

# Overview

## Quality Assurance System in Higher Education

# JAPAN

Second edition

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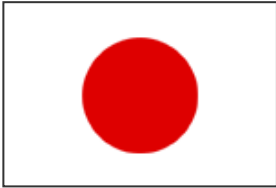
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## I. Basic information on the country

| Name of country/region   | Japan  |  |  |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|-----|-------|-------|---------|-----|-------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| Capital  | Tokyo  |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Major language   | Japanese<br>(Primary teaching language: Japanese)  |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Population*  | 127,498,000<br>(10th largest in the world)   |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Nominal GDP**  | 5,904,672 Million USD  |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Nominal GDP per capita**   | 42,983 USD   |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Public spending on education as a percentage of total government spending*** | All levels of education: 8.9%<br>(OECD average: 13.0%)   | HE level: 1.8%<br>(OECD average: 3.1%) |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP***                       | All levels of education: 3.8%<br>(OECD average: 5.8%)  | HE level: 0.8%<br>(OECD average: 1.4%) |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Spending per student at the higher education level***                        | 15,957 USD   |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Public spending on higher education per student***                           | 5,024 USD  |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Progression rate into higher education****                                   | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Higher education overall<sup>1</sup></th> <th>Universities/<br/>junior colleges</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FY 2012</td> <td>(a)</td> <td>80.9%</td> <td>57.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FY 2005</td> <td>(b)</td> <td>77.7%</td> <td>52.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Change</td> <td>(a)-(b)</td> <td>+3.2%</td> <td>+4.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><sup>1</sup>Indicates the progression rate into university undergraduate programs, junior colleges, four-year programs at colleges of technology, and professional training colleges.</p> |  |   |  |  | Higher education overall <sup>1</sup> | Universities/<br>junior colleges | FY 2012 | (a) | 80.9% | 57.2% | FY 2005 | (b) | 77.7% | 52.3% | Change | (a)-(b) | +3.2% | +4.9% |
|  |  | Higher education overall <sup>1</sup>  | Universities/<br>junior colleges  |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| FY 2012  | (a)  | 80.9%                                  | 57.2%   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| FY 2005  | (b)  | 77.7%                                  | 52.3%   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Change   | (a)-(b)  | +3.2%                                  | +4.9%   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Organization of education system***  | (6-3)-3-4 * See II-2. Diagram of Japanese school systems.  |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |
| Academic year***   | April to March   |  |   |  |  |                                       |                                  |         |     |       |       |         |     |       |       |        |         |       |       |

**Source:**

\* *Total Population as of October 1, 2012, Chapter 2: Population and Estimation, World Statistics 2013*, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

\*\* *Nominal GDP in FY 2011, Chapter 3: National Economic Accounting, World Statistics 2013*, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

\*\*\* *International Comparison of Education Statistical Indicators FY 2013 Edition*, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (2013)

\*\*\*\* *International Comparison of Education Statistical Indicators FY 2013 Edition and FY 2008 Edition*, MEXT (2013, 2008)

## **II. The higher education system**

### **1. Historical overview**

The modern Japanese school education system originated with the promulgation of the Educational System in 1872. The system was changed to reflect the democratization policies in education immediately following the end of WWII. With the establishment of the Constitution in 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law were enacted to ensure equal opportunities in education. The higher education system was consolidated into 'universities' in line with the formulation of the 6-3-3-4 school year system.

The system for colleges of technology was established in 1962 to provide a unified 5-year period of education for secondary school graduates in response to increased need for diverse human resources brought by industrial and economic development. In 1964, 2- to 3-year junior college programs that were established temporarily in 1950 were made into a permanent system under the School Education Law.

Japanese higher education made a quantitative expansion very rapidly, at a globally unprecedented pace. Private universities played a central role in this expansion. National universities accounted for 31.6% of all universities in Japan in 1955 but their percentage decreased to 14.4% in 2002.

The percentage of students who go to universities or junior colleges, which was 16.1% in 1966, increased to 38.6% in 1976. In the context of the universalization of higher education in the 1970s, a major political challenge was raised about how to maintain and enhance the quality of higher education. The Central Council for Education, set up in the Ministry of Education, reported on reforms of the entire school education system in 1971. The report recommended that the government should secure quality by classifying higher education institutions, managing the size of all higher education institutions, and taking fiscal measures. In response to these recommendations, the government introduced the Private Education Institution Aid System and developed a plan for higher education in 1975.

The Provisional Council on Educational Reform, which was formed in 1984 as the Prime Minister's advisory panel, recommended that the government should take actions to make the existing education systems and laws that regulate them more flexible. To foster the individualization, sophistication, and diversification of Japanese higher education as a government educational policy, the Council submitted some proposals including deregulation of the Standards for Establishment of Universities, thereby enabling each institution to develop its distinctiveness under its missions and objectives, and stressed university evaluation and disclosure of university information as a means to ensure academic quality of higher education.

In response to these recommendations, the Council for Higher Education was set up in the Ministry of Education in 1987 and conducted reviews of the entire higher education system from three perspectives: 1) sophistication of education and research, 2) individualization of higher education, and 3) activation of university organization.

The Council for Higher Education published a report on a flexible graduate school system in December 1988. It then recommended the following actions in February 1991: deregulation of the University Act to promote individualization of learning contents and methods, revision of the academic degree system, implementation of self-assessment, management of graduate schools from quantitative approaches, and establishment of new degree-awarding organizations. These efforts promoted university reforms.

Due to the shift to a knowledge-based society in the late 1990s, society expressed high expectations for university education and research. However, there was a major concern regarding how the quality of higher education could be secured in the midst of the universalization of higher education, a rapid decline in the college-age population, and the diversification of upper secondary school education.

To address this concern and propose a comprehensive reform plan, the 1998 Council for Higher Education Report stated the definition of the role of university education as “cultivating a problem-finding ability in learners.” It also recommended expansion of universities’ discretion to enable the development of distinctive education and research, creation of a management system at their own discretion and responsibility, and development of a multi-factorial evaluation system.

In response to the report, government policies were formed as the basis of ongoing university reforms, including restructuring of undergraduate programs by limiting the number of credits that can be registered and encouraging faculty development (FD), development of a professional graduate school system, formation of a responsible management system such as president’s advisory group, and establishment of a third-party evaluation organization. Structural reforms were implemented, and in 2004 a national university corporation system and a municipal/prefectural university corporation system commenced, and the Private School Law intended to develop the school corporation system was revised.

The Central Council for Education published the reports ‘A Vision for the Future of Higher Education in Japan’ in January 2005 and ‘Graduate School Education in the New Age: Towards the Development of Internationally Attractive Graduate School Education’ in September 2005. They recommended the introduction of more rigorous criteria for student assessment and improvement in the content of graduate school education.

The government took actions to improve education in response to these recommendations in April 2008, e.g., clarifying assessment criteria and making FD activities mandatory.

