

2. Internal Quality Assurance

(1) Description of Current Conditions

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (1): Are institution-wide policies and procedures for internal quality assurance being indicated where appropriate?

Evaluation Points

- Indication of institution-wide policies and procedures for internal quality assurance outfitted with the below conditions and indication of said policies and procedures where appropriate
 - University's basic approach to internal quality assurance
 - Authority and roles of institution-wide bodies that assume responsibility for the promotion of internal quality assurance and the division of roles between said bodies and Colleges/Graduate Schools and other bodies involved in internal quality assurance.
 - Guidelines for the planning/design, administration, verification and improvement/enhancement of education (administration processes for PDCA cycles, etc.)

With regards to institution-wide policies and procedures for internal quality assurance, APU has set forth the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Internal Quality Assurance Policy (2018.06.12 University Senate Meeting) (Ref.2-1). The university's specific approach to internal quality assurance consists of the following two points.

- 1) In an effort to embody the ideals of the university established upon its inception and fulfill the university's social mission, we will conduct self-assessments of the university's teaching, research, and other myriad activities. Based on the results of these assessments, we will strive to continuously improve the quality of our activities on an institution-wide basis.
- 2) The details of the self-assessments will be disclosed to the public

Institution-wide bodies, etc. that assume responsibility for the promotion of internal quality assurance and their roles are as follows.

- 1) The University Senate Meeting will bear responsibility for promoting internal quality assurance for the entire university. The University Senate Meeting will issue its resolution on the proposals from the divisions, colleges, and graduate schools (hereinafter, "the internal bodies") outlining their respective action plans and targets, which form the basis of the self-assessment.
- 2) The Self-Assessment Committee will assess items pertaining to the activities of the entire university and the internal bodies and verify the progress of improvements.
- 3) The Self-Assessment Committee will report the results of its assessment to the University Senate Meeting and the President. Based on the results reported, the University Senate Meeting and the President will ask the heads of each internal body to make improvements.

- 4) The heads of the internal bodies will take responsibility for properly conducting a self-assessment of the items pertaining to their respective bodies. The heads of the internal bodies will report on the progress of their improvement plans to the Self-Assessment Committee.
- 5) The University Evaluation Committee will be established to review self-assessment activities. The University Evaluation Committee, upon the advice of the President, will evaluate the university's activities and report the results of said evaluation to the President. Based on the results reported, the President will ask the heads of each internal body to make improvements. The heads of the internal bodies will report on the improvement plans for the items deemed to require improvements as well as the results of said improvement plans to the Self-Assessment Committee.

Note that an overall image of the internal quality assurance system has been represented graphically in the “Diagram of Internal Quality Assurance System at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University” in order to elucidate that overall image (Ref. 2-2).

With regard to internal quality assurance, we ensure the functioning of a comprehensive verification cycle comprising a) a self-assessment (by the Self-Assessment Committee) based on a Self-Assessment Report created in compliance with JUAA's accreditation standards (i.e., University Standards and Self-Assessment Items (hereinafter collectively referred to as "University Standards"), b) an external evaluation by the University Evaluation Committee, and c) accreditation by JUAA (Ref. 2-3).

- 1) The basic policy regarding self-assessment methods is that APU should create a Self-Assessment Report in compliance with the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)'s University Standards once every two years.
- 2) In the academic year following the year in which said Self-Assessment Report was formulated, the University Evaluation Committee shall convene to conduct an external evaluation of the university based thereupon. (The Committee shall meet once every two years in principle.)
- 3) APU will opt not to formulate a Self-Assessment Report in the academic year following the JUAA accreditation screening, which is conducted once every seven years. In addition, the University Evaluation Committee will not convene in the year in which JUAA accreditation screening falls.
- 4) In years when neither a meeting of the University Evaluation Committee nor a JUAA accreditation screening is held, the Self-Assessment Committee will follow up on those items pointed out by said external evaluation bodies to ensure the effective operation of the university's verification cycle.

A summary of guidelines for the planning/design, administration, verification and improvement/enhancement of education are summarily stated in the Educational Reform Implementation Guidelines (Ref. 2-4). The process for administering PDCA cycles is conducted

according to the following flow: 1) Investigation and analysis by the Division of Academic Affairs; 2) Exchange of opinions at Faculty Council/Faculty Discussion Meetings (Graduate School Faculty Council Meetings in cases involving Graduate Schools) and 3) Finalization by the University Senate (Details are stated below in Chapter 4.).

