

8. Education and Research Environment

(1) Description of Current Conditions

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (1): Are policies for developing the environment and conditions for student learning and education and research activities by faculty members clearly indicated?

Evaluation Points

- Appropriate indication of policies concerning education and research environment in light of APU's ideals and aims, the aims of each college and graduate school, and other factors

The policies concerning education and research environment have been redefined as follows in the Plan for Improving Campus Facilities with an Eye on APU2030 (Proposal; University Senate Meeting on 2017.3.14) (Ref. 8-1).

We will formulate a Campus Master Plan in accordance with the APU2030 Vision and the APU2020 Second Half Plan. Based on our long-term plan for renovations, the Campus Master Plan aims to improve the campus environment.

APU2030 Vision



APU2020 Second Half Plan



Campus Improvement Policy

We aim to create a campus that:

- (1) Supports multicultural cooperative learning (with facilities to support a diverse array of communities)
- (2) Is equipped with global-standard education and research facilities for the cultivation of outstanding students and researchers
- (3) Emphasizes respect for human rights (with accommodations for people with disabilities, diversity, and physical and mental health)
- (4) Takes into account harmony with nature, ecology, and disaster prevention
- (5) Is open to the community

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (2): Based on the policies concerning education and research environment, does the university have the required land and buildings and has it developed the necessary facilities and equipment required for education and research activities, such as an athletic field?

Evaluation Points

- Developing and managing facilities and equipment
 - Providing a network environment and information and communications technology (ICT) machines and equipment
 - Maintaining and managing facilities and equipment and ensuring safety and hygiene
 - Developing a campus environment that offers universal access and takes the comfort of its users into account
 - Developing an environment that promotes self-directed learning by students
- Initiatives concerning the establishment of staff, faculty, and students' information ethics

The total area of land owned by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University is 358,482 m² of which 60,908 m² is building area. This is significantly more land area than required by Standards for Establishing Universities. (University Basic Data, Table 1).

We strive to create a comfortable campus with the following initiatives:

- In order to fit in with the surrounding environment, the buildings on campus are all earth tones, but roads and sidewalks have been kept a distinct separate color for aesthetic and safety reasons.
- To ensure that life on campus is comfortable, we installed a fountain and benches and planted shrubbery. We also separate waste into trash and recyclables. In addition, we are working to create a fully smoke-free campus.
- To support student life on campus, we built Building E (Student Union), which houses a cafeteria and student activity space, and Building E II (Student Union II), which houses a shop and student activity space, adjacent to each other. Meanwhile, AP House, our international education dormitory, provides accommodation for up to 1,310 students.
- We established the Learning Commons on the 1st floor of the Media Center in March 2011.
- In August 2015, led by the Ritsumeikan Co-Op, APU's cafeteria became the second university cafeteria in Japan to obtain Muslim-friendly certification.
- As a part of student amenities, we created The Quiet Space (a place for meditation) in March 2016.
- The campus is also equipped with an athletic field (41,810 m²) and a gymnasium (2,950.67 m²).
- Based on discussions with students with disabilities, we installed automatic doors at each entrance of Building D (media center), E (cafeteria), F (classrooms), FII, and H (graduate school building) in August 2017 and March 2018.

We are implementing energy efficiency measures in accordance with the Act on the Rational Use of Energy (Energy Conservation Act) and the Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures (Global Warming Prevention Act). In 2010, the Trust established the Environmental Committee, which has been undertaking activities ever since. In particular, the

Committee has promoted part-time usage of heating equipment, installation of motion and brightness sensors for light fixtures, and improvement of Central Security Office facilities.

All facility repair and maintenance and general campus management falls under the jurisdiction of the Administration Office, which works closely with the Trust's Office of Facilities Management on these duties.

With regard to IT devices and equipment, the basic policy is for the visual projection equipment (e.g. projectors and flat screen displays), microphones and audio-visual devices installed and/or located in each of the classrooms to be replaced in order of age when i) equipment gets too old (i.e., at least eight years has passed since installation) or ii) installation and usage conditions have been standardized.

To ensure the safety and sanitation of facilities, we have installed and administer a central monitoring system that detects facility malfunctions and problems with extraordinary speed. This system also allows us to remotely monitor and manage lighting and air conditioning operations, equipment malfunctions and room entry. The Office of Campus Management and Security, located beside the Central Security Office, is manned 24 hours a day, thereby enabling us to detect issues rapidly. This office also manages an in-house contact list and reporting system.