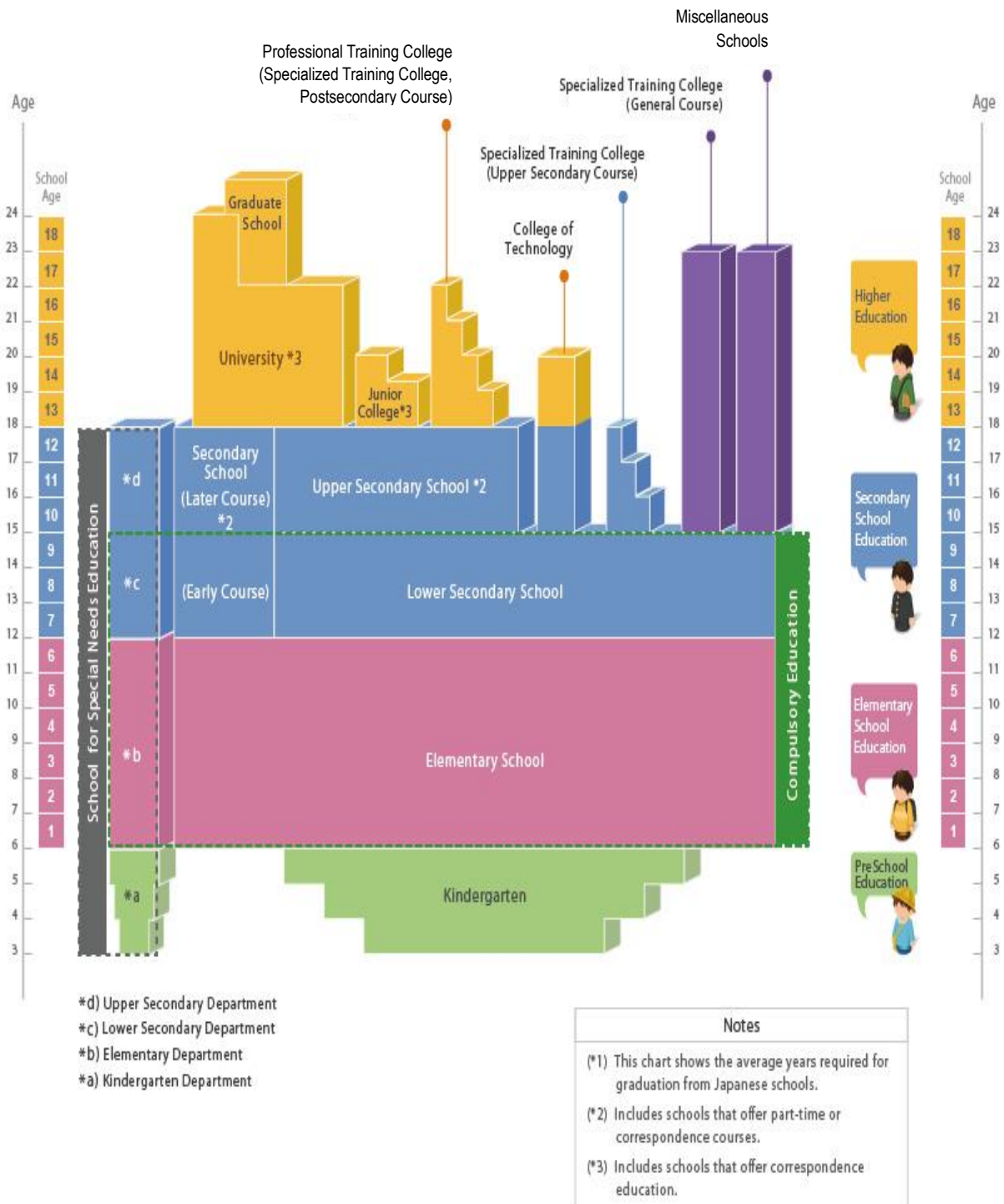
In December 2006, the Fundamental Law of Education was revised substantially for the first time in about 60 years, and the definition of a university was redefined.

In response to the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education, the Central Council for Education published two reports in December 2008, 'Building Undergraduate Education', and 'Enhancing Education at Colleges of Technology'. These two reports made recommendations for articulating a policy on undergraduate education and enhancing education at colleges of technology in order to further promotion of educational reform responding to the amended Fundamental Law of Education.

In January 2011, the Central Council for Education published the report, 'Graduate School Education in a Globalized Society', in which it made recommendations on further development of graduate education in terms of degree programs and doctoral-level human resources, which are referred to in the report, 'Graduate School Education in the New Age'.

The Central Council for Education published the report, 'Towards a Qualitative Transformation of University Education for Building a New Future - Universities Fostering Lifelong Learning and the Ability To Think Independently and Proactively' in August 2012, which suggested the shift from the teacher-centered composition of academic courses/programs to organized and systematic degree programs.

## 2. Diagram of Japanese school systems



Source: <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/introduction/1303952.htm>



### 3. Types and sizes of major higher education institutions

#### 1) Types and definitions

There is no legal definition for English translation of the qualifications listed below. These translations, however, are commonly used among the ministry's publications and higher education community in Japan.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Universities (大学 <i>Daigaku</i>)</b><br/>Universities, as centers of science, shall cultivate advanced learning and specialized skills, while contributing to the development of society by pursuing the profound truth of things, creating new knowledge, and disseminating their outcomes throughout society.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Graduate Schools (大学院 <i>Daigakuin</i>)</b><br/>Graduate Schools are designed to teach and study academic theories and applications, and inquire deeply into them or cultivate knowledge and outstanding ability in depth to engage in professions that require advanced expertise, while contributing to the development of culture.</p>                                   | <p>Doctoral Degree<br/>(博士 <i>Hakase</i>)<br/>Master's Degree<br/>(修士 <i>Shushi</i>)</p> |
| <p><b>Professional Graduate Schools: (専門職大学院 <i>Senmonshoku daigakuin</i>)</b><br/>Within the category of graduate schools, schools which are designed to teach and study academic theories and applications, and cultivate knowledge and outstanding ability in depth to engage in professions that require advanced expertise are defined as professional graduate schools.</p> | <p>Professional Degree<br/>(専門職学位<br/><i>Senmonshoku gakuī</i>)</p>                      |
| <p><b>Universities (undergraduate): (大学 (学部) <i>Daigaku (gakubu)</i>)</b><br/>Universities are designed to impart knowledge broadly, teach and study arts and sciences deeply, and to develop intellectual, ethical and practical abilities.</p>  | <p>Bachelor's Degree<br/>(学士 <i>Gakushi</i>)</p>   |
| <p><b>Junior Colleges: (短期大学 <i>Tanki daigaku</i>)</b><br/>Junior colleges can be designed to teach and study arts and sciences deeply and to develop abilities required for occupations or practical life.</p>   | <p>Associate Degree<br/>(短期大学士<br/><i>Tanki daigakushi</i>)</p>                          |

\*1 Academic degrees are awarded to students who graduate from or successfully complete a program at a higher education institution (university, graduate school, professional graduate school, and junior college) specified in Article 104 of the School Education Law.

