



NIAD-QE

National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education

A longitudinal study on the levels of awareness among universities regarding Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

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Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

- Certified evaluation and accreditation was introduced in 2004, as a new national evaluation scheme, to contribute to the further development of Japanese higher education.
- Organizations which undertake this scheme must fulfill the concept and function required by law, but has the discretion to develop original strategies for their quality assurance arrangements. Consequently, the criteria and methods vary.

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

- The process followed by NIAD-QE principally involves reviewing the overall institutions' education and research based on the Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation and making a judgment as to **whether or not the institution satisfies the Standards**.
- The Standards set out the criteria that NIAD-QE considers necessary for institutions to meet in order to maintain their quality.
- This performs the main function of certified evaluation and accreditation, which is to ensure that higher education institutions **maintain their quality** subsequent to the approval of their establishment.

Certified **Evaluation** and Accreditation

- There is another dimension to NIAD-QE's certified evaluation accreditation process: emphasis on analysis leading to the identification of '**good practices**' and '**areas for improvement**'.
- Where a higher education institution is judged to satisfy the standards but it is recognized that there are some areas in need of **improvement**, these are specified to the institution along with the accreditation result.
- Conversely, points of good practice are also communicated to the institution. NIAD-QE believes this feature of 'evaluation' **promotes quality enhancement** and individualization of the higher education institutions.

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

- The School Education Act stipulates that certified evaluation and accreditation be conducted by a body **certified by the Minister of Education** as an appropriate and impartial organization to carry out a fair process.
- This emphasizes that this scheme is a publicly credible system. Therefore, note that 'certified' in its context does **not imply any official approval** of the reviewed institutions.

Standards for Institutional CEA of Universities

(3rd Cycle: FY 2019-2025)

“Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities: Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation”

The Standards are designed to evaluate the overall status of education and research activities of universities, with a focus on their educational activities. Composed of **27 standards**, which are classified into **six areas**.

- Area 1 : Standards for Basic Organizations for Education and Research (3)
- Area 2 : Standards for Internal Quality Assurance (5)
- Area 3 : Standards for Financial Management, Administrative Management, and Publication of Information (6)
- Area 4 : Standards for Facilities and Equipment, and Student Support (2)
- Area 5 : Standards for Student Admissions (3)
- Area 6 : Standards for Academic Programs and Learning Outcomes (8)

*(): Number of standards

* Standards concerning internal quality assurance as prescribed in the Evaluation Standards are regarded as [priority evaluation items].

Past Standards of CEA for universities

First Cycle: FY2005–2011	Second Cycle: FY2012–2018
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission of university 2. Education and research structure 3. Academic staff and education supporting staff 4. Student admission 5. Academic programs 6. Effectiveness of institutional performance 7. Student support 8. Facilities 9. Internal quality assurance system 10. Finance 11. Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission of university 2. Teaching and research structure 3. Academic staff and teaching support staff 4. Student admission 5. Academic programs 6. Learning outcomes 7. Facilities and student support 8. Internal quality assurance system of teaching and learning 9. Finance and management 10. Public information disclosure on teaching and learning

Results of CEA

		1 st Cycle (FY2005-2011)	2 nd Cycle (FY2012-2018)	Total	Ratio of National, Public and Private Universities Evaluated over Total Evaluated
Number of Universities Evaluated	National	85	85	170	66%
	Public	40	32	72	28%
	Private	7	7	14	5%
Total		132	124	256	100%
Results	Satisfied	131	124	255	
	Unsatisfied	1	0	1	
Percentage of “Satisfied”		99%	100%	100%	

Review of Evaluation and Accreditation Works

- Verification

- NIAD-QE conducts an annual **questionnaire-based survey** among institutions that have undergone CEA, and the committee members who have conducted evaluations, emphasizing evaluation methods;
- NIAD-QE verifies the effectiveness and appropriateness of evaluations based on its findings from analysis of the results. A verification report covers:
 - ❖ Effective and appropriate practices of the evaluation process and arrangements
 - ❖ Matters for improvement or continued discussion for further development of the evaluation framework
 - ❖ Samples of institutional actions where improvement is identified in the evaluation reports
 - ❖ Samples of NIAD-QE's actions in response to the question

Verification of CEA by means of questionnaire survey

- NIAD-QE verifies Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (CEA) through questionnaires completed by universities and evaluators and continuously conducts broad-ranging analyses of the effectiveness and appropriateness of evaluation since FY 2005.