We also formulated the Ritsumeikan Trust Risk Management Regulations (Ref. 7-14), Ritsumeikan Trust Fire and Disaster Prevention Management Regulations (Ref. 8-2) and the Ritsumeikan Trust Faculty and Staff Health and Safety Management Regulations (Ref. 8-3) to ensure campus safety and sanitation control, prevent accidents and disasters, and protect the life, physical well-being and property of all members of the university.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (3): Is there a system in place for providing library and academic information services? Also, is it functioning properly?

Evaluation Points

- Provision of library materials and an environment for library book usage
 - Developing a collection of academic information materials such as books, academic journals, and electronic information
 - Developing a network with academic content provided by the National Institute for Informatics and other libraries
 - Enabling access to academic information
 - Developing a library usage environment that takes student learning into account (e.g. number of seats, hours of operation)
- Assignment of staff with expertise to provide library and academic information services

■ Provision of library and academic information services

Status of provision of library materials and an environment for library book usage

As of May 2017, the library stocked 215,993 books, 2,776 periodicals, 89 online databases and electronic journals, and 3,756 audio-visual resources, making for a distinctive yet well-balanced collection suited to the education and research fields at APU (University Basic Data, Table 1; University Data, Table 31). Combined with materials available from Ritsumeikan University, our fellow Ritsumeikan Trust member, via inter-library loan, a total of 3,468,164 books can be accessed.

Most of the available materials are books listed in syllabi (i.e., reference books and textbooks recommended by faculty), books that students request the library to purchase, and academic titles pertaining to lectures. In this way, the collection spans a wide range of subject matter, including interdisciplinary fields and general educational books.

The 2,776 titles of academic journals comprises 1,805 Japanese journals and 971 foreign journals, and we maintain a particularly robust collection of foreign periodicals keeping APU's diverse composition of students and faculty and the bilingual nature of our education in mind. We have 89 browsable databases and electronic journals that can be used both on and off campus by completing a VPN connection procedure. Library users can use the library homepage to request photocopies, apply to borrow books from other institutions via inter-library loan (ILL) and reserve books, allowing us to offer highly convenient academic information services.

Using the Ritsumeikan Academic Information System (RUNNERS), library users can search for these books, periodicals and electronic journals from the APU Library as well as the seven Ritsumeikan University libraries. They can also reserve and request materials from any of the libraries in the system by way of inter-library loan. Through NACSIS-Webcat (a comprehensive catalogue database) and ILL with the National Diet Library, the National Institute of Informatics, and other domestic and international universities, we can access and share a wide range of academic information and catalogued data

(Ref. 8-4 http://www.apu.ac.jp/media/library_search/opac/index.html/) .

As lecture content for Study Skills and Academic Writing that is a common liberal arts subject taken by all first-year students as library literacy education for students, we offer out-of-class sessions where students use information and the library's collection of materials and learn to search for books in the collection and search for information using the library (Ref.8-5).

Overview of library facilities

The library has a Reserve Corner that provides one-stop access to the books designated as Required Readings and Further Readings for every subject as well as regular books. It also has a section for periodicals and magazines, an audio-visual corner, an information search corner, group study rooms and a Multimedia Room. The library has 1,034 seats for browsing materials.

The 1st floor of the library was renovated into a Learning Commons in AY2011. We expanded the collaborative learning area as well as the presentation room and group learning room and established a Writing Center (Japanese / English). We renovated the 1st floor even more in AY2017 with the aim of promoting multicultural cooperative learning, creating a new collaborative learning area, and we established an Analytics and Math Center to assist students in math and statistics learning.

The library is open from 8:30 a.m. to midnight from Monday to Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends, public holidays, and long vacations. It was open 331 days in AY2017 (Ref. 8-6).

User assistance from dedicated staff

Librarian-qualified staff from an outsourcing company assist library users at the main counter and the Reference Counter. Student staff are also involved in library operations. They shelve books, provide quick reference services and engage in publicity activities. Reference Counter staff and student staff offer reference guidance and other services as a part of literacy education in Study Skills and Academic Writing, the common liberal arts subject mentioned above, and also when requested individually by faculty members.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (4): Are the environment and conditions for supporting education and research activities adequate and are education and research activities being promoted?