\*2 NIAD-UE offers the way to degree attainment for people who have completed courses at educational institutions other than universities in Japan that are recognized by NIAD-UE as providing education equivalent to a university undergraduate program or a graduate school's master's or doctoral program.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Colleges of Technology (高等専門学校 <i>Koto senmon gakko</i>)</b><br/>Colleges of technology are designed to teach arts and sciences deeply and to develop abilities required for occupations.</p>  | <p>Associate<br/>(準学士<br/><i>Jun gakushi</i>)</p>  |
| <p><b>Professional Training College (Specialized Training College, Postsecondary Course)<br/>(専門学校 (専修学校専門課程) <i>Senmon gakko (Senshu gakko senmon katei)</i>)</b><br/>Professional training colleges offer postsecondary course with the aim of developing professional or practical abilities or to foster culture. Under Japanese regulations, graduates can transfer to universities or go on to graduate schools.</p> | <p>Diploma<br/>or<br/>Advanced Diploma<br/>(専門士 or 高度専門士<br/><i>Senmonshi or Kodo senmonshi</i>)</p> |

\*3 Specialized training colleges are schools for developing professional and practical abilities or enhancing the level of education. Training colleges are classified as follows:

- 'Specialized Training College, General Course' (専修学校一般課程 *Senshu gakko ippan katei*)
- 'Specialized Training College, Upper Secondary Course' (専修学校高等課程 *Senshu gakko koto katei*)
- 'Specialized Training College, Postsecondary Course' (専修学校専門課程 *Senshu gakko senmon katei*) (Higher education level)

Among them, 'Specialized Training College, Postsecondary Course' is called a 'Professional Training College'.

\*4 Colleges of technology and professional training colleges award titles of qualification, not degrees.

\*5 Titles (Diploma or Advanced Diploma) awarded by professional training college are awarded to graduates who completed a course approved by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

2) Number of higher education institutions by establishment type (as of May 1, 2013)

|                                    | National | Municipal/<br>Prefectural | Private   | Total     | Percentage of<br>private schools |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Universities<br>(Graduate schools) | 86 (86)  | 90 (74)                   | 606 (464) | 782 (624) | 77.5%                            |
| Junior colleges                    | -        | 19                        | 340       | 359       | 94.7%                            |
| Colleges of technology             | 51       | 3                         | 3         | 57        | 5.3%                             |
| Professional training<br>colleges  | 10       | 193                       | 2,608     | 2,811     | 92.8%                            |
| Total                              | 147      | 305                       | 3,557     | 4,009     | 88.7%                            |

3) Number of students by establishment type (as of May 1, 2013)

|                                   | National | Municipal/<br>prefectural | Private   | Total     | Percentage of<br>private schools |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Universities                      | 614,783  | 146,160                   | 2,107,929 | 2,868,872 | 73.5%                            |
| Junior colleges                   | -        | 7,649                     | 130,611   | 138,260   | 94.5%                            |
| Colleges of<br>technology         | 52,290   | 3,881                     | 2,055     | 58,226    | 3.5%                             |
| Professional training<br>colleges | 361      | 25,905                    | 561,064   | 587,330   | 95.5%                            |
| Total                             | 667,434  | 183,595                   | 2,801,659 | 3,652,688 | 76.7%                            |

4) Number of staff by establishment type (as of May 1, 2013)

|                                   | National      | Municipal/<br>prefectural | Private | Total   | Percentage of<br>private schools |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Universities                      | 134,729       | 27,183                    | 236,541 | 398,453 | 59.4%                            |
| Junior colleges                   | -             | 758                       | 12,551  | 13,309  | 94.3%                            |
| Colleges of<br>technology         | 6,330         | 374                       | 206     | 6,910   | 3.0%                             |
| Professional training<br>colleges | Not available |                           |         |         |                                  |
| Total                             | 141,059       | 28,315                    | 249,298 | 418,672 | 59.5%                            |

## 5) Standard course terms and school age

|                                |                             | Standard course term  | Standard school age   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Graduate schools               | Doctoral Program            | 3 years   | 24 years old and more |
|                                | Master's program            | 2 years   | 22 years old and more |
|                                | Professional degree program | 2 years (12 to less than 24 months)<br>3 years for law schools<br>2 years for teacher education | 22 years old and more |
| Universities (undergraduate)   |                             | 4 years (6 years)   | 18 to 21 years old    |
| Junior colleges                |                             | 2 or 3 years  | 18 years old and more |
| Colleges of technology         |                             | 5 years   | 15 to 19 years old    |
| Professional training colleges |                             | 1-4 years   | 18 years old and more |

\*1 Graduates of junior colleges may, as determined by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, transfer to universities.

\*2 Graduates of colleges of technology may, as determined by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, transfer to universities.

\*3 Persons eligible for university admission, such as upper secondary school graduates and those who have received a Certificate for Students Achieving the Proficiency Level of Upper Secondary School Graduates, who have completed a professional training college course (limited to courses that have a term of two or more years with at least 1,700 hours of total school hours or at least 62 credits) may transfer to universities.

### Referenced articles

- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 7 of the Fundamental Law of Education
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 68 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 83 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 99 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 2 of Article 99 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 108 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 115 of the School Education Law
- \* Article 122 of the School Education Law
- \* Paragraph 1 of Article 124 of the School Education Law
- \* Article 125 of the School Education Law
- \* Article 132 of the School Education Law

## **4. Student selectivity**

Basically, Japanese higher education institutions offer individual entrance examinations to select students based on their own student admission policies.

With regard to the selection of students for university undergraduate programs and junior colleges, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) provides Guidelines for University Entrance Examinations every year to promote appropriate student selection and further improvement of selection methods. Each university selects students based on the Guidelines.

The Guidelines offer guidance on the methods and timing of the selection process and mention the use of the National Center Test for University Admissions (Center Test), which is designed to assess applicants' basic academic abilities at the upper secondary school level.

All universities can use the Center Test, but it is not mandatory for university admission. Consequently, there are a variety of student selection methods, e.g. the Center Test only, combination of the Center Test and an original examination and interview, and an original examination and/or interview only.

The Center Test is comprised of computer-scored paper tests (and an English listening comprehension test) in 29 subjects of 6 subject areas. Universities are allowed to select subject areas and subjects as their application requirements.

## **5. University graduation (completion) and degree awarding requirements**

### **1) Number of credits**

Subjects are categorized into lectures, exercises, experiments, practical training or skill sessions. Classes are included in any of these forms or in a combination of them, and credits are conferred for successful completion of the classes.

The number of credits for each subject is determined at the institutional level based on the standardized credit system in Japan. Under the system, one credit is considered to be generally composed of a total of 45 hours of studying (15 to 30 hours for lectures and exercises and 30 to 45 hours for experiments, practical training and skill sessions). In the case of skill sessions in artistic fields and other subjects that require personal guidance the number of study hours for one credit may be flexibly arranged.

Regarding class subjects such as graduation theses and graduation research, the number of credits may be determined in light of the learning, etc., necessary for these activities. Each class runs for a 10 or 15-week term. However, in case there is a particular educational need and the candidate is assessed as being able to achieve satisfactory educational results, the above-mentioned restrictions will not apply.

