

Effective on April 1, 2025

General Principles of Institutional Evaluation and Accreditation (Universities)

The Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation
(JIHEE)

About these Principles

The purpose of the institutional evaluation and accreditation (hereinafter referred to as the “evaluation”) conducted by the Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (hereinafter referred to as “JIHEE”), a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation, is to support the autonomous enhancement and improvement of the quality of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (hereinafter referred to as “institutions”) in Japan to contribute to their development. In implementing evaluation, since establishment, we have been engaged in activities that help reform and improvement based on the spirit of peer review and the institutions’ founding principles in close communication with institutions, taking into consideration their individuality and distinctive qualities.

In November 2018, in its Grand Design for Higher Education toward 2040 (Report), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) recommended the establishment of a system for educational quality assurance. The March 2022 document Toward Improvement and Enhancement of Quality Assurance System for a New Era (Summary of Discussion) describes a policy of reflecting in the quality assurance system “the implementation of a learner-centered education,” and of attempting to achieve “quality assurance that is open to society” to make public the requisite information and advance dialog with society. In response to this, JIHEE has reviewed the evaluation system and from FY2025 will implement evaluation and accreditation using a new evaluation system.

These principles contain information regarding the fundamental policies and implementation of evaluations. JIHEE evaluations are implemented on the basis of these principles and the Evaluation Standards (hereinafter referred to as the “Evaluation Standards”) stipulated according to these principles. In addition to these principles and standards, JIHEE also publishes the Handbook for Evaluation and Accreditation for institutions preparing to create a Self-Inspection and Evaluation Report for submission to JIHEE, and the Handbook for Evaluators which is to be used by the JIHEE Evaluators.

JIHEE endeavors to develop the most appropriate evaluation system by conducting reviews of the evaluation methods and Evaluation Standards, etc., based upon the opinions received from the parties related to the institutions undergoing evaluations, Evaluators involved in evaluation-related activities, and other related parties.

It should be noted that in these principles, unless otherwise stated “institutions” include professional and vocational universities.

1. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluations conducted by JIHEE at the behest of the institutions are implemented in accordance with the following objectives for the purpose of contributing to the further development of the institutions of Japan.

- (1) To evaluate the overall situation of educational and research activities of institutions, on the basis of the Evaluation Standards developed by JIHEE taking into consideration the analysis of the results of Self-Inspection and Evaluation; and to verify the Self-Inspection and Evaluation and to support the institutions' efforts to strengthen internal quality assurance on their own initiative.
- (2) To assist and promote the autonomous development of the institutions' individual and distinctive educational and research activities, etc. through evaluations that consider their individuality and distinctive qualities.
- (3) To provide support that enables institutions to attain wide public backing through appropriate disclosure of the overall state of their educational and research activities.

2. Object of Evaluation

Those subject to evaluation are institutions in any academic year after the first intake of students following establishment of the institution have graduated.

3. Fundamental Policies of Evaluation

JIHEE conducts evaluations on the basis of the following fundamental policies.

(1) Evaluation Focusing on Internal Quality Assurance

The evaluations will be conducted through continuous Self-Inspection and Evaluation based on evidence pertinent to institutions, positioning the independent and autonomous internal quality assurance of institutions about their education and research as well as overall operation as material evaluation items.

(2) Evaluation on the Basis of Evaluation Standards Provided for by JIHEE

Based on the Self-Inspection and Evaluation conducted by institutions, JIHEE will, in line with its Evaluation Standards, conduct an evaluation of the overall state of institutions, examine the Self-Inspection and Evaluation, and evaluate whether or not the Evaluation Standards are being satisfied.

(3) Evaluation Focused on the Status of Educational and Research Activities

This evaluation will focus on the overall state of institutions, mainly on their educational and research activities, giving consideration to the degree of social expectations and the institutions' obligation of accountability regarding their educational and research activities.

(4) Evaluation Based on Consideration of the Individuality and Distinctive Qualities of Institutions

Evaluation Standards will be restricted to those which are fundamental and common to institutions. Other than these standards, with regard to areas in which institutions place an emphasis upon their individuality and distinctive qualities, the individuality and distinctive qualities will be evaluated by requesting the institutions to conduct their own Self-Inspection and Evaluation according to the Unique Standards and Points Evaluated established by the institutions.

(5) Evaluation that Contributes to the Improvement and Enhancement of Institutions

JIHEE considers the evaluations to be indispensable to the improvement of the educational and research activities of institutions and vital to managerial reform, and conducts evaluations, placing great importance on the coordination and linking of the process and results of evaluation and independent reform and improvement.

