.1.2 The EQAA reports its decisions about higher education institutions and programs. The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.

JUAA describes assuring the public of the quality of university education and research as one of its accreditation objectives (see 3.2.1). JUAA is responsible as an organization for making its evaluation results public. In Japan, certified evaluation and accreditation agencies are required to announce their results in accordance with the School Education Act. In light of JUAA's activities as a public interest incorporated foundation, it is essential to publicly release its evaluations results as part of its activities contributing to the benefits of society, namely, public interest.

JUAA notifies the applicant universities of their evaluation results following the review and final decision by the Board of Trustees, with the certified evaluation and accreditation results also reported to the MEXT Minister. The online evaluation results are available by fiscal year, along with a page for searching by individual settings, including implementation years, university names, and categories. The search results show the accreditation results with a summarized version in English, while JUAA's English website offers a similar search page in an effort to disseminate the information internationally. In addition to its online efforts, JUAA actively releases its evaluation status and activities for the fiscal year through public relations magazines and press releases.

[Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results](#)  
[WEB-JP]  
[WEB-EN]

[Webpage for Announcement](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Webpage for Research Outcomes and Published Materials](#)  
[WEB-JP]  
[WEB-EN]

Furthermore, JUAA announces changes to its evaluation criteria and procedures as well as survey and research outcomes on its website, while also notifying relevant higher education institutions and other entities in writing as necessary.

#### 4.1.3 The EQAA has mechanisms to facilitate the public a fair understanding of the reasons supporting decisions taken.

JUAA's accreditation results consist of decisions on whether universities meet its standards, along with overviews (summaries of accreditation status), general remarks, and comments (commendations, suggestions for improvement, and areas of serious concern) on each evaluation criteria. As mentioned above, JUAA's accreditation standards and results are released on its website to help the public understand the reasons for the decisions (accredited or unaccredited) taken and the universities' strengths and challenges. Regarding the University Accreditation, JUAA also publishes materials analyzing the evaluation trends for each fiscal year to provide a broader perspective on an annual basis, along with a glossary of terms used in its accreditation.

[FY2021 University Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

In August 2021, JUAA opened a webpage that enables users to search for the commendations and distinctive features of the evaluated universities by fiscal year and keywords. The search page organizes such information as accreditation years, types of universities, and school capacities. The webpage also tags the good practices of the universities, allowing users to search for universities with similar successful achievements. Considering that negative results tend to attract more public attention, JUAA launched this initiative to actively publicize the excellent points of highly acclaimed universities, with relevant URLs and other links attached to help the public better understand their evaluated points and efforts. The page also includes comments from evaluated universities, thereby providing opportunities for the two sides – evaluators and evaluatees – to clarify and publicize the universities' strengths and distinctive features to the general public.

[Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Evaluation criteria far beyond common sense will not be accepted widely by society, no matter how well worded they may be. With this in mind, JUAA solicits public comments, as mentioned in 3.2.2, every time it formulates or revises its key evaluation criteria. In doing so, JUAA commits itself to gaining public understanding of its criteria by opening the door not only to universities and relevant parties but to everyone through announcements on its website. JUAA considers this approach as part of its mechanism for making the reasons for its accreditation decisions widely and fairly understood by people in general.

[Webpage for Announcements](#)  
[WEB-JP]

##### *[Future challenges]*

While describing its efforts to make its accreditation results widely known to the public, JUAA finds room for further improvements in its activities.

First, JUAA's accreditation results reports tend to have long sentences using technical terms. Creating a search page to explain the terminology used by higher education institution officials may be helpful, but the public may still find the meanings difficult to understand. As pointed out in MEXT's comments (see 4.2.1),

[JUAA-SNS \(note\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

raising public awareness of certified evaluation and accreditation remains a challenge. Regrettably, media outlets tend to report only simple and sensational news that a university was denied accreditation, rather than focusing on the excellent outcomes achieved by accredited universities.

JUAA will work to make more people aware of its main accreditation objectives by accumulating more data than in the past to upgrade its search page for commendations and distinctive features, and publicizing the webpage through various means. In recent years, JUAA has begun addressing these challenges, such as delivering public lectures on its accreditation results using easy-to-understand words on a separate website. JUAA is considering taking further steps, including disseminating more concise summaries of its accreditation and results of the year on its website and social media.

## 4.2 Other Public Reports

### 4.2.1 The EQAA discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.

JUAA places importance on implementing university accreditation and undergoing third-party evaluations to regularly review its activities as a QA agency, with the aim of improving and enhancing such activities as organizational management and research projects. The External Review Committee, a body that excludes JUAA's board, staff, committee members, and other interested parties, assumes this responsibility. The results of the Committee's evaluation present suggestions for improvement and challenges in JUAA's activities. The results are also reported to the Board of Trustees and made public on the JUAA website (see 2.1.2 and 2.1.4).

In addition to these initiatives, JUAA conducts and publishes the self-assessments of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation and the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools, as required for accreditation agencies by ministerial ordinances. JUAA reported its FY2018 self-assessment results to MEXT, whose comments have been released on its website. The ministry listed four points expected of JUAA: (1) "Incorporating the concept of IQA early into certified evaluation and accreditation is commendable;" (2) "It is expected that JUAA will enhance the assessment of whether IQA functions properly or not;" (3) "It is expected that JUAA's newly established research institute will promote research aimed at enhancing the evaluation quality and share the outcomes with other accreditation agencies;" and (4) "It is expected that JUAA will pioneer measures to raise public awareness of certified evaluation and accreditation in coordination with other accreditation agencies and MEXT, and to engage in various activities such as case analyses that will serve as a model for other accreditation agencies." JUAA is working to advance point (1) and address point (2) in its accreditation process, as mentioned in 3.1.2, while carrying out

[External Review Report \(February 26, 2021\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Self-Assessment Report on the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Self-Assessment Report on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[MEXT website](#)  
[WEB-JP]

surveys and research regarding point (3) and releasing the outcomes, as described in 2.2.1 and 4.2.2. As for point (4), JUAA acknowledges the challenges, as stated in 4.1.3.

In these ways, JUAA appropriately discloses the results of self-assessments and external reviews of its activities in a transparent manner.

#### 4.2.2 The EQAA prepares and disseminates periodically integrated reports on the overall outcomes of QA processes and of any other relevant activities.