## 2) Graduation (completion) requirements

### (1) Universities

A minimum of 4 years of study with 124 or more credits for a bachelor degree

- \* 6 years with 188 or more credits for medicine and dentistry
- 6 years with 186 or more credits for pharmacy (In regards to programs with the main purpose of fostering practical, clinical-related skills)
- 6 years with 182 or more credits for veterinary medicine

### (2) Graduate schools

**Master's programs:** A minimum of 2 years of study with 30 or more credits, receiving necessary guidance on research, approval of a final dissertation or specifically assigned study, and success in an examination.

**Doctoral programs:** A minimum of 5 years of study (including 2 years of study in a master's program) with 30 or more credits (including those collected in a master's program), receiving necessary guidance on research, approval of a final thesis, and success in an examination.

- \* Doctoral programs may consist of a two-year first stage program and a three-year program thereafter.

**Professional degree programs:** A minimum of 2 years of study with 30 or more credits and completion of necessary academic programs.

- \* 3 years with 93 or more credits for law schools (There are exceptions for prior learners of law.)
- 2 years with 45 or more credits for teacher education

### (3) Junior colleges

2-year junior colleges: A minimum of 2 years of study with 62 or more credits

3 or more-year junior colleges: A minimum of 3 years of study with 93 or more credits

### (4) Colleges of technology

A minimum of 5 years of study with 167 or more credits

- \*A minimum of 5 years and 6 months of study with 147 or more credits for shipping technology departments

### (5) Professional training colleges

Regarding daytime schools, the total number of classroom hours students must study in all of their class subjects must be at least equal to the number calculated by multiplying 800 credit hours by the number of years in the course of study.

Regarding evening schools, the total number of classroom hours students must study in all of their class subjects must be at least equal to the number calculated by multiplying 450 credit hours by the number of years in the course of study (in case the number of classroom hours comes to less than 800 hours, students must continue study until they reach a minimum of 800 hours).

- \*One credit hour in specialized training college is generally composed of 50 minutes.

### 3) Degree awarding

Universities and junior colleges are authorized to award academic degrees when the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology approves the establishment of the institution as having adequate quality as a degree-awarding institution. Once the Minister approves the establishment, the right to award academic degrees in the approved type and field rests with each institution.

|                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Graduate school                    | Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree |
| Professional graduate school       | Professional Degree                |
| University (undergraduate program) | Bachelor's Degree                  |
| Junior college                     | Associate Degree                   |

In addition to higher education institutions mentioned above, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) is also authorized to award academic degrees. NIAD-UE awards degrees in the following two schemes:

1. NIAD-UE awards bachelor's degrees to learners who have, after graduating from a junior college, a college of technology or a professional training college, acquired academic credits to fulfill the prescribed requirements according to the NIAD-UE's criteria and have sufficient academic attainments in the particular disciplinary field. Credits can be earned by participating in an undergraduate program at a university in Japan as a non-matriculated student or in a NIAD-UE approved advanced program offered by a junior college or a college of technology. NIAD-UE evaluates applicants' academic ability by examination of earned academic credits and a submitted work such as thesis, work of art or musical performance.
2. NIAD-UE awards bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees to those who successfully complete a program at the NIAD-UE recognized educational institutions which have been established by ministers other than the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and provide education equivalent to a university undergraduate program or a graduate school's master's or doctoral program. NIAD-UE evaluates applicants' academic ability by examination of earned academic credits. Applicants for master's and doctoral degrees are required to defend their theses.

The assessment for granting the academic degrees is strictly conducted by the Committee of Validation and Examination for Degrees of the NIAD-UE and the sub-committees for each specialized field established under the Committee, both of which in principle consist of professors from national, public and private universities. The quality of the academic degrees granted is ensured based on this system.

#### 4) Unified national examination and assessments of learning outcomes

In respect of the individualization of universities and the fact that each university has the right to award academic degrees, there is no unified national examination or assessment of learning outcomes at graduation.

### 6. Agency responsible for higher education

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

3-2-2, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8959

TEL: +81-3-5253-4111 URL: [www.mext.go.jp](http://www.mext.go.jp)

MEXT is responsible for the development of creative people with rich character through the promotion of education and lifelong learning, the promotion of academic, sports and cultural activities, the comprehensive advancement of science and technology. It is also in charge of administrative affairs regarding religions. (Article 3 of the Law on the Establishment of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

Department in charge of quality assurance (evaluation) of higher education:

Higher Education Policy Planning Division, Higher Education Bureau

### 7. Organizations related to higher education

- Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science ([www.jsps.go.jp](http://www.jsps.go.jp))
- Japan Science and Technology Agency ([www.jst.go.jp](http://www.jst.go.jp))
- Japan Student Services Organization ([www.jasso.go.jp](http://www.jasso.go.jp))
- National Center for University Entrance Examinations ([www.dnc.ac.jp](http://www.dnc.ac.jp))

### Major university/college associations

- The Japan Association of National Universities ([www.janu.jp](http://www.janu.jp))
- The Japan Association of Public Universities ([www.kodaikyo.org](http://www.kodaikyo.org))
- Association of Private Universities of Japan ([www.shidaikyo.or.jp](http://www.shidaikyo.or.jp))
- The Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges ([www.shidaiaren.or.jp](http://www.shidaiaren.or.jp))
- Japan Association of Public Junior Colleges (<http://park16.wakwak.com/~kotan819/>)
- The Association of Private Junior Colleges in Japan ([www.tandai.or.jp](http://www.tandai.or.jp))

### 8. Student participation in university administration and student organizations

There is no nationwide student union associated with university management.

## 9. Tuitions and admission fees\*

### 1) Universities

Unit: JPY

|                          | Total                      | Admission fee              | Tuition | Other   |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|
| National**               | 817,800                    | 282,000                    | 535,800 | -       |
| Municipal/prefectural*** | (in-region)<br>770,355     | (in-region)<br>232,422     | 537,933 | -       |
|                          | (out-of-region)<br>935,842 | (out-of-region)<br>397,909 |         |         |
| Private****              | 1,315,882                  | 267,608                    | 859,367 | 188,907 |

### 2) Junior colleges

Unit: JPY

|  | Total     | Admission fee | Tuition | Other   |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|---------|
| National**   | -         | -             | -       | -       |
| Municipal/prefectural***<br>(Full-time department) | 388,013   | 217,588       |         |         |
| Private****  | 1,121,517 | 248,770       | 694,777 | 177,971 |

\* Tuition: Yearly fee / Admission fee: At school entry (only for the first year)

\*\* The standard amount indicated by the government. (National junior colleges do not exist now.)

\*\*\* The average amount for FY 2013

\*\*\*\* The average amount for FY 2012.

