

## Prologue

In 2015 APU underwent an institutional certified evaluation (second accreditation round) conducted by the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), and earned a passing grade.

Up to the second accreditation round, the basic approach to timing and method of self-assessment at APU was to follow an integrated assessment cycle in which the university drafts a Self-Assessment Report that is compliant with JUAA accreditation standards (university standards and assessment/evaluation parameters; hereafter referred to as “university standards”), conducts self-assessment based on this report (Self-Assessment Committee), and conducts an external evaluation (University Evaluation Committee) before undergoing certified evaluation (accreditation by JUAA).

After receiving accreditation in 2015, while maintaining the cycle outlined above, the Self-Assessment Committee embarked on a program of university-wide quality assurance initiatives in accordance with Internal Quality Assurance Initiatives in AY2016 and Beyond (University Senate Meeting, April 12, 2016). This move took into account the fact that the third accreditation round will place greater emphasis on internal quality assurance, as well as a recommendation made at the time of the 2015 accreditation stating that “although the regulations and authority are stipulated for the verification system of the various activities overall of the university, further improvements are expected in order to systematically arrange and establish a systematic internal quality assurance system.” Moreover, it was acknowledged that APU’s focus thus far has been on structures and implementation cycles for “self-assessment,” and that greater importance should be attached to strengthening mechanisms for improvement and enhancement of assessment processes. The decision was made to create a substantial internal quality assurance system centered on the Self-Assessment Committee and conduct university activities for quality enhancement on an ongoing basis, using the following three steps: (1) formulation of an internal quality assurance policy; (2) revision of matters handled by the Self-Assessment Committee; (3) pursuit of self-assessment utilizing IR data (Our Response to the Japan University Accreditation Association’s Accreditation Standards to Apply from AY2018 Onwards (Third Edition Standards) (Self-Assessment Committee, March 6, 2018)). Concrete initiatives in relation to internal quality assurance are detailed in Chapter 2 of this report.

In order to respond to individual issues including the two Issues Requiring Effort (irregularities in the syllabus, unfulfilled transfer admission quotas) and the 14 other flagged by the committee in the last accreditation round, together with the Areas for Improvement set out in the AY2014 Self-Assessment Report, a system of assessment items management sheets has been instituted and used to monitor progress in the bi-annual meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee. The assessment items management sheet is supposed to be filled out with challenges/standards for course completion, plans to handle/improve upon challenges (in academic year units), the status of implementation (midyear/year-end), and a four-step rating (4: Progress beyond plan; 3: Progress according to plan; 2:

Progress not according to plan; 1: Barely off the ground) to clarify the progress in each challenge. In particular, items rated as “2: Progress not according to plan” or “1: Barely off the ground” are subject to an intensive verification of their status and discussion of countermeasures at meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee. Responses and improvements in relation to individual issues are addressed in the applicable chapters of this report.

In this way, since the last accreditation APU has been working toward improvements and enhancements on an ongoing, university-wide basis.