JUAA periodically compiles the outcomes of its activities in reports and other documents and releases them to the public to ensure transparency. Specifically, JUAA announces its university accreditation results for each type of accreditation every fiscal year on its website, along with a summary outlining the overview of the year's evaluations, systems, processes, decisions, and future procedures. These results and materials are also submitted to MEXT as required by law. To disseminate the outcomes of its university accreditation activities, JUAA conducts a survey on the effectiveness of the University Accreditation after each accreditation cycle, and reports the results on its website. Through these efforts, JUAA aims to publicly clarify the effectiveness of its university accreditation, while improving its activities by reflecting the survey findings in the next cycle of accreditation (see 2.1.2).

Furthermore, JUAA prepares an annual report on the outcomes of all its activities, including accreditation. This report covers the main activities of accreditation, research, international cooperation, and corporate management, and is submitted to the Cabinet Office and released to the public on the JUAA website. JUAA also publishes an annual newsletter featuring its activity report, activity plan, and financial documents, and distributes its newsletter to member universities.

Additionally, JUAA established RIQAHE in FY2018 to conduct surveys on university accreditations in Japan and abroad for the benefits of its various projects and share the outcomes with member universities (see 2.1.1 and 2.2.1). These activities help not only improve the quality of JUAA's evaluations but also develop QA systems in Japan. JUAA must return the outcomes to society in order to serve the public's interest as a public interest incorporated foundation. Therefore, JUAA distributes its reports on the survey results to member universities, and releases them to the public on its website as well. Among the reports with specific themes are the "Survey on the Expected Role of Achievement Level Evaluation" and the "Survey on Effective Online Education and Evaluation Standards and Perspectives." The "University Evaluation Review" is a research journal aimed at establishing basic and practical theories related to university accreditation and educational improvement in Japan and abroad, and applying these theories to the practices of university evaluation. The "University Staff Journal" focuses on university staff playing an

[Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Results of University Accreditation and Other Evaluations](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Results of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation \(2nd Cycle\)](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[FY2020 Activity Report](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Newsletter  
[SD-JP05]

Webpage for Research Outcomes and Published Materials  
[\[WEB-JP\]](#)  
[\[WEB-EN\]](#)

important role in university reform, with the aim of enhancing their practical skills and abilities. All of these reports are annual publications. JUAA has been carrying out surveys regularly since before RIQAHE's establishment, and publishes the reports on its website, along with the research conducted by the Research Group on Higher Education and the outcomes of research commissioned by MEXT.

## 5. Decision-making

### 5.1 The Decision-making Process

5.1.1 The EQAA decisions take into consideration the outcomes of both the institution's self-assessment process and the external review; they may also consider any other relevant information, provided this has been communicated to the HEIs.

JUAA stresses the importance of universities' IQA systems, and regards their self-study reports that include self-study results and supporting evidence as importance sources of information. JUAA also conducts site visits to obtain the necessary evidence and information through interviews with university officials before deciding on the accreditation results (detailed in 3.2.1 and 3.3.1). With a focus on universities' IQA as well as respect for their independent and autonomous activities for reviews and improvements, JUAA's evaluations are based primarily on information obtained from universities. JUAA does not unilaterally seek information on individual universities from third parties. JUAA's reference to external organization databases and other information sources is limited to the purpose of examining data representing general trends and information used by universities as evidence.

JUAA clearly states its position on fully respecting university autonomy through its handbooks and other documents. JUAA also includes its regulations in the handbooks to inform universities of its accreditation procedures from implementation to decisions on the results. After the evaluations, JUAA conducts a questionnaire survey of the evaluated universities on the effectiveness of the University Accreditation to gather opinions on its evaluation procedures and the impact of accreditation on universities. According to the survey results, when asked whether JUAA's university accreditation methods, schedules, and other procedures were appropriate, more than 90 percent of the respondents described them as appropriate or mostly appropriate, while no one stated they were inappropriate or slightly inappropriate. JUAA has so far faced no challenges to the decision-making process of the accreditation results.

In rare cases, misconduct by a university may emerge after its accreditation results are decided. JUAA's regulations on University Accreditation, Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools, and Program Accreditation all stipulate that the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the University Accreditation Committee, may revoke a university's accreditation even during the accreditation process, if the university is found to have engaged in serious misconduct affecting the accreditation decision, such as falsifying its self-study report or other materials. Such scandals are sometimes brought to light by the media, but JUAA does not decide whether to revoke the accreditation based simply on these reports, but makes its decision after asking the university to submit documents as required by the above rules and conducting hearings if

Survey Results on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (Question I-6-10) [SD-JP15]

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

[Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Law Schools and Professional Graduate Schools of Global Legal Studies](#) [WEB-JP]



necessary.

In this way, JUAA consistently conducts its evaluations with respect for university autonomy, and its policies and procedures are designed to ensure clear, fair, and independent decision-making.

[Results of the Investigation Concerning the Selection of Students for Admission to a School of Medicine and Changes to the Decisions on the University Accreditation Results Based on the Results](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Change to the Accreditation Results \(Decision\) of Tokyo Medical University](#)  
[WEB-JP]

### 5.1.2 The EQAA decisions are impartial, rigorous, and consistent even when they are based on the reports of other quality assurance bodies.

To apply for accreditation, universities are responsible for preparing and submitting their self-study reports and supporting evidence to JUAA. Some universities submit the results of reviews conducted by other accreditation agencies as evidence, but JUAA basically regards them as one of the evidence materials and conducts its evaluations in the same way as it does for other universities without changing its criteria. JUAA is committed to consistent and rigorous evaluations, and fairly treats evidence materials provided by all universities.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Handbook for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Japan has two types of certified evaluation and accreditation (institutional and disciplinary) as well as other program-specific accreditations (see Part I-3.). Many universities have undergone multiple evaluations in addition to the institutional certified evaluation and accreditation. In light of this trend, it is important for JUAA to take into account the evaluations conducted by other accreditation agencies, and improvement activities undertaken by the evaluated universities in response to the results, in order to fairly evaluate the universities' efforts toward QA and enhancement. This approach will help not only increase the effectiveness of evaluations but also ease the burden on universities. JUAA utilizes other accreditation agencies' evaluations in its accreditation process, but has a clear policy on the extent to which these evaluations can be used as evidence materials. JUAA believes its fair, independent decision-making process is ensured, given that it utilizes other agencies' evaluation results at its own discretion.

