



# Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation: Universities

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General Principles

2009-2010

## Foreword

This document outlines the certified evaluation and accreditation of universities conducted by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE).

Under the School Education Law and its Order for Enforcement, all national, municipal/prefectural, private universities, junior colleges, and colleges of technology are obliged to be evaluated by an organization certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology at least once in every seven years, on the overall conditions of their education, research, management, and facilities, in order to contribute to its quality improvement. Universities and colleges should select from the certified organizations of their choice.

NIAD-UE, in accordance with the operating plans stipulated by law, undertakes the certified evaluation and accreditation of universities to ensure universities equal opportunities to receive the evaluation stipulated by the School Education Law with the aim to contribute to the enhancement of their education and research.

NIAD-UE carries out the process in the light of the General Principles and Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities. The Guidelines for Self-Assessment prepared for universities and the Evaluation Manual for external evaluators give the detailed procedures.

The evaluation and accreditation system is designed to encourage the enhancement of education and research at universities and contribute to the development of their individuality. NIAD-UE carries out the process with its past experience, taking full into consideration of these purposes, and seeks a better evaluation system based on views from universities and the people concerned.

NIAD-UE also sets optional evaluation items and conducts third-party evaluation at the request of universities.

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Disclaimer: This document has been translated from the Japanese original made by NIAD-UE to contribute to deepen the understanding of the certified evaluation and accreditation system. Where any discrepancy between this English version and the Japanese original is found, the Japanese original will prevail.

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## **I Objectives**

In order to enhance the levels of universities' education and research in Japan and to contribute to their individualization, NIAD-UE conducts certified evaluation and accreditation of universities under the following objectives:

- (a) to assure the quality of education and research by regularly evaluating universities in accordance with the standards set by NIAD-UE
- (b) to provide high quality evaluation reports to universities for the quality improvement of their education and research
- (c) to assist universities in fulfilling accountability to the general public on their status as public organizations, by clarifying the condition of their education and research.

## **II Fundamental Policy**

Certified evaluation and accreditation of universities is based on the following fundamental themes to satisfy the objectives:

- (1) Reference to the Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities:

The evaluation and accreditation process focuses to judge on whether or not the overall condition of education and research of each university meets the Standards.

- (2) Focus on educational activities:

Considering the fact that this evaluation scheme targets all universities, NIAD-UE evaluates the overall institutional condition, specializing in their educational activities .

- (3) Contribution to the development of individuality:

Although the evaluation and accreditation process is based on the Standards, each university's 'purpose' on education and research is also taken into consideration in judging their conditions so that they can fully demonstrate their individuality and characteristics. The Standards themselves are designed to enable to evaluate universities reflecting their purpose. 'Purpose' referred to here means the university's mission, basic policy on conducting education and research, and targets that it is aiming to achieve.

- (4) Evaluation and accreditation based on self-assessment:

The certified evaluation and accreditation is aimed at supporting and promoting universities' proactive approaches to their individualization and quality improvement of education and research. It is therefore important for universities to effectively assess

themselves, with transparency and fairness, in accordance with the Standards for evaluation and accreditation and the Guidelines for Self-Assessment.

NIAD-UE analyzes the self-assessment reports, references and data given as evidence by universities, and the findings are reflected in the following process.

NIAD-UE offers training programs for internal assessors of universities. The training programs are designed to help further the understanding of the evaluation and accreditation, giving clear descriptions on the framework and procedures of creating self-assessment reports.

(5) Use of peer review:

To ensure that universities' education and research are appropriately evaluated, peer review by academics and experts is used in the process.

(6) A highly transparent system:

NIAD-UE wishes to build a transparent and open system through providing universities opportunities to make objections and publishing evaluation and accreditation results. NIAD-UE continually reviews its evaluation process and strives to develop the system more flexible and effective.

### **III Implementation System**

(1) Implementation system for conducting the process

The Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities is the responsible committee for organizing the evaluation and accreditation process. It comprises presidents and academics from universities, and experts such as journalists and economists. Subcommittees for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation are set up under the Committee to carry out the actual process.