The aim of this study

- In Japan, the following three metrics —
 - ❖ “effectiveness in helping quality enhancement,”
 - ❖ “gaining public understanding and support,” and
 - ❖ “evaluation exhaustion (workload)”
- —are viewed as challenges for the CEA, according to the **Central Council for Education**.
- This study explores how universities perceived the effectiveness of the CEA system and how these perceptions have changed between the CEA cycles by **comparing the two surveys** that NIAD-QE conducted in the first (FY2005-2011) and the second (FY2012-2018) cycle.

Method

- The study draws on results of the questionnaire survey conducted on the **119 universities** certified by the NIAD-QE in **both cycles**.
- The number of responses was 115 universities (82 National, 29 Municipal/Prefectural, 4 Private) out of 119 universities.
- The questionnaire had 11 sections. **Sections 1–6 were relevant to this study**. Each section contains three to twenty-five items. Total items are **78** (74 questions by 5-point scale, 4 questions by 2-point scale).

Section headers of the questionnaire

- 1. Evaluation standards and viewpoints**
- 2. Evaluation methods and contents**
 - 1. About self-evaluation**
 - 2. Site Visits**
 - 3. Statements of objection**
- 3. The workload and schedule of the evaluation**
 - 1. the workload required for the evaluation**
 - 2. the period of operations set by NIAD-QE**
 - 3. the amount of effort required for the evaluation**
 - 4. the evaluation schedule**
- 4. Orientation meetings and training sessions**
- 5. Evaluation results**
- 6. The outcomes from and impacts of evaluation**
 - 1. Outcomes from and impacts of self-evaluation**
 - 2. Outcomes from and impacts of NIAD-QE's evaluation results**
- 7. The use of evaluation results (free descriptions)**
- 8. Regarding the implementation system for evaluation recommendations (free descriptions)**
- 9. The outcomes from and impacts of your last evaluation for certification**
- 10. NIAD-QE's certification evaluation process in comparison with previous evaluations**
- 11. Other (free descriptions)**

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Results

- The universities responses to each item were compared between the first and the second cycles. The analysis utilized **paired t-tests** and chi-squared tests.
- Significant differences were observed in **25** out of the 78 items.
- The breakdown is as follows:
 - ❖ **3** items related to “**effectiveness in helping quality enhancement**”;
 - ❖ **5** items related to “**gaining public understanding and support**”;
 - ❖ **14** items related to “**evaluation exhaustion (workload)**”; and the remaining
 - ❖ **3** items related to questions regarding evaluation in general.
- From a qualitative point of view, the responses in **23** items showed a **negative** change from first cycle to second cycle, save for two items about “evaluation exhaustion (workload).”

Evaluation exhaustion (workload)

- The most frequently observed 14 items concerned the “evaluation exhaustion (workload).”
- Examples of items are as follows:
- Question 3.1 The workload required for the evaluation (5 Heavy - 1 Light)
 - ❖ (2). Addressing the “Checkpoints During Site Visits” presented before site visits ($M_1 = 3.51$, $M_2 = 3.94$, $t(113) = 5.86$, $p < .01$)
 - ❖ (3). Advance preparations for site visits ($M_1 = 3.48$, $M_2 = 3.78$, $t(113) = 3.89$, $p < .01$)

Effectiveness in helping quality enhancement

- There were 3 items related to “effectiveness in helping quality enhancement.”
- Question 5.1 The contents of the valuation report form (5 Agree - 1 Disagree)
 - ❖ (1). The contents of the evaluation report form were appropriate for the quality control of your school’s educational and research activities. ($M_1 = 4.11, M_2 = 3.97, t(114) = 1.99, p < .05$)
- Question 6.2 Outcomes from and impacts of self-evaluation (5 Agree - 1 Disagree)
 - ❖ (9). Faculty and staff gained an understanding of the importance of self-evaluation. ($M_1 = 3.58, M_2 = 3.41, t(114) = 2.14, p < .05$)
 - ❖ (10). Knowledge and skills of faculty and staff in evaluation improved. ($M_1 = 3.65, M_2 = 3.48, t(114) = 2.17, p < .05$)