Evaluation Points

- Establishment of conditions for promoting research activities
 - Indicating the basic stance regarding research as a university
 - Using research funds appropriately
 - Providing support for acquiring external funding
 - Providing research laboratories, securing research time, and guaranteeing a dedicated period for research
 - Having a system to support research activities such as holding thesis writing seminars
- Establishment of conditions for promoting education activities
 - Improving education facilities and equipment and the education environment
 - Having a system to support education and research activities such as teaching assistants (TA)

■ Establishment of conditions for promoting research activities

Regarding research allowances, tenured faculty, fixed-term faculty, and specially-appointed faculty all receive ¥200,000 in individual research materials expenses and ¥100,000 in research travel expenses every academic year (Ref. 8-7).

In addition, we operate the following systems, including internal research subsidies, in an effort to enhance research support for our faculty.

	Budget
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Academic Research Subsidies (Grant-in-Aid-Linked) (Ref. 8-8; Ref. 8-9; Ref. 8-10).	¥12,500,000
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Academic Conference Participation Subsidy System (Ref. 8-11)	
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Academic Publication Subsidy (Ref. 8-12)	¥2,500,000

Note that this budget is not the upper limit for the system, but rather the figures assigned as the first year budget. The majority of subsidies in the APU Subsidy System are Grants-in-Aid-linked subsidies. If the number of Grant-in-Aid recipients rises higher than expected, for example, we exceed the budget and funds are taken from other budgets as arranged by the Student Office.

In addition, we operate the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Academic Development Leave (ADL) System, which exempts up to ten tenured faculty per year from classes in one semester so they can focus on their research during a sabbatical (Ref. 6-10; Ref. 8-13). Past Deans are able to utilize the ADL system under a separate scheme.

Under the aforementioned Faculty Assessment System, the faculty member who receives the Special Award for Research is provided with a subsidy to be used for either publication or research as well as priority in applying for ADL (Ref. 6-13).

The APU Subsidy System is constantly being updated in an effort to create research service reserves by streamlining administrative duties while meeting the needs of researchers. We are creating an environment that helps researchers access information easily, for example by posting important information online as much as possible.

In addition to financial aid, we also strive to improve research-related skills, for example by holding seminars on how to write and submit academic papers in English. (Ref. 8-14)

■ Establishment of conditions for promoting education activities

Promoting multicultural cooperative learning

As mentioned above, in AY2011, the 1st floor of the library was renovated into a Learning Commons, the collaborative learning area for students was expanded, and a platform for providing individual learning support (the Writing Center) was added. Furthermore, in AY2017, we greatly expanded the collaborative learning area with the aim of promoting multicultural cooperative learning and created an Analytics and Math Center, adding a system for providing individual learning support in math and statistics study (Ref. 4-10; Ref. 8-15).

Use of the Learning Management System (LMS)

For many years, APU has been using the LMS as a university-wide system for learning management in each lecture. The LMS remains an essential tool for professors to distribute, save, and store learning and teaching materials, hold short tests, and comprehensively manage test scores and other learning outcomes of their students. In AY2017, we stopped using the Blackboard that we had been using until that point and replaced it with a new system called manaba (Asahi Net).

Assignment of Teaching Assistants (TAs)

We extensively assign Teaching Assistants (TAs) as an education and learning support system for classes in an effort to improve the quality of classes. For undergraduate lecture courses, classes with 150 or more students are entitled to one TA upon request by the professor. TAs are also assigned to classes with less than 150 students for required subjects and core subjects for both colleges and subjects that require collaborative learning among students, for example. TAs are assigned to many of the language education subjects and subjects for freshmen as well where they contribute to collaborative learning among students and help implement interactive classes in addition to their role as a teaching assistant (Ref. 8-16).

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (5): Are necessary steps being taken and measures applied appropriately to ensure compliance with research ethics guidelines?

Evaluation Points

- Initiatives related to the prevention of unethical research practices and misconduct in research activities
 - Improving regulations
 - Periodically holding compliance classes and research ethics classes
 - Having an internal review organization concerning research ethics

Basic research ethics rules are stipulated in the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Research Ethics Guidelines and the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Regulations for Prevention of Misconduct in Research Activities (Ref. 8-17; Ref. 8-18). We also established the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Human Subjects and the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Guidelines for Proper Publication of Research Outcomes to create guidelines from the points researchers must consider. With this Code of Ethics, in addition to guaranteeing researchers the right to freely engage in research based on their good conscience as academics, we aim to create a shared ethical outlook for the entire university so that both APU and its researchers can fulfill their responsibilities to society in a self-directed manner. We also aim to protect the individuals and/or organizations being researched and the researchers themselves against

any rights violations during the research process. Through the appropriate and efficient execution of research at APU, we hope to earn the trust of the public and maintain it over the long term. This information is also provided on the APU website (Ref. 8-19; Ref. 8-20).