Referring only to appropriate information as evidence is important in conducting a proper evaluation. In the accreditation process, JUAA constantly examines whether appropriate information is obtained by using other accreditation agencies' evaluation results, and will revise its policy if the information obtained proves to be inappropriate.

### 5.1.3 The EQAA decisions are based on published criteria and procedures, and can be justified only with reference to those criteria and procedures.

Based on the universities' self-studies, JUAA is committed to conducting fair and reliable evaluations from a third-party point of view. It is therefore essential for JUAA to provide universities beforehand with access to information on its evaluation criteria and procedures. JUAA considers this important because the aim of its accreditation is to assure the public of the quality of university education and research (see 3.2.1). Given that university students and applicants will eventually participate in the labor market, employers are important university stakeholders. Disseminating the evaluation results to employers is therefore necessary to assure the quality of universities' educational and research activities and to clarify their role in society. To this end, JUAA specifies the evaluation criteria and procedures in its regulations, and also includes them in its handbooks published on its website.

In addition, JUAA helps evaluators fully prepare for accreditation by holding training seminars to explain its evaluation criteria and procedures, along with simulations (see 3.3.4 and 3.3.5). This training contributes to JUAA's published criteria and procedures being consistent in the accreditation process, resulting in appropriate decisions. Even when using other accreditation agencies' evaluations as evidence (see 5.1.2), JUAA carries out its evaluations consistently based on its published criteria without changing the procedures.

Despite JUAA's defined and published criteria, evaluators may interpret individual cases differently, which could negatively affect universities undergoing JUAA's accreditation using their self-studies. JUAA has drawn up written guidelines for dealing with certain problems, and provides evaluators with supplemental materials explaining how to refer to its evaluation criteria, with these materials also made public.

JUAA therefore finds no problem regarding its published evaluation criteria and procedures, and considers its accreditation reliable and transparent.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Handbook for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

[Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Guidelines for Accreditation](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Evaluators' Perspectives](#)

[Accreditation Handbook for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health](#)  
[WEB-JP]

#### 5.1.4 Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action.

JUAA conducts evaluations based on its published criteria, with comments attached for issues to be addressed (see 3.2.5). JUAA clearly defines its evaluation criteria and comments on strengths and problems in its handbooks (see 3.2.5). JUAA implements its accreditation uniformly and fairly for all universities in line with these criteria and definitions throughout the process from evaluations by review subcommittees to final decisions by the Accreditation Committee, thereby ensuring its consistency.

JUAA places importance on the self-improvement functions of universities (see 3.2.1), and considers its role to be to assist universities in improving and enhancing their quality independently and autonomously. JUAA provides universities with feedback on their improvement efforts after receiving their progress reports and reviewing them at the Accreditation Committee. JUAA also provides certain universities with an opportunity to present their improvement plans to the Accreditation Committee and exchange opinions with committee members (e.g., Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools). This support helps universities modify their plans as necessary based on the committee's advice and make their improvement activities more effective. JUAA offers this exchange opportunity with the Accreditation Committee to all professional graduate schools, excluding law schools and professional graduate schools of intellectual property studies. Such arrangements are only possible for a relatively small number of evaluated professional graduate schools per year (at most ten schools submit progress reports). The challenge lies in providing similar support to a larger number of universities (30 to 50 per year) in the University Accreditation and other evaluations.

##### *[Future challenges]*

While it is difficult to offer all universities undergoing evaluations the opportunity to exchange opinions with the Accreditation Committee, JUAA can provide information to help universities introduce their improvement plans by other means, for example, sharing improvement efforts made by various universities. The initiatives identified as commendations in the accreditation results are now accessible on the JUAA website. Considering it useful to widely disseminate not only the universities' distinctive features and strengths but also other effective improvement activities, JUAA will explore ways to expand its support through such means as online media and events.

#### 5.1.5 The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.

Based on JUAA's accreditation results, the evaluated universities are required to properly confirm their strengths and issues to be addressed in light of their current

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Handbook for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[University Accreditation Regulations](#)

[Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities](#)  
[WEB-JP]

[Website for Accreditation Results](#)

status, and clarify their measures to make improvements. To assure the public of the quality of university education and research (see 5.1.3), it is necessary to make the accreditation results easy to understand for both universities and the public. JUAA is committed to clear, precise, and intelligible evaluations by establishing decisions (accredited/unaccredited), evaluation overviews, evaluations for university standards, and results including comments on each standard. The format of the results is revised as necessary before the next accreditation cycle begins. For example, JUAA's university accreditation results initially provided overviews presented in each evaluation category for university standards, but the current results have been organized to make them easier to read by adding several headings for each standard, followed by overviews. JUAA's accreditation results of professional graduate schools contain tables showing curricula and the numbers of students and faculty members.

As a QA agency, JUAA's accreditation results are recognized as clear and accurate based on the fact that most evaluated universities find the results easy to understand. JUAA's survey of universities on the contents of the results revealed that more than 90 percent of the respondents stated the results were easy or generally easy to understand. When asked whether JUAA's evaluations of the universities' initiatives were appropriate, a similar percentage of the respondents answered that the evaluations were appropriate or generally appropriate. The accreditation results must be easy to understand for the public as well. With social connection in mind, JUAA includes business and secondary education professionals as members of the Accreditation Committee and the Board of Councilors to seek their opinions. JUAA has exchanged views with organizations related to high school career guidance, and published educational materials providing ways to utilize its accreditation results for career guidance.

Survey Results  
on the  
Effectiveness of  
University  
Accreditation  
(Question I-5)  
[SD-JP15]

*[Future challenges]*

JUAA has produced reference materials to help high school students with their future academic choices, but its evaluations have rarely been appreciated and used as a reference. To further promote its accreditation results, for example, JUAA is consulting with high school teachers. JUAA will actively hold discussions with other stakeholders in various fields to deepen their understanding of its evaluations and expand the use of the results. Through a series of exchanges, JUAA will review its accreditation decisions in terms of clarity and accuracy as a QA agency, and examine its stakeholders' needs and to what extent their needs have been fulfilled. JUAA will improve its format and methods of presenting accreditation results if needs arise from these communications.

## 5.2 The EQAA's Process for Appeals and Complaints

### 5.2.1 The EQAA has procedures in place to deal in a consistent way with complaints about its procedures or operation.

