

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

Ritsumeikan University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Kyoto, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2018	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2019 – March.31.2026)	

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for Ritsumeikan University

Overview

Ritsumeikan University (hereafter, the University) consists of 15 undergraduate and 22 graduate schools (as of FY2018), and conducts education and research activities based on its school spirit of “freedom and innovation” and its educational philosophy of “peace and democracy.” With the Ritsumeikan University Educational Mission and Vision to foster learning and the development of individual talents in order to nurture just and ethical global citizens, the University encourages students to “to believe in the future, to live for the future.” In FY2010 the Ritsumeikan Academy established “Academy Vision R 2020,” a vision of what the educational corporation should strive to become in 2020, and the “R2020 Plan,” a concrete medium-term plan of action designed to achieve this vision. The plan is divided into two five-year phases: the R2020 First Half Plan (FY2011-2015) during which the University launched the “Ritsumeikan Model for Learning,” a learning style that encourages proactive learning; and the R2020 Second Half Plan (FY2016-2020) with its continuing focus on transforming the quality of education and learning as one of the priority agendas, and implementing undergraduate and graduate school reforms along with new teaching and learning initiatives.

The Educational guideline, developed based on the R2020 Second Half Plan to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and establish active learning among students, require the undergraduate and graduate schools to prepare a curriculum map, curriculum tree, and course overview, which are defined by the University as key curriculum documents that accommodate and reflect the features of the schools’ education program. The Guidelines also instruct all undergraduate schools to assess the student learning achievements as part of the self-study practice called “Academic Review and Plan Outline for the Following Academic Year.” It is highly commendable that the University, in line with its educational goals, utilizes the “Learning and growth survey” and effectively measures and assesses student learning outcomes using subjective and objective data.

The University demonstrates originality not only in its education programs and learning achievement assessment process but also in the student support programs designed to enhance the education standards and introduce learner-centered education. It offers various peer support programs, for example, curricular and extracurricular activity support programs designed to help students achieve their own set goals. The University also strives to strengthen collaboration with businesses and governments, developing and

implementing research assistance programs to help advance research.

The University designates the Self-Study Committee, a long-standing organization created to maintain the quality of education programs for the many undergraduate and graduate schools, as the organization responsible for promoting internal quality assurance (IQA). The undergraduate and graduate schools are managed through a system in which the Self-Study Committee studies various problems and improvement measures based on the self-study results, and the measures are passed on to the undergraduate and graduate schools as the president's instructions for improvement through the Subcommittees and related committees. The University has also adopted external evaluation processes for the undergraduate and graduate schools, such as field-specific evaluations and evaluations conducted by the University Assessment Committee consisting of outside experts. It is highly commendable that the University has developed and implements an effective IQA system. The student support programs to further enhance the education programs and efforts to advance research are also commendable.

Other efforts consistent with the educational mission include peace education through the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University, which the University implements as part of its social contribution program, and phased and structured staff training in university administration duties. Both are highly commendable undertakings that improve education and research activities and help the University engage with the public.

There are a number of issues the University needs to address, however. The undergraduate programs have undertaken a review of their three policies (degree award policy, curriculum design and implementation policy, and admission policy), but several of the programs have yet to adopt a degree award policy and curriculum design and implementation policy due to the rule stipulating that revised policies are to be implemented only at the time of curriculum revision. There is also a master's program that lacks clear evaluation criteria for research projects on specific topics. While undergraduate enrollment is generally managed appropriately, some master's and doctoral programs need to better control student enrollment against the set enrollment capacity. These issues should be addressed through a more effective IQA system.

Going forward the University is advised to evaluate the effectiveness of its current IQA system developed building on its long-standing processes and continue to improve the system. The graduate school education reform identified as a priority concern in the R2020 Second Half Plan remains a work in progress, thus it is important that education reform is carried out in accordance with the university-wide guidelines and that efforts are made to secure a sufficient number of incoming students. For these purposes,

the University is expected to strengthen undergraduate and graduate school support through its IQA organizations, Academic Affairs Department, and Center for Teaching and Learning as well as address problems, enhance its strengths, and work on quality assurance of education.

Notable Strengths

Internal Quality Assurance

- The University has developed a three-tier IQA system in accordance with the Ritsumeikan University's Internal Quality Assurance Policy. Under this IQA system, the Self-Study Committee (an institution-wide IQA promotion organization), the six councils under the Self-Study Committee (Academic Affairs Education and Research Environment, Student Enrollment, Student Affairs, Social Cooperation, University Management and Finance), and the undergraduate and graduate schools work with various committees to conduct university-wide evaluations based on the results of the long-established self-study practice conducted by the undergraduate and graduate schools called "Academic Review and Plan Outline for the Following Academic Year," and develop and present the improvement measures to be carried out. This improvement process is implemented in conjunction with teaching and learning management of the undergraduate and graduate schools in line with the "Teaching and Learning Guidelines" to ensure the quality assurance of education. Furthermore, the University ensures objectivity through the field-specific external evaluation for undergraduate and graduate schools, the IQA effectiveness evaluation conducted by the University Evaluation Committee consisting of external experts, and the evaluation program involving students. It is commendable that the University has developed an IQA system building on its long-established processes and strives constantly to assure the quality of its education and research.