## 10. Student aid – major scholarship program (for FY 2013)

|                       | Scholarship provider                        | Applicable institution            | Annual amount per student (Unit: JPY) | Allowance or loan |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Interest-free loan    | Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) | University                        | 360,000 to 768,000                    | Loan              |
|                       |   | Graduate school: master's program | 600,000 to 1,056,000                  | Loan              |
|                       |   | Graduate school: doctoral program | 960,000 to 1,464,000                  | Loan              |
|                       |   | Junior college                    | 360,000 to 720,000                    | Loan              |
| Interest-bearing loan |   | University                        | 360,000 to 1,920,000                  | Loan              |
|                       |   | Graduate school: master's program | 600,000 to 2,640,000                  | Loan              |
|                       |   | Graduate school: doctoral program | 600,000 to 1,800,000                  | Loan              |
|                       |   | Junior college                    | 360,000 to 1,440,000                  | Loan              |



## **11. Student registration status at institutions**

The types of student registration status include 'students' who enroll a formal academic program to obtain a degree, 'non-degree students,' and 'research students.'

## **12. Information for international students**

Japan Student Services Organization ([www.jasso.go.jp](http://www.jasso.go.jp)) provides information, including a list of universities in Japan, for international students.

## **13. Higher education laws**

### **1) Laws governing higher education**

- Fundamental Law of Education (2006, Law No. 120)
- School Education Law (1947, Law No. 26)

### **2) Laws and regulations related to approval of the establishment of Japanese higher education institutions**

- School Education Law (1947, Law No.26) Article 3
- Standards for the Establishment of Universities (1956, Education Ministry Ordinance No.28)
- Standards for the Establishment of Distance Learning Programs at Universities (1981, Education Ministry Ordinance No.33)
- Standards for the Establishment of Junior Colleges (1975, Education Ministry Ordinance No.21)
- Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Schools (1974, Education Ministry Ordinance No.28)
- Standards for the Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools (2003, MEXT Ordinance No.16)
- Standards for the Establishment of Colleges of Technology (1961, Education Ministry Ordinance No.23)
- Standards for the Establishment of Specialized Training Colleges (1976, Education Ministry Ordinance No.2)

### **3) Laws and regulations pertaining to degree awarding**

- School Education Law (1947, Law No.26) Article 104
- Rules for Degrees (1953, Education Ministry Ordinance No.9)

### III. The quality assurance system

#### 1. Introduction

As stated in the Fundamental Law of Education (Paragraph 1 of Article 6, Clause 1) that “the educational institution that is established by law has a public character,” all Japanese educational institutions are required to perform roles as public institutions and only limited bodies (the government, local public organizations/prefectural governments, and school corporations) are authorized to set them up. In addition, an institution wishing to operate as an educational institution must receive approval for establishment by undergoing an assessment. These ex-ante quality assurance measures throughout the system for approval of the establishment of institutions are complimented by various ex-post quality-related systems for guaranteeing the quality of Japanese higher education.

The mission of universities is stipulated in the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law.

The Fundamental Law of Education states the ultimate roles of universities: “Universities, as centers of science, shall cultivate advanced learning and specialized skills, while contributing to the development of society by pursuing the profound truth of things, creating new knowledge, and disseminating their outcomes throughout society” (Paragraph 1 of Article 7). This means that universities are required to provide educational and research outcomes and to demonstrate their performance to society. This law also provides the academic autonomy of universities: “The autonomy, independence, and nature of education and research of universities should be respected” (Paragraph 2 of Article 7).

The School Education Law also declares the ultimate mission of universities as follows: “Universities, as centers of science, are designed to impart knowledge broadly, teach and study arts and sciences deeply, and to develop intellectual, ethical and practical abilities” (Paragraph 1 of Article 83). This law also states that, “universities should contribute to social development by carrying out educational research to accomplish this mission and disseminating their outcomes throughout the society” (Paragraph 2 of Article 83).

To ensure that the quality of Japanese universities is suitable for their mission as stipulated in such laws, several quality assurance frameworks have been legally established, including:

- The approval system for establishment of universities (Article 4 of the School Education Law); and
- Certified evaluation and accreditation (Paragraph 2 of Article 109 of the School Education Law).

The certified evaluation and accreditation system was adopted in accordance with the revision of the School Education Law in 2003 and has been enforced since April 2004.

Before launching a major review of its education policy, the government applied a ‘control policy’ concerning the quantitative scale of universities, and, therefore, did not, as a general rule, allow

institutions to establish new campuses in the central areas of big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka or to increase the total capacity of their students. This was a control policy concerning the establishment of universities. In response to the recent reform of regulations since 2003, however, the control of the establishment of new universities was deregulated in all subject areas excluding those related to doctors, dentists, veterinarians and seamen, to allow universities to build flexible organizations so that they promote their individualization and take account of social and economic changes.

As a result of deregulation, the policy in approving the establishment of universities has been reexamined and the deliberation procedures have become simpler. Firstly, simple conformance with related regulations has become the basic principle of the approval assessment. Thus, the establishment of a university may now be approved if it is judged that it fulfills the basic requirements stated in laws such as the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. Secondly, reference points for the approval assessment have been streamlined. Previously, internal regulations prescribing strict rules concerning athletic fields, the number of books in the library, and the age of the academic staff, etc., used to be referred to besides the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. However, these rules have been abolished in the course of deregulation, thereby making requirements for approval much simpler. Thirdly, a notification system was adopted, replacing the previous policy of advanced deliberations being mandatory for the establishment of every faculty or department. In this system, it is not necessary to undergo the approval process, and a simple notification of the changes is all that is required in the case of the establishment of faculties or departments that do not greatly deviate from the existing academic fields.

These policy reforms and deregulation processes regarding university establishment facilitated preparation of ex-post facto checking systems for assuring the quality of universities, certified evaluation and accreditation was added as a major quality assurance system besides a systematic self-assessment. In addition, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology was authorized by law to take corrective actions in his/her capacity against a university if it fails to meet laws and regulations. The actions include a recommendation for improvement, an order to change, and an order to close a department or an entire institution.

To summarize, 'ex-post checking/evaluation' may now be taken into account as well as 'ex-ante restrictions' as an approach to assure the quality of universities.

Incidentally, seeing the need to create educational institutions that meet the needs of students as consumers, the Japanese government began to allow stock corporations to establish universities following the enactment of the Act on Special Districts for Structural Reform. As a part of the ongoing review of Japanese higher education, drastic reforms of the quality assurance system for universities have been carried out and put into practice since 2003. Meanwhile, many issues and problems have appeared as the globalization of higher education advances and the number of higher education institutions increases due to the government's deregulation policy.

For example, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has given recommendations to some newly established universities operated by stock corporations pointing out that their lesson content was nothing more than that employed at preparatory schools.

Higher education institutions have widely been facing difficulty in recruiting students. Specifically, 67.5% of universities and 47% of junior colleges did not reach their fixed enrollment capacities in FY 2008.

Thus, as the types of higher education institutions diversify due to the government's deregulation policy, there has often been concern regarding the quality of their teaching and research performance, casting doubt on their ability to achieve the ultimate mission of universities stated in the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law.

In order to address these issues, extensive discussion was made in the Subdivision on Universities of the Central Council for Education, focusing on the future of Japanese university education. Its panel members recognized the necessity to establish an official and comprehensive quality assurance framework comprised of university self-assessment, the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, the approval system for the establishment of universities, certified evaluation and accreditation, and a public funding system for enhancing the quality of Japanese universities.