As mentioned in Part I, certified evaluation and accreditation is mandatory and plays an important role in assuring the public of the quality of university evaluation. JUAA reiterates that one of its objectives is to assure the public of the quality of university education and research; namely, JUAA's accreditation has social significance. The same objective also applies to program-specific accreditation. JUAA's evaluations must therefore be fair, appropriate, and transparent. To this end, it is important to establish a mechanism for accepting opinions from universities and other institutions, and providing them with an opportunity to make appeals.

JUAA has a mechanism in place for an independent body to review the appeal filed by a university against the decision on its accreditation results (described below in 5.2.2). In addition, JUAA has set up an inquiry form on its website to accept complaints concerning its overall activities, including evaluations, and has procedures in place to deal with the complaints it receives. JUAA basically replies only to identified senders and does not respond to anonymous inquiries. In call cases, JUAA records and stores its responses in a given form. After receiving inquiries, the person in charge contacts and consults with the executive director via the associate director of the department in charge. Any reply requiring advice from the Accreditation Committee is made after the consultation.

JUAA also actively offers opportunities to hear various opinions on its accreditation procedures, operations, and other activities. Specifically, JUAA officials collect requests when evaluators and university officials openly exchange opinions on the challenges facing universities during site visits, and conduct a questionnaire survey of the universities and evaluators after the evaluations are completed. Based on the opinions collected, the Standards Committee and the Accreditation Committee, both in charge of the evaluation system, address any issues that need to be corrected.

#### *[Future challenges]*

JUAA has procedures to deal with complaints in a consistent way, but may face more complicated cases requiring legal action. To ensure more appropriate responses, it would be best to prepare a systematic manual specifying a series of procedures, including legal disputes, in light of the various types of complaints based on past cases. JUAA records and stores the complaints and its responses for sharing internally, but considering the possibility of more complicated and legally challenging cases, it is necessary to work more closely to share information across its departments.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

[Handbook for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools](#)  
[WEB-JP]

Survey Results on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (Question I-5) [SD-JP15]

Surveys of Evaluators for the FY2020 Certified

### 5.2.2 The EQAA has clear, published procedures for handling appeals related to its external review and decision-making processes.

JUAA provides the evaluated universities with an opportunity to make opinion statements regarding factual errors or other inconsistencies before finalizing the results of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools, and Program Accreditation. This is one of its key processes for implementing fair and appropriate evaluations (see 3.3.1 for procedures).

The universities officially denied accreditation can file an appeal to overturn the decision. With the review focused on the facts underlying the decision, the universities can only lodge appeals over factual errors. In other words, the review related to the alleged objection does not mean reevaluating the accreditation results, but examining whether the accreditation results were produced based on appropriate procedures, before determining the need to revise the results.

The Appeal Committee conducts reviews based on the documents submitted by universities as a general principle (see 5.2.3). The Committee may solicit opinions from the appealing university and external experts if necessary, and even conduct on-site inspections of the university. After completing the review, the Committee sends the results to the Board of Trustees for a final decision on the need for changes. JUAA notifies the university of the final results, which are also reported to the MEXT Minister and made public (see Chart 14.).

[Regulations on Review of Appeal against Accreditation Results](#)

In recent cases, three universities filed appeals against the decisions to deny accreditation on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools in FY2016, Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Law Schools in FY2018, and University Accreditation in FY2019. In the three cases, written reviews were conducted in accordance with the above procedures. The Appeal Committee sent questions to two of the universities to conduct hearings due to insufficient explanations in their submitted documents. The Committee confirmed that the evaluations of the three universities were carried out appropriately based on the regulations, from implementation to decisions on the results, and found no factual errors. The Committee concluded that the decisions to deny accreditation were appropriate.

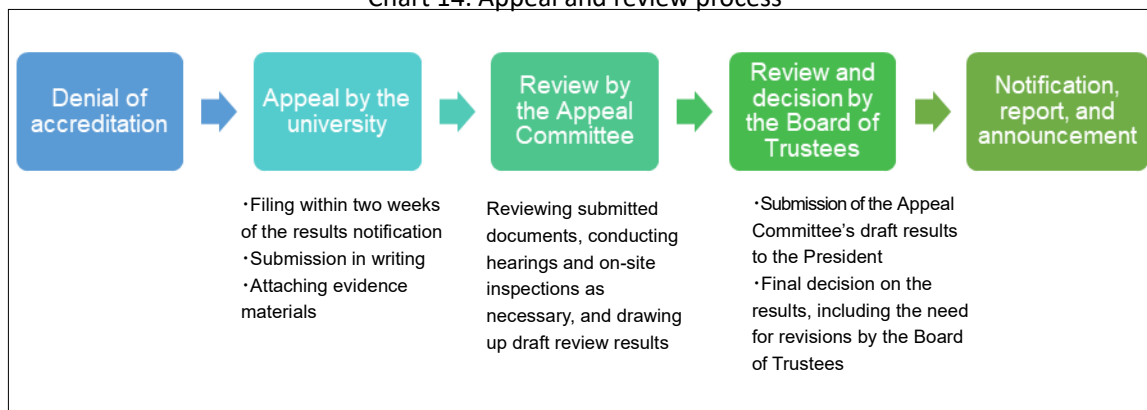
The appeal review process, aimed at assessing the appropriateness of JUAA’s evaluations, must be neutral and transparent. To this end, the Appeal Committee serves as an independent body, as described below in 5.2.3, with its review conducted with no interested parties involved to ensure impartiality.

[Regulations on Review of Appeal against Accreditation Results](#)

JUAA specifies all procedures for handling opinion statements and appeals in its regulations, and makes these procedures public through its handbooks, website, and other media.

[University Accreditation Handbook](#)

Chart 14. Appeal and review process



### 5.2.3 Appeals are conducted by a Panel that was not responsible for the original decision and has no conflict of interest; appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.

JUAA attaches the utmost importance to no conflicts of interest in its process and system for responding to appeals against its accreditation results in order to ensure neutrality.

Appeals filed by universities are handled by the Appeal Committee, which is different from the committee responsible for the accreditation results (see Chart 3.). The Appeal Committee established under JUAA is an independent body dedicated to reviewing appeals with respect to all JUAA evaluations.

[Regulations on Review of Appeal against Accreditation Results](#)

The Appeal Committee consists of two university officials and three experts who do not belong to universities. Its members cannot concurrently serve as members of committees involved in implementing evaluations and deciding on the results. University officials cannot participate in reviewing the accreditation results of the universities to which they belong.