(6) Evaluation Based on Peer Reviews

In order to appropriately evaluate the complex educational and research activities of institutions, the evaluations conducted by JIHEE are based on the peer reviews of the faculty and staff of institutions. Furthermore, experts on the educational and research activities of institutions who are unaffiliated with the institution undergoing evaluation are appointed as members of the Committee for Evaluation (herein referred to as the “Committee for Evaluation”) to assure objectivity and social appropriateness of the evaluation.

(7) Qualitative Assessment-Oriented Evaluation

From the perspective of the educational and research quality improvement orientation of evaluations of these institutions, JIHEE conducts evaluations that place importance not only on quantitative indices, but also on qualitative assessment of the content of educational and research activities of institutions.

(8) Communication-Oriented Evaluation

With regard to evaluation, JIHEE endeavors to avoid making and publishing one-sided judgments, holds a Seminar for Liaison Officers of institutions requesting evaluation, and twice provides opportunities to make an appeal on the evaluation, thereby placing great importance on the communication between evaluated institutions and JIHEE.

(9) Highly Transparent and Reliable Evaluation

JIHEE conducts highly transparent and open evaluations through the establishment of a system in which institutions can appeal and through broad disclosure of the process, methods and results of evaluations. Furthermore, JIHEE strives to secure trustworthiness by incorporating the opinions of institutions and society regarding the evaluation system.

4. System of Implementation of Evaluation

In conducting evaluations, Evaluation Teams are established to conduct actual evaluations under the Committee for Evaluation. A wide range of the faculty and staff of institutions are registered as Evaluators. Evaluators who are able to properly evaluate institutions are assigned to each Evaluation Team taking into consideration the diversity of the educational and research fields and localities of the institutions undergoing evaluation. In addition, although teams generally consist of five members, the size of the team can vary depending on the scale and faculty structure of institutions.

In order for evaluations to be more effective, it is necessary to implement evaluations that are highly reliable based on professional judgment from an objective perspective. Accordingly, Evaluators will be provided with sufficient training on objectives, contents, and methods of evaluation to carry out evaluation activities in a fair, proper, and smooth manner, and with a shared understanding on evaluations. In providing such training, seminars will be held mainly on the Evaluation Standards and implementation methods, as well as sessions for listening to the experiences of the former Evaluators and group training for each Evaluation Team if necessary, thereby building a consensus among Evaluators and improving the quality of evaluation.

The Committee for Evaluation consists of 18 members or less, who are parties related to national, public and private universities; high schools; academic societies; and economic organizations. The Committee members are ultimately decided at the Board of Directors (BOD) meeting.

However, the following Evaluators and members of the Committee for Evaluation who are directly related to the institutions to be evaluated are not permitted to participate in the evaluations of those institutions.

1. Graduates of the institutions to be evaluated
2. Evaluators and members of the Committee for Evaluation who are (or planning to be) employed full-time or who are concurrently employed, or who were formerly employed within the past five years by the institutions to be evaluated
3. Evaluators and members of the Committee for Evaluation who are (or planning to be) executives, or who were within the past five years former executives of the institutions to be evaluated
4. Evaluators and members of the Committee for Evaluation who are participating (or planning to do so), or who participated in the past five years in an organization examining important matters related to the education and research or management of the institutions to be evaluated
5. Parties related to neighboring competitor institutions to be evaluated
6. Any other individual deemed inappropriate by JIHEE

5. Evaluation Standards

(1) Details of Evaluation Standards

The Evaluation Standards consist of six Standards, including “Standard 1. Mission and Objectives”; “Standard 2. Internal Quality Assurance”; “Standard 3. Students”; “Standard 4. Educational Curriculum”; “Standard 5. Faculty and Staff”; and “Standard 6. Management, Administration and Finance”; all of which are designed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the educational and research activities of institutions. These Evaluation Standards are composed of basic and common standards focusing on education, and under each Point Evaluated, criteria are set that must be met by institutions. Each Point Evaluated is established with Perspectives for Evaluation that are necessary for evaluation of such Point Evaluated.

In particular, “Standard 2. Internal Quality Assurance” has been set as a material evaluation item related to the evaluation of other five Standards.

(2) Unique Standards

In addition to these six Standards, institutions are required to establish their own Unique Standards, Points Evaluated and Perspectives for Evaluation with regard to the areas upon which institutions place an emphasis as their individuality and distinctive qualities.