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (2): Has an institution-wide framework that bears responsibility for the promotion of internal quality assurance been established?

Evaluation Points

- Establishment of institution-wide body that bears responsibility for promotion of internal quality assurance
- Member composition of institution-wide bodies that bear responsibility for promotion of internal quality assurance

- Establishment of institution-wide body that bears responsibility for promotion of internal quality assurance

As stated above, under the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Internal Quality Assurance Policy (Ref.2-1), the University Senate bears responsibility for promoting internal quality assurance for the entire university. Additionally, the Self-Assessment Committee assesses items pertaining to the activities of the entire university and its internal bodies and verifies the progress of improvements made. This is the basis of the framework that the university has established.

The University Senate is a body that deliberates on 1) Items regarding the basic policy surrounding education, research, student assistance and university operation, 2) Items regarding organs, bodies and systems at the university, 3) Items regarding personnel affairs for faculty members, and 4) Other important items regarding education, research, student support and university operation. This body oversees the operation of the university as a whole (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Regulations) (Ref.1-2). Additionally, under the “Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Self-Assessment Committee Regulations,” the Self-Assessment Committee has been established as a body that “performs self-evaluations on education, research, bodies and their operation as well as facilities and equipment (“education and research, etc.” below) at the university.” (Ref.2-5).

- Member composition of institution-wide bodies that bear responsibility for promotion of internal quality assurance

The member composition of the University Senate, which bears responsibility for promoting internal quality assurance for the entire university, and that of the Self-Assessment Committee, which performs assessments and verifies the progress of improvements, are as follows (Ref. 2-6). A vast majority of the members of both bodies overlaps, and they are tightly coordinated. Moreover, the below executives

as well as a Secretariat (consisting of Administrative Directors and Managers of each office) also attend meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee. They assume the role of linking each issue to actual operations and policy-formation.

University Senate:

Senate Chairman: President

Senate Members: Vice-Presidents, Deans (Colleges/Graduate Schools), Director of Center for Language Education, Director of Education Development and Learning Support Center, Director of Media Resource Center, Director of Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Admissions, Dean of Careers, Dean of International Cooperation & Research, Dean of Social Collaboration and Director-General of University Administration and Student Services

Observers: Auditors and Assistant to the Trustees

Self-Assessment Committee:

Committee Chairman: Assistant to the Trustees

Committee Vice-Chairman: Vice-President, Dean of Academic Affairs

Committee Members: Assistant to the Trustees, Deans (Colleges/Graduate Schools), Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Admissions, Dean of Careers, Dean of International Cooperation & Research, Dean of Social Collaboration and Director-General of University Administration and Student Services

Observers: President, Director of Center for Language Education and Director of Education Development and Learning Support Center

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (3): Is the internal quality assurance system effectively functioning based on established policies and procedures?

Evaluation Points

- Establishment of basic approach by entire university for formulating degree conferral policy, formation and implementation policy for curriculum, and student intake policy
- Initiatives by institution-wide body that bears responsibility for promoting internal quality assurance to ensure function of PDCA cycle for education in Colleges, Graduate Schools and other bodies
- Appropriate handling of matters pointed out by government agencies, accreditation institutions, etc. (including surveys on the performance status of establishment plans, etc.)
- Securing of objectivity and appropriateness in assessments

- Establishment of basic approach by entire university for formulating degree conferral policy, formation and implementation policy for curriculum, and student intake policy

We have established policies on the conferral of academic degrees and the design and implementation of educational programs across the university, but the basic university-wide approach to these policies has not yet been set.

■ Initiatives to ensure function of PDCA cycle for education

Initiatives to ensure the function of a PDCA cycle for education in Colleges, Graduate Schools and other bodies related to education are incorporated in the institution-wide cycle for internal quality assurance stated under Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (1) in this chapter. These initiatives are functioning appropriately. To be more specific, based on self-assessments and external assessment results as well as the content of the Medium-Term Plan, the Educational Reforms Implementation Guidelines, etc. set by the university under the APU2020 Second-Half Plan, the Academic Affairs Committee leads efforts to formulate full-year action targets (plans) for Colleges, Graduate Schools and other bodies and report/discuss them at meetings of the University Senate, which is an institution-wide body (Ref. 2-7). Additionally, under these initiatives, the verification of the progress of those plans and their incorporation into improvement plans for the next academic year are also examined at meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee, after which they are reported and discussed at meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee and the University Senate (Ref.2-8).