In this way, JUAA’s appeal review strictly excludes stakeholders of the accreditation committees and appealing universities. The impartiality of the review is also enhanced by including external experts who are neither university faculty and staff nor accreditation agency employees. Moreover, transparency is ensured by releasing a list of Appeal Committee members to the public on the JUAA website.

[List of Appeal Committee Members](#)  
[WEB-JP]

*[Future challenges]*

JUAA has two challenges to address regarding the Appeal Committee membership.

The first challenge lies in the appointment of legal professionals. The Appeal Committee includes lawyers, but their appointment is not stipulated in the regulations. With possible legal disputes stemming from the appeal review in mind, it is necessary to consider adding the appointment of legal professionals to the regulations.

The second challenge concerns the independence of the Appeal Committee. As mentioned earlier, members of the committees tasked with evaluations and decisions on the results as well as those affiliated with the universities filing appeals are not permitted to take part in the appeal review (see 5.2.3). This rule is clearly stated in the regulations, and no problems have arisen in terms of independence and impartiality. However, it is important to state more explicitly in the regulations that the review process by the Appeal Committee is not directly influenced by the Board of Trustees, JUAA's top body responsible for final decision-making. While the final decision is made by the Board of Trustees, the independence of the review process must be ensured. JUAA will therefore work to revise its regulations to further ensure the Appeal Committee's independence.



## 6. The QA of Cross-border Higher Education

### 6.1 Criteria for Cross-border Higher Education

6.1.1 The EQAA in a sending country makes clear that the awarding institution is responsible for ensuring the equivalent quality of the education offered, that the institution understands the regulatory frameworks of the receiving countries, and that the institution provides clear information on the programs offered and their characteristics.

This reference standard does not currently apply to JUAA.

The OECD and the World Bank define cross-border education as the movement of people, programs, providers, curricula, projects, research, and services in education across national jurisdictional borders. In this definition, cross-border education includes broader movements of students and researchers. Transnational education is, however, considered the movement of academic programs and institutions across borders; in other words, it focuses primarily on the movement of academic programs and providers to students, and not the movement of students to overseas higher education institutions and providing countries. Such transnational education includes international branch campuses, franchise programs, distance education, partnership programs, and joint universities (Knight and McNamara, 2017).

Looking at transnational education in Japan, in terms of exporting education, no Japanese universities have opened overseas schools. Only several overseas universities have been established by local corporations that were founded and acquired (including mergers) by Japan's school corporations or other entities as independent institutions, while satellite campuses have been set up for distance education from Japan with lessons conducted by dispatched faculty members. As for Japan importing education, there are several Japanese campuses of overseas universities, but these institutions are designated under MEXT's jurisdiction, which means that QA agencies cannot engage in QA activities for them. For these reasons, JUAA currently has no QA framework for transnational education.

With international academic mobility increasing rapidly in various forms in recent years, QA for cross-border education has become increasingly important. As a QA agency, JUAA will strive to improve its evaluation systems, including accreditation standards, as needed, in light of the future overseas developments of Japanese universities. JUAA's Standards Committee is currently reviewing its evaluation system ahead of the fourth cycle of the University Accreditation starting in FY2025. JUAA plans to discuss cross-border education QA at the Committee and reflect the outcomes in revising its evaluation criteria and processes if necessary.

[OECD and World Bank, 2007](#)

Knight, Jane and McNamara, John, 2017, Transnational Education: A Classification Framework and Data Collection Guidelines for International Programme and Provider Mobility (IPPM).

[University Standards and its Rationale](#)

### 6.1.2 Students and other stakeholders receive clear and complete information about the awards delivered.

In Japan, universities have the authority to grant degrees, and JUAA as a QA agency issues certificates for its accredited universities upon request from their students and graduates. JUAA issues one to four certificates per year, with most of them requested by individuals primarily for (1) seeking employment with overseas companies, (2) transferring or advancing to overseas universities or graduate schools, or (3) taking qualification tests. JUAA willingly responds to their requests for career advancement, in the hope that its certified evaluation and accreditation certificates will be used for the benefit of students and graduates.

[Webpage for the Outline of Accreditation Results](#)

[Webpage for Accreditation Results by University](#)

[Webpage for a List of Full Member Universities](#)

JUAA also releases its accreditation results, including evaluated fiscal years, on its website, while disseminating its information to overseas QA agencies.

The above efforts show that JUAA offers appropriate information to students and other stakeholders.

### 6.1.3 The rights and obligations of the parties involved in transnational education are clearly established and well known by the parties.

Not applicable.

## 6.2 Collaboration between Agencies

### 6.2.1 The EQAA cooperates with appropriate local agencies in the exporting and importing countries and with international networks. This cooperation is oriented to improve mutual understanding, to have a clear and comprehensive account of the regulatory framework, and to share good practices.

This reference standard does not apply to JUAA in terms of exporting and importing education. However, JUAA collaborates with other agencies in (1) MOU-based activities (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), (2) joint staff trainings (see 2.2.2), and (3) joint accreditation projects. The following are the detailed descriptions of (3).

JUAA launched the iJAS project in 2018 as a new international cooperation initiative. The aim of iJAS is to contribute to the development and internationalization of universities through joint accreditation. The project was initially designed as an international QA framework under cooperation between JUAA and TWAEA to enhance the mutual understanding of the higher education environments in Japan and Taiwan as well as further promote international cooperation. In 2021, ONESQA, Thailand officially joined iJAS, and the project is now underway in Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan.

[Webpage for iJAS](#)

[iJAS Handbook](#)

iJAS dates back to 2014 when JUAA received an offer for mutual accreditation from TWAEA, but from the perspective of QA, JUAA did not immediately agree to accept

the accreditations of universities evaluated by other agencies. Both sides started with working-level opinion exchanges, and spent a long period of time discussing how the accreditation should function through participating in each other’s evaluator seminars, subcommittees, and site visits. As a result, the two agencies reached an agreement to implement joint accreditation by a mixed team using shared evaluation standards instead of each other’s criteria. The evaluation standards and methods were decided after discussions by the Standards Committee and the Board of Trustees. The launch of iJAS required a total of two years, but JUAA and TWAEA have successfully developed a unique and distinctive framework for international QA to implement joint accreditation based on integrated standards.