(3) Remarks

In addition to its own Unique Standards, the institutions can describe as remarks their characteristic educational and research activities or enterprises that they wish to emphasize (up to three items).

6. Implementation Methods of Evaluation

(1) The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is as follows.

1. Holding of seminars for describing the process of Self-Inspection and Evaluation to institutions undergoing evaluation

JIHEE hosts Seminars for Liaison Officers from the institutions that apply for JIHEE evaluation, in order to explain the evaluation system, the method of evaluation and how to prepare the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports.

2. Self-Inspection and Evaluation when undergoing evaluation

Institutions will implement Self-Inspection and Evaluation and prepare the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports based on the Handbook for Evaluation and Accreditation provided by JIHEE.

When preparing the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports, based on the School Education Act and the Standards for Establishment, the institution will initially analyze the educational and research activities of each faculty and graduate school as necessary

in line with the Perspectives for Evaluation for each of the Points Evaluated and judge for themselves whether or not the Points Evaluated are “satisfied” or “unsatisfied” based on the evaluation results. With regard to this self-judgement, having referred to the “Points to remember in self-judgments” in the Handbook for Evaluation and Accreditation, institutions will concisely detail their reasons for self-judgment (explanation of facts and self-evaluation) while illustrating the evidence, and indicate the names of the evidential material. In addition to the Perspectives for Evaluation set up by JIHEE, the institutions may establish their own Perspectives for Evaluation for each of the Points Evaluated and include their description when the situation and objectives of the institutions make it necessary. Next, the institutions are required to briefly describe the self-evaluation for each Standard taking into account the results of overall self-judgment of the Points Evaluated. Self-judgment for each Standard is not required.

It should be noted that there are some partial differences in the “Points to remember in self-judgments” for professional and vocational universities.

3. JIHEE Evaluations

- (i) In accordance with the judgment standards provided for separately, JIHEE makes the following evaluations and judgments, based on the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports submitted by the institutions.
 - Evaluation is made from the viewpoint of whether each Point Evaluated is “satisfied,” or “unsatisfied” based on the Perspectives for Evaluation.
 - Evaluation is made from the viewpoint of whether each Standard is “satisfied,” or “unsatisfied” based on the evaluations of the Points Evaluated.
 - The Standard shall be evaluated as “satisfied” by institutions if every Point Evaluated is satisfied.
 - In the five Standards other than “Standard 2. Internal Quality Assurance,” in the event that one or more Points Evaluated are not satisfied, if, taking into account the overall circumstances of the Standard, it is possible to verify that the quality of education and research is being assured, the Standard will be evaluated as “satisfied,” but if this cannot be verified, it will be evaluated as “unsatisfied.”
 - In the event that one or more Points Evaluated are not satisfied in “Standard 2. Internal Quality Assurance,” the Standard will, regardless of any circumstances, be evaluated as “unsatisfied.”
 - Evaluations are made from the comprehensive viewpoint of whether the Evaluation Standards are satisfied or not and the institutions are judged as “suitable for accreditation,” or “not suitable for accreditation.”
- If an institution satisfies all of the six Standards, it is judged to be “suitable for accreditation.”

If there are one or more unsatisfied Standards out of the six Standards, the

institution in question is judged as “not suitable for accreditation.”

- If it is determined by the Committee for Evaluation that an institution has intentionally acted in violation of social norms and ethics by making false reports or covering up the facts when preparing the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports or undergoing the process of On-site Inspection and JIHEE evaluation, the institution in question will be judged as “not suitable for accreditation.”
- (ii) Institutions judged as “not suitable for accreditation” are, with regard to the items requiring improvements, able to request JIHEE to conduct an additional evaluation within the stipulated time. In the event that an institution makes such a request, JIHEE will make an additional evaluation in line with its separately stated regulations, and judge whether the institution is “suitable for accreditation” or “not suitable for accreditation.”
- (iii) JIHEE also conducts an overall evaluation of the institutions from the viewpoint of the obligation of accountability to society.
- (iv) JIHEE provides comments on the contents of the institutions’ own Unique Standards.
- (v) The remarks, in which the institutions describe their characteristic educational and research activities or enterprises, will be introduced in an overall evaluation and disclosed to the public, and we expect that this will further strengthen the institutions’ commitment, and serve as reference for reform and improvement by other institutions.