In addition, the College of International Management and Graduate School of Management are currently engaged in promoting international quality assurance and ongoing cycles of improvement in education, research and other areas in connection with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation acquired by those schools in AY2016. To give a specific example of those initiatives, both schools are engaged an Assurance of Learning (AOL) process in which they measure the degree to which they have achieved their adopted mission in education and proceed to work towards implementing improvements in accordance with the results yielded by that measurement (Details are stated below in Chapter 4.).

On an individual faculty member level, the university is promoting initiatives for improvements that concern “the classroom,” a responsibility shared among all faculty, while establishing linkage between those improvements and a faculty assessment system (Education Quality Promotion Incentive). More specifically, the university is encouraging all faculty members to engage in the improvement of education quality through implementing the below PDCA cycle.

- 1) Plan (Course objectives and classroom planning)⇒Preparation of syllabi
- 2) Do (Classroom implementation)⇒Verification through classroom assessment questionnaires
- 3) Check (Grading)⇒Issuing of grade evaluation comments
- 4) Act (Improvement of educational content and methods)⇒Preparation of reviews of classes for previous academic year and points to improve going forward; improvement of syllabi/classes/grade evaluation comments for next academic year

Additionally, opportunities for an annual individual interview between each faculty member and the Dean or Center Director serving as their boss are arranged for as a means of verifying the nature of each individual faculty member's PDCA with the head of the body they belong to.

■ Handling of items pointed out in external assessments, etc.

At the time the university was accredited by JUAA in AY2015, two Issues Requiring Effort (irregularities in the syllabus, unfulfilled transfer admission quotas) were pointed out, as were fourteen other areas. For these items that were pointed out, the assessment items management sheet (Ref.2-8) is prepared and used to manage progress at meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee held twice a year. 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.

Additionally, the university has modified its regulations on increasing admission capacity in AY2017. However, these do not fall under the reminders issued by MEXT. In AY2017, the university submitted a "Report on Admissions Status for Universities that Changed Its Regulations on Admission Capacity" in accordance with a request issued by MEXT (Ref. 2-9).

With regards to AACSB accreditation, which the College of International Management and Graduate School of Management acquired in AY2016, initiatives and evaluation/assessment efforts will continue to be maintained in the improvement in items pointed out upon obtaining that accreditation.

■ Securing of objectivity and appropriateness in assessments

Objectivity and appropriateness in self-assessment activities are secured through the establishment of a University Evaluation Committee made up of external members and the convening of that Committee. The University Evaluation Committee conducts one external evaluation about once every two years as an advisory organ under the President. It is stipulated in regulations that the Committee evaluates the objectivity and appropriateness of the results of self-assessments by the university, and that the President incorporates the results of that assessment into the various plans of the Academy and the University (Ref. 2-10 Article 2, Paragraphs 1 and 2).

Most recently, the results of an external evaluation conducted by the University Evaluation Committee in AY2013 were reported to the President and the Self-Assessment Committee under the control of the University Evaluation Committee Chairman. Regarding the items pointed out as challenges, while each division pushes forth initiatives aimed at improvement, progress in those items

is managed using the assessment items management sheet and is reported to the Self-Assessment Committee twice a year (Ref. 2-8).

Additionally, the university is promoting Institutional Research (IR) in order to ascertain the actual situation surrounding students, etc. using objective data and apply findings towards the evaluation of progress in objectives/plans, policy-making and so forth. A database (Data Warehouse) that centrally accumulates the various data that exists across the entire university (data on student entrance exams, studies, extracurricular activities, career paths, satisfaction levels, actual sense of growth, etc.) was established in AY2013. Data that is gathered on a regular basis is analyzed and applied towards the evaluation of progress in objectives, etc., policy-making, and so forth (Ref. 2-11). The future implementation of a new alumni questionnaire is also being examined, and post-graduation data is scheduled to be utilized in assessment activities going forward.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (4): Is the status, etc. of education and research activities, self-assessment results, financial and other results and financial and other various activities being adequately disclosed? Is accountability to society for the foregoing being fulfilled?

Evaluation Points

- Disclosure of status, etc. of education and research activities, self-assessment results and financial and other various activities
- Accuracy and dependability of information disclosed
- Adequate updating of disclosed information

With regard to information disclosure, APU's parent institution, the Ritsumeikan Trust, formulated the Ritsumeikan Trust Information Disclosure Regulations in AY2010, which apply to all schools established by the Trust. These regulations "aim to fulfill our social responsibility with regard to various activities including administration, education and research, to realize fair and highly transparent management, and to contribute to improving the quality of self-rule by our constituent members and education and research and activities" (Ref. 2-12, Article 1). Article 4, Paragraph 1 of these regulations stipulate the disclosure of information to the general public, including information pertaining to "the status of education and research activities" stipulated in Article 172-2, Paragraph 1 of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Education Act. In line with this, APU also discloses information on the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Information Disclosure Page on the Ritsumeikan Trust's homepage (Ref. 2-13 <http://www.ritsumeikan-trust.jp/publicinfo/disclosure/apu/>).