## 2. Types of major quality assurance systems in Japanese higher education

- Approval system for establishment of universities
- Corrective actions taken if a university fails to comply with laws and regulations
- Self-assessment (mandatory under the School Education Law)
- Certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA)
  - Institutional CEA: institutional level (university, junior college, and college of technology)
  - CEA for professional graduate schools: academic unit level
- National university corporation evaluation

Besides these legally determined systems, there are several non-legally stated voluntary initiatives developed by organizations outside higher education institutions, such as the Accreditation System for Engineering Education in Japan (refer to p.27).

### 1) Approval system for establishment of universities

#### Purpose and roles

The government guarantees the approval system. Its purpose is to protect students' rights to study, and to assure that the quality of every university is adequate as an institution that awards internationally compatible academic degrees. In the case of a newly established university, approval is granted if it is judged to meet certain standards.

#### Scope of approval

Government approval is required for:

- Establishment of a graduate school (academic unit/major);
- Establishment of a university (faculty/department);
- Establishment of a junior college (department); and
- Establishment of a college of technology (department).

In the case of the establishment of faculties or departments that do not greatly deviate from the existing academic fields, it is not necessary to undergo the above approval process, and a simple notification of the changes is all that is required.

#### Frequency

There is no established expiration date or frequency of approval.

## Process

An application for the establishment of an institution such as a university is submitted to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In response to a request from the Minister, MEXT's Council for University Chartering and School Corporation examines the application in light of relevant standards such as the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. Examination results are reported to the Minister, and the Minister makes a final decision regarding approval.

The Council for University Chartering and School Corporation, comprised of approximately 400 academics and experts possessing abundant knowledge and experience, undertakes the investigations.

The investigations are carried out by the Council's subcommittees: the subcommittee on university chartering examines education and research, and the subcommittee on school corporation examines financial and management systems. In the case of the establishment of a university, the examination process runs for approximately seven months through document analysis, interviews, and site visits. For approval of newly established departments, the process usually takes about five months.

## Examination criteria

As for examining aspects of teaching and learning, the Standards for the Establishment of Universities are mainly employed. The Standards comprise:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Chapter 1 - General provisions                      | Chapter 6 - Academic programs                  |
| Chapter 2 - Educational and research structure      | Chapter 7 - Graduation/completion requirements |
| Chapter 3 - Academic staff organization             | Chapter 8 - Facilities and equipment           |
| Chapter 4 - Eligibility criteria for academic staff | Chapter 9 - Administrative organization        |
| Chapter 5 - Student capacity                        | Chapter 10 - Miscellaneous provisions          |

## Follow-up

In order to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the academic level of each university and encourage its spontaneous improvement, the Council monitors through written reports, interviews, or site-visits whether the university conducts education and research as planned until the year in which it produces its first graduates. The monitoring includes requesting a university to provide progress reports concerning the recommendations previously pointed out at the time of its approval, and give information about its academic courses/programs, academic staff organization, and progress of other establishment plans. In the case the Council identifies improvements that need to be made, it will notify the university of them and encourage necessary actions. The progress of newly established universities is made public through MEXT's official website.

## Publication of results and measures for ensuring transparency

Applications and results of examinations are made public through MEXT's official website.

In the approval process, applicants have an opportunity to revise their original plans in light of the comments from the Council and make further explanations.

## 2) Corrective actions taken if a university fails to comply with laws and regulations

### Overview (purpose, roles)

Following the revision of the School Education Law of 2003 and other related regulations, the authority was given to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to take corrective actions in his/her capacity against a higher education institution if it fails to comply with laws and regulations including the School Education Law and/or the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. The traditional single action of issuing an order for the closure of an entire institution has been replaced by three gradual measures: 1) a recommendation for improvement; 2) an order to change; and 3) an order to close a department or an entire institution.

### Applicable unit

The entire institution or academic unit (e.g. faculty, department)

### Frequency

There is no expiration date or frequency of actions.

### Process

The autonomy of universities should be fully taken into account when taking any actions. Prior to actions, the Minister should consult with the Council for University Chartering and School Corporation. The Council, with its abundant knowledge and experience, considers necessary actions in a fair and careful manner.

## Publication of results and measures for ensuring transparency

The Minister may request a university to submit reports and materials as documentary evidence in considering necessary actions.

Information on corrective actions is made public through MEXT's official website.

### 3) Self-assessment

#### Overview (purpose, roles, process, publication of results, and measures for ensuring transparency)

Self-assessment is a systematic assessment for universities and other higher education institutions to check progress in light of their own goals and objectives, discover areas of excellence or areas in need of improvement, and enhance the quality of their activities based on published assessment results. Self-assessment was first stipulated as a 'task' that universities should strive to implement under the revised School Education Law of 1991. In 1999, self-assessment and publication of its results became mandatory. (Regulations concerning self-assessment and publication of its results are now stipulated in the School Education Law following its revision in 2002.) The scheme of self-assessment was developed against a background of the expectation that universities would have the prime responsibility for assuring the quality themselves under their academic autonomy.

#### Applicable unit

Although the School Education Law states that every university, junior college, and college of technology is obliged to conduct self-assessment and publish its results, no applicable unit is legally determined. Each institution conducts self-assessment at the institutional level and, where needed, at the academic unit level.

#### Frequency

There is no expiration date or frequency for self-assessment.

### 4) Certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA)

#### Overview (frequency)

CEA is a mandatory evaluation system in which evaluation and accreditation organizations certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (called certified evaluation and accreditation organizations) conduct evaluation of the progress of education and research of universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and professional graduate schools, based on their own standards for evaluation and accreditation. Universities, junior colleges, and colleges of technology are obliged to undergo the evaluation at least once in every seven years, and professional graduate schools at least once in every five years.

#### Purpose and roles

- To develop education and research of universities and other higher education institutions and to assist in demonstrating their performance to society through periodical third-party evaluation.
- To contribute to the individualization of education and research through multidimensional assessments based on individual criteria developed by evaluation organizations.



### Applicable Unit

Institutional level: University, junior college, and college of technology

Academic unit level: Professional graduate school

### Process, publication of results, and measures for ensuring transparency

The certification process begins with applications from organizations wishing to be certified evaluation and accreditation organizations. After receiving reports from the Central Council for Education, the Minister confers certification as an evaluation and accreditation organization when the applicant body is judged to fulfill certain criteria concerning their standards, methods, and framework for evaluation. Information on certified organizations is made public through government newspapers.

Evaluation and accreditation results are reported to targeted institutions and the Minister, and made public to society.

Targeted institutions have an opportunity to make remarks/objections about evaluation results prior to finalization of the process.

### Judgments on the evaluation process

Each organization creates its own evaluation standards and uses these standards in judgment. While the standards are required to meet the basic/minimum stipulations stated in related laws to ensure a fair and appropriate evaluation process, how they are exercised in each evaluation is left to the discretion of the organizations.