(2) Implementation Method

Evaluations are conducted through a process of document screening and On-site Inspection in accordance with the Handbook for Evaluators. Document screening includes an analysis of the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports (including the documentation and data submitted in support of the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Report) created and submitted by institutions; confirmation of integrity of the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports; confirmation of compliance with the School Education Act and the Standards for Establishment; and a review of how they respond to the results of investigations on implementation of the Establishment Plan. During On-Site Inspections, investigations will be implemented centering on the points that could not be verified through the document screening.

(3) Appeals and Finalization of the Results of Evaluation

While evaluation results are expected to be used for the future improvement of the educational and research activities of institutions, they are also widely publicized to society at large, making it necessary to assure transparency of the evaluation process, as well as

accuracy of the results of evaluation, and to finalize them.

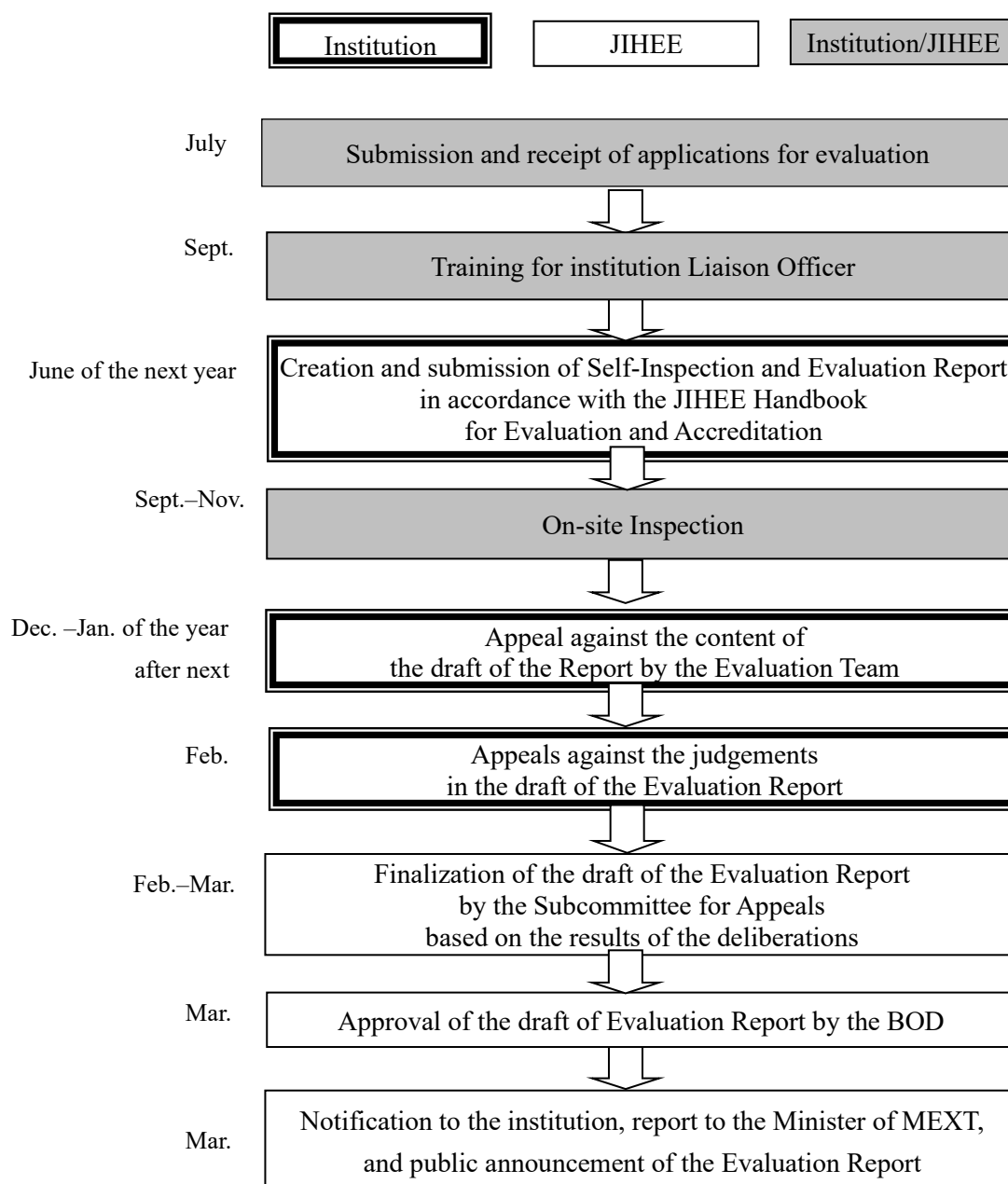
Furthermore, since great importance is placed on communication with the institutions, JIHEE twice provides them with opportunities to appeal regarding the evaluation. The first opportunity gives the institutions the chance to respond to the draft of the Report by the Evaluation Team. The second opportunity enables the institutions to appeal against the judgement in a draft of the Evaluation Report prepared by the Committee for Evaluation prior to the finalization of evaluation results.