We established a Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Research Ethics Committee to ensure thorough implementation of the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Research Ethics Guidelines. The Committee also responds to i) questions and complaints about researchers who commit violations stipulated in the Code of Ethics, ii) questions and complaints from people who claim to have been treated improperly or unfairly by a researcher, and iii) reports of falsifications, fabrication and plagiarism (Ref. 8-21). In AY2017, we also established a Research Compliance/Ethics Review Committee to listen to questions about research ethics and offer advice and to review compliance with guidelines concerning research involving human subjects (Ref. 8-22). This enables speedy response to inquiries about research ethics from researchers, thus creating a system that promotes efficient research activities.

In the previous self-assessment, we stated that the Committee “issues the necessary guidance and advice concerning research ethics to researchers, but some researchers say the consultation procedures and screening process have become opaque. Furthermore, as the number of consultations on research ethics and compliance increases every year, we are not always able to respond quickly under the existing system.” The above improvements were made in response.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (6): Is the education and research environment regularly assessed and evaluated for suitability? Moreover, are efforts taken to improve support based on those results?

Evaluation Points

- Assessment/evaluation based on appropriate grounds (materials, information)
- Improvement based on assessment/evaluation results

■ Writing of an Annual Report for the library

Every year, APU writes and publishes an Annual Report with various types of data on the usage of the library by students and the results of questionnaires. The various types of data and questionnaire results contained in the Annual Report are shared at the Media Resource Center Steering Committee meeting and used to set issues for upcoming years and discuss various plans.

The Annual Report summarizes the number of library visits by students, the number of books borrowed by students, and other details by college, year, language basis and other factors and also tracks data over time concerning correlations between academic performance (GPA) and number of books borrowed for seminar enrollees and non-seminar enrollees, for example. In the questionnaire for students, we ask about their use of the databases and their use of the equipment and services in the library. Based on their responses, we choose subscriptions for the following academic year and

consider plans for improving facilities and services.

■ Assessment/evaluation of the research environment

Regarding assessment and evaluation of the suitability of the research environment, we report the International Cooperation and Research Division activities every year at a University Senate Meeting and receive an evaluation. That University Senate Meeting is expanded to allow participation by managerial personnel and regular faculty members as well. Comments received at the meeting are used to make improvements in following years (Ref. 3-10; Ref. 3-11).

(2) Strengths and distinctive features

■ Library environment that supports learning

To build a collection of books relevant to the academic content of subjects at APU, the library, as a general rule, purchases two copies of every book listed in the syllabi (Books listed as Further Reading: up to 15 for undergraduate subjects and 30 for graduate subjects; Required Reading: up to three each for undergraduate and graduate subjects). Also, when classes are in session, the library shelves the books denoted as Required Reading and Further Reading in the syllabi in the Reserve Corner for greater convenience for students using them.

In the Learning Commons on the 1st floor of the library, expansion of the collaborative learning area promises to further promote multicultural cooperative learning using APU's diverse student body. Also, the addition of new functions on that floor such as the installation of a new Analytics and Math Center providing individual learning support in math and statistics allows us to provide fine-tuned learning support together with the existing Writing Center for each individual student.

■ Development of facilities with consideration for diversity

We are developing facilities to accommodate diverse students (e.g. Muslim, LGBT).

■ Faculty research funds

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Academic Research Subsidies have been offered since 2014 as Grant-in-Aid-linked subsidies through which APU actively encourages researchers to research and obtain Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research. As requesting of such grants is now firmly established at APU, we revised the system in AY2017. In addition, the requirements for disbursement of an annual individual research allowance of ¥300,000 are extremely simple and these allowances form a foundation for research activities (Ref. 8-23).