### Follow-up

In light of the purpose of certified evaluation and accreditation, necessary actions in response to evaluation results depend upon the self-initiative of each institution. However, the Minister may take corrective actions if the university is judged to fail to comply with laws and regulations based on unsatisfactory evaluation standards and request it to submit reports and materials as documentary evidence in considering necessary actions. The actions include a recommendation for improvement, an order to change, and an order to close a department or an entire institution.

**Reference:**

Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organizations (as of April 2014)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) | Universities (Certified on January 14, 2005) |
|   | Colleges of technology (July 12, 2005)       |
| Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)                             | Universities (August 31, 2004)               |
|   | Junior colleges (January 25, 2007)           |
| Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (JIHEE)                     | Universities (July 12, 2005)                 |
|   | Junior colleges (September 4, 2009)          |
| Japan Association for College Accreditation (JACA)                            | Junior colleges (January 14, 2005)           |

Standards of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (as of April 2014)

|             | NIAD-UE  | JUAA  | JIHEE                                  |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| Standard 1  | Mission of the University                                  | Mission and Goals                             | Mission and Objectives, etc.           |
| Standard 2  | Teaching and Research Structure                            | Educational and Research Structure            | Learning and Teaching                  |
| Standard 3  | Academic Staff and Teaching Supporting Staff               | Faculty Members and Faculty Structure         | Management, Administration and Finance |
| Standard 4  | Student Admissions   | Educational Program, Instruction and Outcomes | Self-Inspection/ Evaluation            |
| Standard 5  | Academic Programs  | Student Admissions                            |  |
| Standard 6  | Learning Outcomes  | Student Services                              |  |
| Standard 7  | Facilities and Student Supports                            | Educational and Research Environment          |  |
| Standard 8  | Internal Quality Assurance System of Teaching and Learning | Social Cooperation and Social Contribution    |  |
| Standard 9  | Finance and Management                                     | Administration and Financial Affairs          |  |
| Standard 10 | Public Information on Teaching and Learning                | Internal Quality Assurance                    |  |

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organizations for Professional Graduate Schools\*  
(As of April 2014)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Japan Law Foundation  | Law schools (Certified on August 31, 2004)  |
| NIAD-UE   | Law schools (January 14, 2005)  |
| JUAA  | Law schools (February 16, 2007)   |
|   | Management (April 8, 2008)  |
|   | Public policy (March 31, 2010)  |
|   | Public health (July 4, 2011)  |
|   | Intellectual property (March 29, 2012)  |
| ABEST21   | Management (October 12, 2007)   |
|   | Intellectual property (October 31, 2011)  |
| Japanese Institute of International Accounting Education (JIAE)           | Accounting (October 12, 2007)   |
| Japan Institute of Midwifery Evaluation                                   | Midwifery (April 8, 2008)   |
| Foundation of the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologists | Clinical psychology (September 4, 2009)   |
| The Institute for the Evaluation of Teacher Education                     | Teacher education (March 31, 2010)  |
| Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE)               | Information technology, innovation for design and engineering, embedded technology, nuclear technology (March 31, 2010) |
| JIHEE   | Fashion business (March 31, 2010)   |
| Institution for Beauty Business Evaluation                                | Beauty business (July 31, 2012)   |
| Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture                              | Landscape architecture (July 31, 2012)  |

\* In the case some academic areas of professional graduate schools do not undergo evaluation for particular reasons (because related evaluation and accreditation organizations for the specific fields do not exist in Japan, for example), they are required to be assessed by overseas evaluation organizations that the Minister designates as internationally recognized organizations conducting fair and appropriate evaluations, make evaluation results public, and report them to the Minister.

## 5) National university corporation evaluation

### Overview

National university corporation evaluation is performance-based evaluation of national university corporations and inter-university research institute corporations in respect of their attainment of mid-term objectives, mid-term plans and annual plans for education, research and management. The National University Corporation Evaluation Committee is entirely responsible for this evaluation. The committee appoints NIAD-UE to undertake evaluation on their attainment of mid-term objectives for education and research.

### Purpose and roles

National universities have traditionally played a central role in the well-balanced development of Japanese higher education and academic research by: promoting academic research and organizing graduate schools; developing talented people considering the balance of development in academic fields; providing higher education to both urban and local areas; and contributing to regional development and ensuring access to higher education.

However, national universities, formerly positioned as internal organizations of MEXT, were faced with some challenges. For example, it had become difficult for them to respond to the rapid growth of society because they were not independent bodies and were unable to make decisions individually. To address these challenges, all national universities were incorporated with the beginning of the national university corporation system in April 2004. National universities are expected to develop their individuality and competitiveness within higher education as autonomous, independent and flexible organizations.

The purpose of national university corporation evaluation is to demonstrate the progress of national university corporations to society, and to use the results of evaluation in allocating financial resources to the corporations appropriately.

### Frequency

Evaluations are conducted every fiscal year and at the end of a six-year mid-term objectives period.

### Process

The National University Corporation Evaluation Committee is comprised of up to 20 experts appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The committee may set up subcommittees and working teams. It conducts reviews on the progress of mid-term plans for corporations based on their performance reports submitted every fiscal year. Then, it evaluates their overall attainment of mid-term objectives in respect of the results of reviews and the features of each corporation.

### Judgments in the evaluation process

Each national university corporation's mid-term objectives vary according to its features and characteristics. The committee therefore conducts reviews and makes judgments about university corporations individually.

### Follow-up, publication of results, measures for ensuring transparency

The results of the annual review reported to each corporation at the end of the fiscal year are used in identifying a corporation's strengths, making improvements and enhancing their activities. Evaluation results of all mid-term objectives are used in developing the next mid-term objectives. The results of the national university corporation evaluation affect the rate of governmental grants allocated during the next period of mid-term objectives.

Evaluation and review results are made public. Information on the evaluation including meeting agendas, minutes and evaluation reports are also available from MEXT's official website.

## 6) Other evaluation and accreditation

Evaluation and accreditation systems in Japan are as given above in "2. Types of major quality assurance systems in Japanese higher education." (p.19) These systems can be organized as follows:

### Evaluation and accreditation based on Article 109 of the School Education Law

- (1) Self-assessment
- (2) Institutional CEA
- (3) CEA for professional graduate schools

### National university corporation evaluation based on Article 35 of the National University Corporation Law

- (1) Evaluation at the conclusion of each academic year
- (2) Performance-based evaluations during the mid-term objectives period

While each of these evaluation and accreditation systems is established by law, evaluation and accreditation is also carried out regarding education in specialized fields as an independent initiative of institutions concerned.

### Other evaluation and accreditation

- (1) Accreditation of engineering programs (engineering, science, and agriculture)

This is a professional accreditation system under which the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE) conducts examinations as to whether engineering education programs offered by higher education institutions fulfill the level expected by society, based

on uniform standards established in cooperation with the academic and industrial communities, and confers the status of accreditation on successful programs.

(2) Evaluation of pharmaceutical education programs

This is a system implemented by the Japan Accreditation Board for Pharmaceutical Education (JABPE). Trial evaluations were conducted in the 2011 academic year and full evaluations began in the 2012 academic year. Evaluations of six-year undergraduate pharmaceutical education programs are carried out once every seven years to guarantee the quality of pharmaceutical education institutions.