In order to provide even greater objectivity to the process of consideration of the appeals against a draft of the Evaluation Report, the Committee for Evaluation shall establish a Subcommittee for Appeals to examine the appeals prior to the finalization of the evaluation results by the Committee for Evaluation.

It should be noted that, according to the judgement of the Committee for Evaluation, these evaluation processes and the manner of their implementation may be simplified.

7. Schedule for Evaluations

The schedule for the JIHEE evaluation and accreditation is as follows. Note that changes may be made according to the year.



8. Publication of Evaluation Results and Information Disclosure

- (1) The Evaluation Report is sent to the institutions in question and the Minister of MEXT. In addition, the evaluation results are made widely available to the public by the posting of Evaluation Reports and the Self-Inspection and Evaluation Reports prepared by the

institutions on the JIHEE website.

- (2) As an organization responsible to the public, JIHEE places great importance on the transparency and objectivity of its organizational structure, and in addition to providing public disclosure of the items regulated by Article 169, Paragraph 1 of the Regulations for Enforcement of the School Education Act, JIHEE strives to provide any information in its possession regarding evaluation, to the best of its ability and in the most appropriate manner.
- (3) Any requests submitted for disclosure of documents under the (sole) ownership of JIHEE shall be processed in accordance with JIHEE regulations. As a general rule, however, documents provided by institutions that are in the possession of JIHEE shall not be disclosed.

9. Evaluation Fees

Member institutions seeking evaluation are required to pay the following evaluation fees in accordance with the size of the institution. In addition, consumption taxes are added to evaluation fees.

Evaluation Fees

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| (1) Basic fees per institution | ¥2,000,000 |
| (2) Per faculty | ¥500,000 |
| (3) Per graduate school | ¥250,000 |
| (4) Portion of the cost incurred for On-site Inspection (Accommodation, meeting room fees, lunch, etc.) | |

For a non-member institution undergoing evaluation, the amount equivalent to membership fees for a period of 7 years will be added, in principle, to the above-listed evaluation fees.

Note that in the event that an institution undergoes additional evaluation, JIHEE will charge an evaluation fee according to the separately stipulated regulations.

10. Timing of Evaluation

Evaluations are conducted once every year. Institutions seeking JIHEE evaluation shall submit applications by the application deadline in accordance with the forms provided for separately. Furthermore, when requests are received from an institution, JIHEE shall implement evaluation of the institution without delay, unless justifiable grounds for delay apply. The time cycle for the evaluation of institutions is seven years or less.

11. Evaluation follow-up

An institution that has been judged as “suitable for accreditation” and that has received

“recommendations for improvement” is required to prepare an Improvement Report to be made available to the general public. Moreover, the institution should post the Improvement Report on its website within the period specified by JIHEE as well as submit the report to JIHEE. JIHEE examines the Improvement Report submitted, and notifies the evaluated institution of the results.

In addition, upon request from the institutions for comment or consultation as a follow-up for evaluation JIHEE will accommodate such requests after consideration.

12. Cancellation of Judgment Concerning “Suitability for Accreditation”

With regard to institutions judged as “suitable for accreditation,” if it is revealed that the institution has intentionally acted in violation of social norms and ethics by making false reports or covering up the facts after evaluation is completed, the judgement may be annulled following the deliberation of the Committee for Evaluation and decision of the Board of Directors.

13. Improvement of Evaluation System

JIHEE makes improvements to the evaluation system at all times. In order to improve the evaluation system, JIHEE refers to the opinion of relevant persons belonging to the evaluated institution, and Evaluators who participated in evaluation activities, or other related parties, and the results of research and investigation activities on higher education. At the same time, JIHEE endeavors to improve the Evaluation Standards as necessary according to the self-evaluation by JIHEE and to build an appropriate evaluation system to evaluate institutions engaged in various social activities.

In the event of any modification to Evaluation Standards or evaluation method, we will make opinion inquiries or seek public comment from related parties of member institutions or high schools prior to that modification, to ensure the fairness and transparency of the process.