In addition, we also respond to requests for the disclosure of information as per Article 3, Paragraph 2 of these regulations, which stipulate that "information will be released in accordance to disclosure request procedures stipulated in these regulations." In sum, the intent of these regulations is to define two types of information disclosure—the disclosure of information for wider audience and the

disclosure of information limited to individuals who meet certain conditions—while keeping personal information and other confidential information private.

In the regulations of the university, the following is stipulated with respect to self-assessments: “In order to endeavor to improve its education and research standards and achieve its purpose and social mission, the university will perform self-assessments with respect to the status of education and research activities, etc. at the university, and will disclose the results thereof” (Ref. 1-2). Initiatives geared towards internal quality assurance, the university’s approach to accreditations, self-assessment reports, overviews of convenings of the University Assessment Committee and Committee Chairman summaries thereof, and university evaluation results and accreditation results by JUAA are disclosed on the university website (Ref. 2-14). Regarding self-assessments, these undergo a careful final review by the Self-Assessment Committee to secure the accuracy and dependability of the content to be disclosed. Additionally, with regards to fundamental university data prepared using forms designated by JUAA and various forms of data in university data collections (with some exceptions), this data is also disclosed on the university’s website every year on a regular basis (Ref. 2-14). Moreover, after it is prepared by each relevant office, this data disclosed by the university is consolidated along with materials serving as evidence at the Office of the President, and is disclosed after undergoing a double-check to ensure its accuracy and dependability. Furthermore, all information disclosed by the university is in both the Japanese and English languages as a general rule so that the university fulfills its accountability not only to domestic parties, but also to international students and alumni as well as other overseas stakeholders that include the parents of international students.

Regarding education, research and community outreach activities by tenured faculty members, the accomplishments of those members are communicated far and wide both within and outside of Japan through the construction and operation of a “researcher database” unique to the university and efforts to promote the inputting of information into that database in conjunction with the faculty assessment system (Ref. 2-15 <http://researcher.apu.ac.jp/scripts/WebSearch/index.htm?lang=ja>). Meanwhile, with the agreement of faculty members, some of the data inputted into the researcher database is provided to “Researchmap,” which is supplied by the Department of Databases for Information and Knowledge Infrastructure at the Japan Science and Technology Agency, another example of endeavors by the university to communicate information to a wide target audience.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (5): Is the adequacy of the internal quality assurance system periodically assessed? Are initiatives geared towards the improvement of that system conducted based on the results of said assessment?

Evaluation Points

- Adequacy and effectiveness of institution-wide PDCA cycles
- Assessments of internal quality assurance system based on adequate

evidence (materials/information)

○Improvement and enhancement of system based on assessment results

■ Adequacy and effectiveness of institution-wide PDCA cycles

The university formulated the APU2030 Vision in 2015 to represent the ideal and desired form of APU in 2030. Using this as its basic policy, the university formulated its “APU2020 Second-Half Plan” to serve as a concrete action plan between AY2015 and AY2020 (Ref. 1-9). This APU2020 Second-Half Plan also contains numerical targets, and APU is administering PDCA cycles university-wide using that plan as a pillar. To be more specific, every academic year, items to implement for various activities in each College and Graduate School are configured in accordance with the APU2020 Second-Half Plan, and the status of that implementation is checked across the university twice a year and reflected in improvement plans for the next academic year at the end of the current academic year. Furthermore, the university performs comprehensive assessments of its various activities by preparing self-assessment reports every other year, and obtains objective opinions the following year at meetings of the University Evaluation Committee, which is made up of external members. The above content is collectively reported at meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee and the University Senate, both of which are institution-wide bodies. There, the policies and progress of that content are verified, making for the adequate and effective implementation of PDCA cycles across the university. Additionally, for important items that have not satisfactorily progressed relative to goals or plans, a working group is set up directly under the President to form a framework for analyzing challenges and devising measures on a priority basis.