(3) Evaluation of education programs for rehabilitation therapists and midwifery

The Japan Council on Rehabilitation Education (JCORE) was established in 2012. JCORE evaluates programs that train physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language hearing therapists. The Japan Institute of Midwifery Evaluation conducts field-specific evaluations of midwifery education and maternity practices in addition to certified evaluation and accreditation of midwifery graduate schools.

(4) Developments relating to field-specific evaluations of medicine, dentistry, and nursing

As a project subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, universities in the applicable fields are cooperating to consider the establishment of a basis for evaluation systems specialized in medical education, dentistry education, and nursing education.

### 3. History of the Japanese quality assurance (evaluation) system

April 1947 The new university system was launched upon the School Education Law coming into force.

July 1947 The Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) was established under the sponsorship of universities, based on guidance given by the CIE (GHQ Civil Information and Education Section). Its University Standards were developed.

January 1948 The University Establishment Committee was set up within the Ministry of Education.

June 1952 JUAA conducted evaluation of the qualification of universities and approved 38 universities for membership.

October 1956 The Standards for the Establishment of Universities were developed.

April 1986 The Provisional Council on Educational Reform report 'The Second Report on Education Reform' requested universities to carry out self-assessment.

February 1991 The Council for Higher Education report 'Improvement of University Education' was compiled. It requested the government to deregulate the University Act (to make regulations on

subjects, graduation requirements, and academic staff organizations more flexible) and to introduce a self-assessment system.

June 1991 The Standards for the Establishment of Universities were revised. The University Act was deregulated, making the university approval system more flexible. Self-assessment was stipulated as a task that universities should strive to implement.

October 1998 The Council for Higher Education report 'A Vision of Universities in the 21st Century' requested enhancement of the existing self-assessment system (i.e. indicated the need for publication of assessment results and verification by external persons) and introduction of a third-party evaluation system (with the establishment of third-party evaluation organizations).

September 1999 The Revised Standards for the Establishment of Universities stated that self-assessment and publication of assessment results should be mandatory and that universities should strive to implement verification by external parties.

April 2000 National Institution for Academic Degrees was reorganized as NIAD-UE.

July 2000 (to March 2004) NIAD-UE conducted trial university evaluation of national and municipal/prefectural universities.

August 2002 The Central Council for Education report 'Establishment of a New System pertaining to the Quality Assurance of Universities' requested reviews of the existing approval system for establishment as well as the introduction of a new third-party evaluation system (certified evaluation and accreditation) and corrective actions against universities failing to meet laws and regulations.

November 2002 The Revised School Education Law mandated the review of the approval system, the introduction of the certified evaluation and accreditation system, and the development of regulations concerning corrective actions and of a professional graduate school system. (The certified evaluation and accreditation system was initiated in April 2004.)

As a result of the major revision of laws concerning the establishment of a university (e.g. the Standards for the Establishment of Universities), simple conformance with related regulations has become the basic principle of the approval assessment. It was also decided that the additional standards which had thus far been prescribed as internal regulations in the Ordinance of the Council for University Chartering and School Corporation should be abolished and that approval should be based on laws above the level of notification.

March 2003 The standards for establishment of professional graduate schools were developed.

July 2003 The National University Corporation Law was enacted and national universities were incorporated in April 2004.

April 2004 The certified evaluation and accreditation system was introduced.

January 2005 The Central Council for Education submitted the report 'A Vision for the Future of

Higher Education in Japan,' requesting the classification of universities by their functions, appropriate use of the approval system, and enhancement of the certified evaluation and accreditation system.

September 2005 The Central Council for Education report 'Graduate School Education in the New Age: Towards the Development of Internationally Attractive Graduate School Education' requested enhancement of learning contents in graduate schools and assurance of their quality by introducing a new evaluation system.

December 2006 The Fundamental Law of Education was revised to specify the basic roles of universities.

April 2008 NIAD-UE conducted the evaluation of education and research of national university corporations and inter-university research institute corporations, commissioned by MEXT's National University Corporation Evaluation Committee.

April 2008 The National University Corporation Evaluation Committee conducted performance-based evaluations of national university corporations and inter-university research institute corporations during the mid-term objective periods.

December 2008 The Central Council for Education report 'Building Undergraduate Education' requested clarification of the policy of undergraduate education, enforcement of self-assessment, and development of the internal quality assurance system.

January 2010 The Council for the Coordination of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organizations was established by ten certified evaluation and accreditation organizations.

June 2010 The Amendment of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Education Act clarified the information that universities need to publish regarding education, research, and other activities.

August 2011 The 'Interim Report on the Announcement and Application of Educational Information by Universities' by the MEXT's Collaborators Meeting recommended the development of a common structure for publishing and application of educational information using a database.

August 2012 The Central Council for Education report 'Towards a Qualitative Transformation of University Education for Building a New Future - Universities Fostering Lifelong Learning and the Ability To Think Independently and Proactively' requested the increase and securement of learning time and the shift to organizational and systematic curricula.



#### **4. Laws and regulations pertaining to quality assurance (evaluation)**

- Fundamental Law of Education
- School Education Law
- School Education Law Enforcement Ordinance
- School Education Law Enforcement Regulations
- Rules for Degrees
- Standards for the Establishment of Universities
- Standards for the Establishment of Distance Learning Programs at Universities
- Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Schools
- Standards for the Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools
- Standards for the Establishment of Junior Colleges
- Standards for the Establishment of Distance Learning Programs at Junior Colleges
- Standards for the Establishment of Colleges of Technology
- Standards for the Establishment of Specialized Training Colleges
- Ministerial Ordinance Providing Details Required to Apply Standards Provided in Paragraph 2 of Article 110 of the School Education Law
- The Law on Coordination of Graduate Law School Education and the National Bar Examination
- National University Corporation Law
- Act on the General Rules for Incorporated Administrative Agency
- Act on the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation
- Private School Law
- Act on Organization and Operation of Local Education Administration
- Act on Local Incorporated Administrative Agencies
- Act on Special Districts for Structural Reform
- Measures pertaining to Exceptions to a Ministerial (MEXT) Ordinance Provided in Paragraph 3 of Article 2 of the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform and a Ministerial Ordinance Providing Applicable Projects
- Law on the Establishment of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- Ordinance of the Council for University Chartering and School Corporation

## 5. Other topics

### University ranking

There are rankings of higher education institutions in the private sector of Japan—e.g., the university ranking based on the level of difficulty in passing entrance examinations of universities released by the entrance examination supporting service sector and the subject level ranking developed by the media. Meanwhile, the public sector has traditionally voiced negative opinions toward university rankings. Some universities, however, began to react to the world university rankings positively from the viewpoint of international competitiveness.

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- Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE): [www.jabee.org](http://www.jabee.org)
- Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO): [www.jasso.go.jp/](http://www.jasso.go.jp/)
- National Institution for Academic Affairs and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE): [www.niad.ac.jp](http://www.niad.ac.jp)

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