The following six standards were adopted by iJAS after TWAEA and JUAA compared each other’s evaluation criteria for similarities and identified such key items as IQA. The two agencies also referred to the ESG established by ENQA to take the broad use of these standards into consideration.

Table 30. Standards for International Joint Accreditation

Standard 1. Mission, Goals & Strategy	Standard 2. IQA
Standard 3. Teaching & Learning	Standard 4. Faculty
Standard 5. Social Connection	Standard 6. Governance

The iJAS evaluation focuses on whether the university’s activities and outcomes are fit for the purpose, rather than legal compliance. Accordingly, iJAS stipulates that universities accredited by institutional evaluations conducted under the laws and regulations of their countries are eligible to apply for the International Joint Accreditation.

Regarding the evaluation methods, the iJAS Committee set up by the three agencies discusses the iJAS policy and reviews the draft accreditation results. The accreditation consists of document analyses and site visits conducted by a review team formed based on the location, characteristics, and type of each applicant university.

The review team has five evaluators. For a Japanese university, a mixed team is formed – one chair and three evaluators from Taiwan and Thailand, and one evaluator from Japan. The iJAS policy stipulates those evaluators are to be selected from current (or former) members of the university executive board, professors, and administrative staff (senior level) of higher education institutions or research institutes, and senior corporate managers with expertise in higher education, in order to ensure high-quality evaluations.

Each agency holds evaluator training based on the integrated training program. The aim of the training is to raise the evaluators’ awareness of the different educational

systems in each country, deepen their understanding of the iJAS standards and methods, and ethics for evaluators, applicant universities, and administrative offices, and ensure smooth evaluation practices.

The effects of iJAS under the above procedures include the following.

Assuring international quality	Ensuring international standards	Promoting international initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Evaluation by overseas quality assurance agencies</li> <li>•Internal quality assurance</li> <li>•Guidelines for signing partnership agreements with overseas universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enhancing international recognition</li> <li>•Acquiring outstanding students and researchers</li> <li>•International education compatibility</li> <li>•Credit transfers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Promoting exchanges among universities in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand</li> <li>•Guidelines for joint/double degrees</li> </ul>

In FY2018, JUAA held its first briefing session on iJAS, publicized the project on its website, and distributed flyers at its events, drawing not only attention from higher education institution officials but also inquiries from newspapers and other media outlets.

In 2019, iJAS issued its accreditation to two universities – Akita International University (Japan) and Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Science (Taiwan). A university in Taiwan applied for iJAS in FY2020, but the evaluation was postponed with the site visit canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY2021, Thailand joined the project, and JUAA updated its iJAS brochures for distribution to universities and held briefing sessions for universities in Japan. The iJAS Committee also reviewed its related regulations, accreditation handbooks, and other materials. The iJAS Committee plans to carry out trial accreditation in cooperation with universities in Thailand in order to confirm the appropriateness of the current standards and evaluation process.

[Accreditation Report for Akita International University](#)

[Accreditation Report for Chia Nan University of Pharmacy & Science](#)

iJAS project is characterized by the following two major features. First, it includes the opinions (evaluations) of international evaluators with expertise in university accreditation in their countries. Second, iJAS focuses on the internal quality assurance of institutions based on the evaluation criteria shared with overseas accreditation agencies.

With iJAS intended for international-oriented universities, its accreditation standards include criteria related to internationalization strategies and key QA items, including the functionality of IQA systems and the monitoring and assessment of learning outcomes. iJAS does not directly evaluate legal compliance of the applicant universities, as its application requirements stipulate that universities are qualified for accreditation after undergoing and receiving institutional accreditation under the laws and regulations of their countries. The

iJAS basically looks at the fitness of purpose, namely, whether the universities' activities and outcomes fulfill their purposes. The evaluations focused on mission, purpose, objectives, and strategy, as well as IQA efforts, are the major features of iJAS's accreditation process.

Several international QA frameworks are exploring the QA of joint educational programs and cross-border education (including JOQAR (Joint Programmes: QA and Recognition of Degrees Awarded), MULTRA (Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results Regarding Joint Programmes by ECA), QACHE (QA of Cross-border Higher Education), and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)). Degree program-level evaluations based on international standards are actively conducted in such fields as business, medicine, engineering, public health, and public policy. However, there are few cases of institution-wide accreditations based on international standards, and in this respect, the iJAS institutional accreditation represents a new and unique approach focusing on the functionality of IQA.

[JOQAR](#)

[MULTRA](#)

[QACHE](#)

However, the iJAS project has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, amid the process of making arrangements with would-be applicant universities seeking in-person site visits. The iJAS Committee shares the need to boost its performance and build credibility for iJAS over a period of time while balancing the quality and quantity of reviewed universities. The two iJAS-accredited universities commented that the international joint accreditation certificate helps demonstrate their compliance with internationally accepted standards (international educational quality standards) and raises their profiles. These achievements will create high expectations for iJAS to expand further, including extending to other countries. JUAA strongly recognizes the importance of the project in terms of enhancing the international compatibility of accreditation and ensuring international credibility. Its Board of Trustees has confirmed that JUAA will strive to step up its joint accreditation activities and actively coordinate with other countries. The expansion of this joint accreditation system worldwide could increase its value, making universities more aware of the need for such an accreditation. To achieve this ambition, it is important to first carry out more joint accreditations in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand while extensively promoting iJAS at the same time. With universities in Asian countries taking active approaches to internationalization, Japan needs to keep up with the trend, and cooperating with Asian QA agencies is essential. JUAA plans to expand its publicity activities to QA agencies in the Asian region through APQN.

In addition, JUAA is approaching the national government to advance the iJAS project. In Japan, universities are required by law to undergo certified evaluation and accreditation every seven years. Combining with iJAS or other voluntary evaluations would place a heavy burden on universities. JUAA is considering

lobbying MEXT to have iJAS recognized as an alternative to the certified evaluation and accreditation in Japan. The other iJAS agencies also plan to take similar approaches in Thailand and Taiwan, with each seeking to coordinate with their central government.

JUAA will work to further advance iJAS and contribute to international QA of universities, while strengthening collaboration and cooperation with TWAEA and ONESQA.

#### 6.2.2 The EQAA seeks ways to cooperate in the external quality assurance in transnational education provision, for example through mutual recognition.