The Subcommittees are composed, taking account of the diversity of universities and conflicts of interest, of external experts from various academic fields appropriate to the features of the targeted universities.

These experts are nominated widely from universities, academic societies, and other relevant organizations and are elected as external evaluators by NIAD-UE's Administrative Committee.

(2) Training programs for external evaluators

External evaluators are required to conduct a highly reliable process based on professional judgment from an objective standpoint. NIAD-UE provides training programs

to the evaluators, on details of the objectives, contents, and methods of the certified evaluation and accreditation, to ensure common understanding and the fair, appropriate, and smooth implementation.

#### **IV Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities**

(1) The Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities comprise 11 items to enable to evaluate the overall condition of universities, particularly focusing on their educational activities.

(2) The items cover various aspects of a university including education and research that NIAD-UE considers necessary every university should satisfy.

(3) Each standard is accompanied by 'viewpoints' that assist the analysis of the university in the line with the standards.

Universities may create their original viewpoints which may better suit their characteristics.

(4) In order to evaluate the activities of universities from a different dimension to the certified evaluation and accreditation, NIAD-UE sets optional evaluation items: the condition of research, and education offered to those other than full-time students.

Universities may request to be evaluated on these aspects in addition to the Standards (See Section XIV).

#### **V Methodology**

(1) Outline of the process

(a) Self-assessment

Universities conduct self-assessment and produce a report in accordance with the Guidelines for Self-Assessment.

Self-assessment is based on the analysis, in the line with each of the 11 standards and accompanying viewpoints, of the conditions of education and research at institutional level or, where necessary, the level of faculty/academic unit of graduate school. In principle, the university is required to comment on all viewpoints in the report.

In addition to the designated viewpoints, the university may create original viewpoints where necessary in the light of its purpose.

Good practices and improvements that the university appraises itself of are also identified in the self-assessment report.

(b) NIAD-UE's process

(i) NIAD-UE judges whether the university as a whole meets each standard or not and gives the reasons for its judgment. Where appropriate, the conditions at unit level are also reviewed for reference. The Standards are generally accompanied by a number of viewpoints, but judgments will not be led by the analysis of a single viewpoint.

(ii) Where it is judged satisfactory of the standards but improvements are desirable, or where good practices are identified, they are described in the final report.

(iii) When the university is judged to meet all 11 standards, it will be given the status as a qualified institution. Where any one of the standards is not being met, the university is judged as unsatisfactory. These results are made public.

(2) Methods

The methods of the certified evaluation and accreditation is based on document analysis and site visit by the Subcommittees. Document analysis examines the self-assessment report and references submitted as evidence, and the data NIAD-UE has collected, in accordance with the 'Evaluation Manual'. Site visit is the stage to interview staff/students and inspect university facilities, based on the 'Guidelines for Site Visit', in order to scrutinize in greater depth and verify issues which could not be determined during the document analysis.

The findings of the document analyses and site visits are summarized by the Subcommittees. The main Committee reviews these findings and creates a draft result.

(3) Statement of objections and finalization of evaluation results

The results of the certified evaluation and accreditation are for improving universities' education and research and should be publicly available information. NIAD-UE considers, therefore, it necessary to ensure that the evaluation process is implemented in a transparent and accurate manner.

In this context, NIAD-UE notifies the draft result to the universities to provide them the opportunity to make remarks/objections prior to its finalization.

Where an objection is made against a failing judgment, an examining panel is set up under the main Committee to address this issue. The main Committee then finalizes the result.

## VI Evaluation Schedule

June to July

Briefing

NIAD-UE outlines the framework and method of the institutional certified evaluation and accreditation.

End of September

Application

NIAD-UE receives applications for evaluation from universities.

November to December

Training program for internal assessors

NIAD-UE provides a training program on the instruction for self-assessment.

### Training for external evaluators

The academic year in which the process is conducted

End of June

Submission of self-assessment report

Targeted universities carry out self-assessment and produce a report with reference to the Guidelines.