Gaining public understanding and support

- There were 5 items related to “gaining public understanding and support”
- Examples of items are as follows.
- Question 6.2 Outcomes from and impacts of self-evaluation (5 Agree - 1 Disagree)
 - ❖ (13). Students (including future enrollees) can now attain better understanding and skills. ($M_1 = 3.33$, $M_2 = 3.12$, $t(114) = 2.33$, $p < .05$)
 - ❖ (14). We have obtained widespread public support and understanding. ($M_1 = 3.52$, $M_2 = 3.29$, $t(114) = 2.65$, $p < .01$)

Discussion

- From a qualitative point of view, the responses in **23** items showed a **negative** change from first cycle to second cycle out of the **25** items.
- Of the three topics targeted, “**gaining public understanding and support**” tended to be **much negative** than the other two topics both in first and second cycle.
- However, statistical caution dictates against a myopic view about the urgency of raising public awareness of the evaluation.
 - ❖ For example, evaluation results that do not meet the criteria have newsworthy characteristics and can raise the awareness of evaluation in society, but are likely to constitute fragmented and distorted information.

Conclusion

- The theme of this Session:
- “The role of quality assurance in instilling trust to **stakeholders** (e.g., employers, governments, society at large.)”
- The result of this study indicates the needs for the improvement “**gaining public understanding and support**”.
- It is desirable that the university will be improved, and the significance of CEA will be recognized as a result by retooling the education approach under the **new system**, pointing out **possibilities for improvement and proceeding with follow up**.

Prioritized Standards and Methods

(3rd Cycle: FY 2019-2025)

1. Evaluation of **internal quality assurance**

- The standard requires the system and process for internal quality assurance to be stipulated in the organizational rules as a priority item. A university assessed to have exceptional internal quality assurance in effect is considered for time-effective evaluation in the next cycle of CEA.

2. Using evaluation results and documents of a reputable accrediting agency

- In the assessment of each standard for Area 6 (Academic Programs and Learning Outcomes), examination and advisory report by a reputable external agency—for example, CEA organizations, or accrediting agencies that are parties to international mutual recognition agreements, such as Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE)—can be substituted with self-assessment for each standard in Area 6.

3. Evaluation on three policies

- Responsible institution of the three policies* by the university is assessed in order to make a judgment with respect to standards for internal quality assurance.

*The three policies—diploma policy, curriculum policy and admission policy—stipulated in the Regulation for Enforcement of the School Education Act.

Prioritized Standards and Methods (cont.)

(3rd Cycle: FY 2019-2025)

4. Follow-up mechanism

- Universities that are accredited in spite of the identification of areas for improvement are required to **report** subsequently to NIAD-QE about the condition of the improvement on the identified areas. If it verifies the improvement, the confirmation of improvement is **ostensibly added to the publicized evaluation results**.

5. Improved site visit method

- Graduates are excluded from site visit interviews to reduce burden on the university
- **Interviewee pool expanded to include the local government, businesses, etc.**
- Items to be verified are submitted to universities at an earlier period

6. Optimized administration of evaluation

- Content of evaluation is examined based on the results up to the 2nd Cycle (→ analysis simplified for those including purpose of the university, short-term courses, and affiliated institutions)
- Structure, content and format of Self-Assessment Report are optimized (→ more focus on evidence)
- Paper-based transfer of documents is abolished
- Basic information is submitted through Japanese College and University Portraits (JPCUP) in a standardized format for basic information submission

Judgement and Supplementary Review

- The university that meets all standards
⇒ the university shall **be accredited**.
- If it fails to meet any one of the standards,
 1. it shall **be accredited** on condition that it is confirmed, all the things concerning all the standards considered, that the quality of education and research of the university is assured to live up to the condition required of a university. Otherwise, the university would **not be accredited**.
 2. Should the university be found not to have a system or a procedure for internal quality assurance, either of which is deemed to be a priority requirement, the university would **not be accredited** regardless of whether it meets other standards.
- NIAD-QE explicitly identifies **good practices** and **areas for improvement**, in addition to the above decision.

Supplementary Review

- Universities may apply for a supplementary review, if within two academic years after the evaluation, only for **the standards that have failed to be met**. If a university is decided in this review to meet the standards that it has failed to meet in the original evaluation, NIAD-QE decides and makes publicly known that it is accredited together with the original results.