As described in 6.1.1, few transnational educational programs are offered in Japan. JUAA currently has no QA standards for such programs. However, JUAA manages the iJAS project, a framework that transcends the scope of transnational education QA (see 6.2.1 for details) and enables the accreditation of universities in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand using integrated international standards. The standards are broadly equivalent to international standards, with consideration given to the shared items of the three agencies and the unique features in each country. Once the pilot evaluation of Thai universities is completed, the review will be made necessary. But, the iJAS project has great potential for development, such as expanding target countries and improving accreditation methods. Adding more countries is expected to bring many benefits through an extended network of international exchanges with evaluated universities. JUAA agrees that expanding the project will lead to collaboration with more international agencies, as well as enhancing the international recognition and ensuring the international credibility of the iJAS accreditation. JUAA will work with TWAEA and ONESQA to make the project even more effective and contribute to international QA as QA agencies.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the main body of this report, JUAA has undertaken several self-assessments of its organization and activities in the past. These past self-assessments were conducted to assess whether JUAA (a) has the organizational structure and systems in place to achieve its goals, (b) implements its activities appropriately, (c) meets its stated goals, and (d) operates in line with QA aimed by the Japanese government's higher education policy. In this latest self-assessment undertaken to demonstrate our alignment with INQAAHE's GGP, JUAA evaluated its organizations and activities from the added perspective of whether JUAA meets the international expectations and standards of QA agencies. It was a refreshing experience for us, and being able to confirm through the self-assessment that JUAA's governance system and QA activities are in alignment with the GGP was extremely rewarding. Nonetheless, the review did reveal a number of areas requiring improvement, which are discussed below.

First, JUAA lacks a mechanism to allow direct student involvement in the process of developing accreditation standards and other QA activities (Section 1.3.1). Turning our eyes overseas, we find there are countries that actively support student participation in their QA. If we were to adopt this practice in Japan, JUAA would need to consider appropriate methods suitable to the Japanese context.

Second, RIQAHE needs to actively disseminate its research findings in Japan and abroad (see Section 2.2.1). Established in 2018, the RIQAHE is a unique organization that undertakes research exclusively on university QA and university accreditation. Widely sharing its achievements not just in Japan but internationally as well would enhance JUAA's presence and promote its growth.

Third, there is room to improve JUAA's staff training programs in terms of systematic structuring (Section 1.4.3). Presently, plans for annual staff training are designed and implemented with the aim of developing a common set of competencies expected of all staff across all job levels and categories. In future, JUAA looks to build a more systematic training framework by establishing job-level-specific competencies in addition to the current skills, and developing training programs designed to build these competencies.

The fourth challenge is finding ways to sustain JUAA's organizations and activities that currently rely on volunteers. This is an issue that came to light during the Self-Assessment Committee's discussions held in relation to the GGP alignment review. All JUAA personnel, for example, Board members and committee members, other than the staff, work for JUAA on a part-time basis. To maintain the continuity of its activities and ensure that the organization can grow as a sustainable entity, JUAA needs to reconsider how roles and responsibilities should be assigned and coordinated.

The article titled "The History of INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice and its Impact" featured on INQAAHE's website points out, among other things, that the work of QA agencies carries great responsibility, because their judgements have an enormous impact on the future of higher education

institutions, and as such, QA agency staff are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior based on relevant knowledge and expertise.

This latest self-assessment was conducted by six teams of staff members ranked assistant director and higher. Each team evaluated six items of the GGP criteria, summarized the results and presented them as a team report at the all-teams meeting. These reports were studied, discussed, and further compiled into a draft self-assessment report, which was then presented to the Self-Assessment Committee for further discussions before drawing up the final version. By actively engaging in this GGP alignment review process, the team members gained the confidence needed to carry out QA activities going forward. At the same time, this experience enabled them to realize anew the grave responsibilities of a QA agency's work. This was another significant benefit that the project provided.



## Appendix 1: References

Knight, Jane and McNamara, John, 2017, Transnational Education: A Classification Framework and Data Collection Guidelines for International Programme and Provider Mobility (IPPM), British Council.

OECD, Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, 2005.

OECD and The World Bank, 2007, Cross-border Tertiary Education: A Way towards Capacity Development, OECD publishing.

## Appendix 2: Complete list of supporting evidence

Section	Supporting documents (JPN)	Website links (EN)	Website links (JPN)
1	[SD-JP01] Employment Regulations	<a href="#">Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation</a>
	[SD-JP02] Medium-term Goals and Medium-term Plan	<a href="#">Act on Authorization of Public Interest Incorporated Associations and Public Interest Incorporated Foundations</a>	<a href="#">Guidelines for Maintaining Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality for Evaluators and Institutions</a>
	[SD-JP03] Action Plan	<a href="#">OECD's Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education</a>	<a href="#">Activity Plan and Budget</a>
	[SD-JP04] Secretariat Organization Regulations	<a href="#">Articles of Incorporation</a>	<a href="#">Activity Report and Financial Statements</a>
		<a href="#">Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards</a>	<a href="#">Self-Asseemsent Report (September 27, 2019)</a>
		<a href="#">Board of Trustees and Auditors</a>	<a href="#">Boards of Councilors</a>
		<a href="#">JUAA Building Photograph</a>	<a href="#">Self-Assessment Report (September 27, 2019)</a>
			<a href="#">JUAA website (Research&gt;Archives</a>
			<a href="#">Regulations on Inspections of Archival Documents</a>
			<a href="#">Statement of Net Assets (FY2016-FY2020)</a>
2	[SD-JP01] Employment Regulations	<a href="#">JUAA website</a>	<a href="#">Activity Plan and Budget</a>
	[SD-JP02] Medium-term Goals and Medium-term Plan	<a href="#">Articles of Incorporation</a>	<a href="#">Activity Report and Financial Statements</a>
	[SD-JP03] Action Plan	<a href="#">Board of Trustees and Auditors</a>	<a href="#">Public Relations Magazine "JUAA"</a>
	[SD-JP05] Newsletter	<a href="#">Webpage for the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (RIQAHE)</a>	<a href="#">Website for Public Interest Corporation Information</a>
	[SD-JP06] Specific Personal Information Handling Regulations	<a href="#">University Accreditation Handbook</a>	<a href="#">JNCEAA website</a>
	[SD-JP07] Regulations on the Prevention of Harassment	<a href="#">University Evaluation Review</a>	<a href="#">Board of Councilors</a>
	[SD-JP08] Self-Assessment Committee Regulations	<a href="#">University Staff Journal</a>	<a href="#">Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (1st Cycle)</a>
	[SD-JP09] External Review Committee Regulations	<a href="#">JUAA Library</a>	<a href="#">Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (2nd Cycle)</a>
	[SD-JP10] Regulations on Internal Quality Assurance	<a href="#">2019 Survey Report</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation</a>
		<a href="#">2020 Survey Report</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Protection of Personal Information</a>