July to January

Document analysis and site visit

Subcommittees review the self-assessment report and go on site visits, and summarize initial findings. The findings are reviewed by the main Committee and a draft result is created.

End of January

Notification of draft result

NIAD-UE notifies the draft to the university.

February

Statement of objections

The university may make remarks/objections to the draft.

March

Finalization and publication of evaluation result

The main Committee finalizes its comments after consideration of the objections. The final result is published in the form of document, which is sent to the university and its founder and is made public.

## VII Publication of Evaluation Results

- (1) The result of certified evaluation and accreditation is published in the form of a final report.
- (2) The report for each university will be sent to the university and its establisher, and published both in a printed format and on the NIAD-UE website.
- (3) In order to ensure the transparency of the evaluation and accreditation process, the self-assessment report (without the annexes for the reviewers' reference) is also published on the website.

## VIII Information Disclosure

- (1) NIAD-UE is expected to be an organization open to both society and universities, and to continuously make efforts to improve the evaluation system highly transparent and objective. NIAD-UE therefore discloses: the Standards for certified evaluation and accreditation, the methods for the process, the implementing structure, and as much of the information on its evaluation activities as it can through the website or in other appropriate ways.
- (2) Where NIAD-UE receives a request for the disclosure of internal documents on evaluation activities, it will, in principle, comply with the request, pursuant to the Act on Access to Information Held by Incorporated Administrative Agencies, excluding personal data or management information that could damage its rights and interests.  
In case of the request for access to the management information of universities that NIAD-UE possesses, a consultation with the university is held under the Act.

## IX Evaluation Fees

- (1) The following fees will be charged according to the size of the institution in initiating the process:

Basic charge:	2,000,000 JPY
plus per faculty:	300,000 JPY
plus per academic unit of graduate school:	200,000 JPY

- (a) Universities without undergraduate programs will be charged 300,000 JPY per academic unit.
  - (b) Basic units equivalent to faculties/academic units of graduate schools are applied the fees for faculties/academic units of graduate schools.
- (2) Specific instructions for payment procedures and fees for the supplementary review will be specified separately.

## **X Application**

- (1) The process of the certified evaluation and accreditation takes place once each academic year.
- (2) Universities should apply for certified evaluation and accreditation to NIAD-UE by the end of September in the previous academic year in which it wishes to undergo the process. NIAD-UE should initiate the process without delay unless legitimate reasons.
- (3) Universities may apply for the next evaluation and accreditation after an interval of at least five academic years. (However, this does not apply to universities that are judged failing the Standards.)

## **XI Supplementary Review**

Supplementary review is for universities judged to be failing in one or more of the Standards. Universities may apply for being reviewed on the standard(s) which it has failed, within two years of the evaluation year.

When the standard(s) is judged to be qualified, the result will be combined with the satisfactory results of the other standards, and made public as meeting all standards at institutional level.

## **XII Notification of Revisions of Education and Research**

Where a qualified university has made substantial revisions in its educational and research, it should be reported to NIAD-UE.

### **XIII Procedures for Revising the Standards**

NIAD-UE strives to develop its own system of evaluation and accreditation through self-improvement, taking into account the views from universities, external evaluators, and stakeholders.

Amendments to the standards, methods, and other items related to the evaluation framework are first inquired to related parties, then deliberated and approved by the main Committee, in order to ensure the fairness and transparency of the process.

### **XIV Optional Evaluation**

Universities may request to be reviewed on the optional evaluation items, as its third-party evaluation, in addition to the institutional certified evaluation and accreditation. The aim is to evaluate their activities, especially on the attainment of objectives, from a different dimension from the Standards for certified evaluation and accreditation: the conditions of research, and education offered to those other than full-time students.

Universities cannot apply for taking this optional evaluation only. This evaluation is carried out based on the General Principles<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Issues on fees for optional evaluation are defined separately. No supplementary review is arranged for this evaluation.

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