Educational Program and Outcome

- The undergraduate programs implement a multi-dimensional student learning outcomes assessment over time using subjective data, namely the students' own perceptions of their learning obtained from the "Survey on Learning and Growth," and objective data obtained through analyses of course grades in the curriculum. By incorporating this process into the PDCA cycle that uses the "Teaching and Learning

Review/Overview of Next Year's Plans," the learning outcomes assessment is continually incorporated into the University's self-study. As a steppingstone to developing this process, the University created a curriculum map, curriculum tree, and course overview, and established a learning process that culminates in the measurement of learning outcomes presented in the degree award policy. It is commendable that coordinated efforts are being made to effectively measure and assess the student learning outcomes.

Student Support

- Placing learner-centered education at the center of its education, the University provides comprehensive student support with the aim of promoting independent learning, including a wide range of peer support programs in accordance with the R2020 Second Half Plan that emphasizes the strengthening of peer learning to develop a community of learning. Examples of such peer support programs include Educational Supporter (ES) who provide learning support during classes; the SUP! Language Exchange Program that matches international exchange students with Japanese students as language exchange partners for mutual assistance; and the Orientation Conductors program that provide support for new students. In particular, the University uses the PDCA cycle effectively to improve the ES program by enhancing ES training through revising the guidelines and instructions under the guidance of the Academic Affairs Committee. These peer learning programs are commendable efforts that help improve student life and the ability of students to take ownership of their own learning.
- In line with its student support policy to promote student development through a balance of academic and extracurricular activities, the University offers mainly for first-year students the Student Success Program consisting of Academic Skills Support, Student Skills Support, and Support for Learning and Growth through Extracurricular Activities. These support programs include pre-semester camps for new students and report-writing workshops that help students develop the skills necessary for university studies. These programs, serving an increasing number of students and expected to reduce university withdrawals in the future, are commendable activities in that Inclusive Student Support, covering everything from academic learning to student life.

Education and Research Environment

- The Advanced Research Medium-term Plan lists as priorities the creation of a research promotion structure that facilitates the University becoming a global research institution and the development of young researchers. In keeping with these priorities, the University offers a number of research support programs, including the Senior Researcher Program designed to nurture young researchers and the Program for Promotion of Academic Publication aiming to disseminate research findings, and the Research Office works to strengthen collaborative ties with governments and businesses. It is commendable that, through systematic promotion and support of its research activities, the University has been successful in securing external research funding.

Social Cooperation and Contribution

- The University delivers its educational mission of “peace and democracy” and the goals established in the R2020 Second Half Plan through its social contribution activities. Specifically, the University offers peace education through the International Peace Museum, encouraging the public to think not only about peace from the perspective of war and conflict throughout history, but also about social issues such as child labor and food shortages, as well as many extension courses including the half-century-old “Saturday Lectures by Ritsumeikan.” The University also carries out recovery and reconstruction assistance in areas affected by disasters through its academic programs and extracurricular activities. It is commendable that the University uses the abundant intellectual and human resources garnered as a large institution and draws on its regional strengths to contribute to society.

University Administration and Finances

- The University has established specific staff growth and development goals suitable for each life stage of its employees and aims to develop staff capacity using a structured, step-by-step approach. Various unique in-house training programs are offered, including “Policy Development Training” that teaches policy development skills, requisite for all employees to become capable of addressing the issues facing the Ritsumeikan schools, and the “Project Based Training” program in which the

participants learn to study and analyze given problems and formulate policies. The University also supports staff self-development efforts inside and outside the institution, for example, by paying the expenses for participating in academic conferences and offering financial rewards to employees earning graduate degrees. These systematic multidimensional staff development programs are commendable efforts intended to raise the competency levels of staff and further enhance the operations of the University.

Suggestions for Improvement

Educational Program and Outcome

- The College of Science and Engineering and the College of Life Sciences need to adopt a degree award policy for each degree offered, and the College of Life Sciences should adopt a curriculum design and implementation policy for each degree offered.
- The Master's Program of the Graduate School of Letters needs to provide its own evaluation criteria for research projects on specific topics.

Student Enrollment

- The ratios of student enrollment to the student enrollment cap are high at 2.08 in the Doctoral Program (Major in Sport and Health Science) in Sport and Health Science of the Graduate School of Sport and Health Science, and low at 0.20, 0.27, 0.42, and 0.29, respectively, in the Master's Program in Law (Major in Law) of the Graduate School of Law; Doctoral Program in Law of the Graduate School of Law; Master's Program (Major in Technology Management) in Technology Management of the Graduate School of Technology Management; and the School of Law. Graduate school enrollment should be managed more effectively.