Section	Supporting documents (JPN)	Website links (EN)	Website links (JPN)
		<a href="#">2021 Survey Report</a>	<a href="#">Roadmap</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for Accreditation Results Search</a>	<a href="#">Self-Assessment Report (January 17, 2014)</a>
		<a href="#">INQAAHE Bulletin (December 2021 iJAS, September 2021 Accreditation Results, March 2021 International Student Survey, etc.)</a>	<a href="#">Self-Assessment Report (September 27, 2019)</a>
			<a href="#">External Review Report (September 30, 2014)</a>
			<a href="#">External Review Report (February 26, 2021)</a>
			<a href="#">Comments to the Japan University Accreditation Association</a>
			<a href="#">Report on the Survey of University Accreditation by US Accrediting Organizations and Other Bodies (interim report) (FY1997)</a>
			<a href="#">Report on the Survey of University Accreditation by US Accrediting Organizations and Other Bodies (second interim report) (FY1998)</a>
			<a href="#">MEXT-Commissioned Project "Establishment of an Internal Quality Assurance System"</a>
			<a href="#">Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities</a>
3	[SD-JP11] University Accreditation Regulations: Detailed Rules on the Qualifications and Nomination of Subcommittee Members Candidates	<a href="#">University Accreditation Handbook</a>	<a href="#">Accreditation Fees Regulations</a>
	[SD-JP12] Evaluator Manual	<a href="#">Website for Accreditation Standards</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation)</a>
	[SD-JP13] Results of the Questionnaire Survey on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (2018-2020)	<a href="#">University Standards and its Rationale</a>	<a href="#">FY2022 Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Universities and Junior Colleges</a>
		<a href="#">Junior College Standards and its Rationale</a>	<a href="#">Survey on Effective Approaches, Evaluation Standards and Perspectives of Online Education</a>
		<a href="#">Regulations on Establishment and Revision of the Standards</a>	<a href="#">Handbook of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health</a>
		<a href="#">Professional Graduate Business School Standards</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health)</a>
		<a href="#">Veterinary Educational Program Standards</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Program Accreditation</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for Accreditation Results Search</a>	<a href="#">Decision Criteria and Their Operational Guidelines</a>
		<a href="#">University Accreditation Regulations</a>	<a href="#">Guidelines for Accreditation</a>
		<a href="#">Evaluators' Perspectives</a>	<a href="#">Self-study Report: Notes and Examples of Supporting Evidence Materials</a>

Section	Supporting documents (JPN)	Website links (EN)	Website links (JPN)
		<a href="#">Standards for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health</a>	<a href="#">List of Materials to Be Submitted</a>
		<a href="#">Evaluation Items and Perspectives</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation</a>	<a href="#">Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities</a>
			<a href="#">Briefing Videos for Universities Planning to Apply for Accreditation in FY2022</a>
			<a href="#">Webpage for Program Accreditation Application Procedures</a>
4	[SD-JP05] Newsletter	<a href="#">University Accreditation Handbook</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Handbook</a>
	[SD-JP14] Internal Rules on Information Disclosure	<a href="#">Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Handbook of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for Accreditation Results Search</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Program Accreditation Handbook</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for Search Results</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Overview of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation</a>
		<a href="#">Webpage for Research Outcomes and Published Materials</a>	<a href="#">Webpage for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results</a>
			<a href="#">Webpage for Announcement</a>
			<a href="#">Webpage for Research Outcomes and Published Materials</a>
			<a href="#">FY2021 University Accreditation</a>
			<a href="#">Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities</a>
			<a href="#">JUAA-SNS (note)</a>
			<a href="#">External Review Report (February 26, 2021)</a>
			<a href="#">Self-Assessment Report on the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation</a>
			<a href="#">Self-Assessment Report on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools</a>
			<a href="#">MEXT website</a>
			<a href="#">Results of University Accreditation and Other Evaluations</a>
			<a href="#">Results of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools</a>
			<a href="#">Survey Report on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation (2nd Cycle)</a>
			<a href="#">FY2020 Activity Report</a>
5	[SD-JP15] Survey Results on the Effectiveness of University Accreditation	<a href="#">University Accreditation Regulations</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Law Schools and Professional Graduate Schools of Global Legal Studies</a>
	[SD-JP16] Surveys of Evaluators for the FY2020 Certified	<a href="#">University Accreditation Handbook</a>	<a href="#">Results of the Investigation Concerning the Selection of Students for Admission to a School of Medicine</a>

Section	Supporting documents (JPN)	Website links (EN)	Website links (JPN)
	Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Schools and Applicant Graduate Schools		<a href="#">and Changes to the Decisions on the University Accreditation Results Based on the Results</a>
		<a href="#">Evaluators' Perspectives</a>	<a href="#">Change to the Accreditation Results (Decision) of Tokyo Medical University</a>
		<a href="#">Website for Accreditation Results</a>	<a href="#">Handbook for the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools</a>
		<a href="#">Regulations on Review of Appeals Against Accreditation Results</a>	<a href="#">Regulations on the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Business Schools</a>
			<a href="#">Guidelines for Accreditation</a>
			<a href="#">Accreditation Handbook for Professional Graduate Schools of Public Health</a>
			<a href="#">Search Page for Commendations and Distinctive Features of Universities</a>
		<a href="#">List of Appeal Committee Members</a>	
6		<a href="#">OECD and World Bank, 2007</a> <a href="#">University Standards and its Rationale</a> <a href="#">Webpage for the Outline of Accreditation Results</a> <a href="#">Webpage for Accreditation Results by University</a> <a href="#">Webpage for a List of Full Member Universities</a> <a href="#">Webpage for iJAS</a> <a href="#">iJAS Handbook</a> <a href="#">Accreditation Report for Akita International University</a> <a href="#">Accreditation Report for Chia Nan University of Pharmacy &amp; Science</a> <a href="#">JOQAR</a> <a href="#">MULTRA</a> <a href="#">QACHE</a>	