■ Assessments of internal quality assurance system based on adequate evidence (materials/information)

Assessments of the internal quality assurance system itself are primarily verified through an internal verification (once every two years) and an external evaluation of that verification by the University Evaluation Committee (once every two years) through the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report. Said report is prepared based on adequate evidence (materials/information), and is evaluated by the University Evaluation Committee, which consists of external experts, to guarantee the objectivity of the verification (Ref. 2-10). Furthermore, the progress of the status of initiatives geared towards findings based on the results of the verification by the University Evaluation Committee is managed using the assessment items management sheet, and said status is reported to the Self-Assessment Committee twice a year. Through this process, a PDCA cycle for assessments pertaining to the internal quality assessment system is being implemented (Ref. 2-8).

■ Improvement and enhancement of system based on assessment results

The following observation was made regarding the verification process at APU at the time it underwent a university evaluation as well: “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.” As this observes, internal quality assurance at the university up to this point had emphasis placed on “assessment,” and there was a lack of efforts to build constant cycles to link assessment results to actual improvements and verify those results even further (Ref. 2-16). Based on this point, in order to substantiate an internal quality assurance system centered on the Self-Assessment Committee and conduct university activities regarding quality improvement on an ongoing basis, it was decided to verify the implementation of the following three points and commence accompanying initiatives starting from AY2018: 1) Formulation of internal quality assurance policy (system diagram included), 2) Revision of items handled by the Self-Assessment Committee and 3) Pursuit of self-checking with the use of IR data (Ref. 2-17).

(2) Strengths and distinctive features

From the standpoint of aiming to create a university that is up to international standards, starting from AY2008, APU worked towards obtaining accreditation by AACSB, an international accreditation facility for business schools. The university’s College of International Management and Graduate School of Management obtained that accreditation in AY2016 (Ref. 2-14). Furthermore, in AY2017, the university’s College of Asia Pacific Studies obtained TedQual, an accreditation in tourism education granted by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (Ref. 2-14). The university’s efforts to establish internal quality assurance with international standards in its education, research, governance and other areas through the above process of obtaining those international qualifications could be termed as a strength and distinctive feature of internal quality assurance at APU.

With AACSB accreditation, particular emphasis is placed on initiatives that emphasize the mission of the institution, faculty qualifications, and AOL. Since obtaining that accreditation, initiatives in the accredited College of International Management and Graduate School of Management are progressing (Details on each initiative are stated in related chapters.). Furthermore, it should also be mentioned that similar initiatives are also in the process of spreading to other Colleges and Graduate Schools as well. As there is a re-accreditation process for AACSB every five years after it has been acquired, the university is implementing ongoing initiatives aimed at preserving that accreditation.

Additionally, the Governing Advisory Board, which concurrently performs the functions of the University Evaluation Committee slated to convene in AY2018, is planning on inviting experts from overseas as well as from within Japan to serve as Committee members. This carries the promise of evaluations and suggestions from an international perspective.

(3) Problem areas

As stated above in this chapter, while the university is in the process of tackling improvements to its internal quality assurance system, as it aims to establish a systemic internal quality assurance system, the university needs to sophisticate that system while continuing to check the status of its operation in the future.

Additionally, in order to improve university operation and education quality, APU is conducting initiatives where it uses questionnaires, direct informal talks with College Deans and other efforts to gauge student needs and feedback. However, mechanisms for constantly incorporating that feedback into PDCA cycles for improving quality have not been sufficiently established (Ref. 2-11). The university is planning to continue administering alumni surveys in the future; however, it must proceed to establish mechanisms for leveraging quality improvement initiatives while also factoring in analysis of the post-graduation status of alumni and their feedback.

(4) Summary

With regards to verification efforts for various activities at the university, in addition self-assessments by the Self-Assessment Committee, external assessments by the University Evaluation Committee made up of external experts and university evaluations by JUAA are incorporated into the continuous flow for internal quality assurance. Additionally, for items that have been clearly shown to require improvement based on self-assessments and external evaluations, in addition to each body formulating response and improvement plans using the “control sheet” and executing those plans, the Self-Assessment Committee is verifying the progress of those plans and encouraging improvements.

Also, in recent years, verification efforts with internationality and objective evidence in mind have also been progressing. These include international accreditations such as AACSB and initiatives for internal quality assurance utilizing data through the reinforcement of IR. In AY2017, the university has been implementing educational reforms based on the challenges present up to this point, and the verification of those reforms will continue to be necessary in the future. Going forward, the Self-Assessment Committee will spearhead efforts to ensure that each individual initiative functions as well as promote those initiatives to bring about systemic internal quality assurance for the entire university.