(3) Problem Areas

■ Training of Teaching Assistants (TA)

The main reasons for AY2017 academic reforms in accordance with changes to the undergraduate curriculum were to implement multicultural cooperative learning and improve the quality of education. To achieve these goals, we need to train Teaching Assistants (TAs) so that they have the capacity to adequately support the implementation of cooperative learning among students both inside and outside of class. In addition, the curriculum became stricter with AY2017 academic reforms, for example with an increase in required subjects at both colleges, and it is possible that more students are now focusing exclusively on their own studies, resulting in a decrease in the number of students willing to act as TAs. As implementation of the AY2017 curriculum progresses, we expect that faculty members of applicable classes will have an even greater need for TAs. Accordingly, some tasks for APU as a whole will be obtaining a sufficient number of TAs as well as training TAs so that they have sufficient quality and skills to take on more than a simple teacher's assistant role.

■ Issues concerning research

As shown in QS rankings of Asian universities and other rankings, APU rated poorly for number of articles published and cited. We plan to launch a project to strengthen our article publishing performance and will carry out improvements over several years.

(4) Summary

■ Library and academic information services

Our library has a distinctive yet well-balanced collection suited to the education and research fields at APU. We maintain a robust collection of foreign periodicals, databases, and electronic journals suitable for APU's diverse composition of students and faculty and the bilingual nature of our education. Using the Ritsumeikan Academic Information System (RUNNERS), library users can search for information in the collections at the Ritsumeikan University libraries, cross search electronic materials, and reserve and request materials by way of inter-library loan. Through NACSIS-Webcat (a comprehensive catalogue database) and ILL with the National Diet Library, the National Institute of Informatics, and other domestic and international universities, we can access and share a wide range of academic information and catalogued data.

The library is open from 8:30 a.m. to midnight from Monday to Friday and was open 331 days in AY2017. It has 1,034 seats for browsing materials, meeting the needs of our students and faculty. The 1st floor of the facility was recently renovated into a Learning Commons and the collaborative learning area was expanded to promote multicultural cooperative learning as one of the main goals of AY2017 academic reforms. A new Analytics and Math Center was installed to provide individual learning support. The library now functions suitably as a daily learning base for students.

The library is staffed by certified librarians from an outsourcing company and student staff are

also available to assist library users. In addition to reference services at the library, they offer reference guidance and other services as a part of literacy education in Study Skills and Academic Writing, a first-year common liberal arts subject, and when requested individually by faculty members.

With the above developments, we have determined that the library and academic information services as well as the system providing these services have reached a sufficient level and are functioning properly.

■ Development of an environment and conditions for supporting research and education activities

We enhanced the Learning Commons on the 1st floor of the library as an environment for promoting education and learning activities and are promoting multicultural cooperative learning using APU's diverse student body. In addition, we are improving our concrete one-on-one learning support, for example with a Writing Center for providing students with individual writing instruction in English and Japanese and an Analytics and Math Center that provides individual learning support in math and statistics that became required subjects in the College of International Management in AY2017.

The significance of lecture assistance in promoting multicultural cooperative learning is increasing. At present, the general rule is to assign one TA for every relatively large class with at least 150 students, but we also assign numerous TAs to required subjects, core subjects, language education subjects and subjects for freshmen who contribute to cooperative learning among students and implementation of interactive classes. One task will be training TAs to be able to take on a peer leader role inside and outside of class and increasing the number of TAs in an aim towards achieving 100% multicultural cooperative learning.

From the above, we deem that our development of facilities, equipment, and the environment for promoting education and learning activities is being carried out appropriately in order. Regarding the system for supporting human-based education and student learning through the assignment of TAs, although we must further enhance the quality and quantity, we deem that our activities at present are suitable.

■ Faculty research funds

The majority of research funds at APU come from APU Subsidies funded by APU's ordinary expenses and Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, with a smaller amount coming from external subsidies. After 2015, we designed a financial support system in which APU Subsidies are linked to Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, but we are now considering revising the system to add an element evaluating research results with a focus on publication of articles. We will create new financial resources by redistributing APU's financial resources and acquiring external competitive

funding.

■ Research ethics

By establishing the Research Compliance/Ethics Review Committee in AY2017 and having the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Human Subjects and the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Guidelines for Proper Publication of Research Outcomes, we have developed an environment for the standards required including national policies. We have also established a mid-term plan for ethics education and our policy involves first thoroughly educating staff, faculty, and PhD students and later enhancing education for Master's students and undergraduate students (Ref. 8-22; Ref. 8-24; Ref. 8-25).