

TWAEA and JUAA International Joint Accreditation Akita International University Self-Assessment Report

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I. Abstract

Akita International University (AIU) was established in April 2004 as Japan's first Public University Corporation. With an educational philosophy of "International Liberal Arts," AIU's mission is to educate people to be capable of leading the global community. To pursue this mission - and there is strong evidence that its goal is being achieved in a solid manner - AIU implements a truly innovative education system that would have been unthinkable in a conventional Japanese university, including offering all the classes in the English language and requiring all students to live in the university dormitory during their freshman year to experience living side by side with overseas students and to study abroad for one year as part of their undergraduate study.

In 2008, AIU's academic and research structure went through a significant buildup, including the addition of Teacher's License Program and the opening of a professional graduate school - the first in Japan at the time - in the global communications field. AIU has also been continuously expanding and improving its learning environment in recent years, including the completion of new student apartments (Global Village) in 2007, a new library and lecture buildings in 2008, the Suda Hall (Multi-Purpose Hall) in 2010 and additional student apartments (Sakura Village) in 2013.

In April 2014, which marked the 10th anniversary of AIU's inauguration, AIU released the "Akita International University's Long-Term Vision: Changing the Higher Education Landscape in Japan." This Vision identifies the goals and directions that AIU will pursue over the next ten years, seamlessly linking its ongoing efforts and commitments into a path of stronger growth and enhancement toward the future. The Vision forms the foundation for various activities that AIU is undertaking to deliver a superior international liberal arts education. It cultivates in the students a wide scope of intellectual experience and fosters power for making decisions and taking action, the kind of quality that will help the progress of the local and global community.

In September 2014, AIU was selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as one of the 24 "Global Traction" type universities of its Top Global University Project, a ministerial support program to help develop truly globalized educational institutions in Japan. Within the framework of this program, AIU is currently pursuing four educational environment improvement projects as part of its effort to evolve into a "Japan's World-Class Liberal Arts University." Akita International University, while solidly retaining its Japanese identity, aims at providing a world-class, internationally-competent liberal arts education to communicate the presence of Japan to the world and to educate people to be capable of acting as leaders in the global community.

Akita International University has already acquired a number of high-profile national certifications including the Certified Evaluations and Accreditations for Institutions and for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools issued by the Japan University Accreditation Association as well as the corporate accreditation under the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law. To apply for the proposed International Joint Accreditation this time, we hereby provide a Self-Assessment Report completed by the University and the Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees. The two Committees conducted self-inspection and evaluation based on a draft report created jointly by various academic program

teams and Administration Office sections within AIU. The Self-Evaluation Report has been fully examined and approved by the University Management Committee, which has the final authority and responsibility for AIU's management decisions and also acts as the Management Deliberation Committee.

II. History of Akita International University

2003 November	Governmental permit issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for the establishment of Akita International University (AIU).
2004 April	Governmental approval given (from the MEXT and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) for AIU to be inaugurated as a Public University Corporation. Akita International University inaugurated.
2005 February	Center for Regional Sustainability Initiatives (CRESI) opened.
2005 July	Satellite Center opened in the center of Akita City.
2006 April	“Chinese Studies” in the Global Studies Program was extended and upgraded to “East Asian Studies.” Undergraduate admission capacity expanded from 100 to 130 students.
2007 June	Global Village (student apartments) completed.
2008 March	The Library Building completed.
2008 April	Teacher’s License Program opened. “Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center” (LDIC) inaugurated. Undergraduate admission capacity expanded from 130 to 150 students.
2008 September	Professional graduate school called “Graduate School of Global Communication and Language” opened with an admission capacity of 30 students.
2008 December	Lecture Building D completed.
2010 March	Multi-Purpose Hall completed.
2011 April	Undergraduate admission capacity expanded from 150 to 175 students.
2012 January	Center for East Asia Research (CEAR) opened.
2013 March	Sakura Village (student apartments) completed.
2013 September	Active Learning Support Center (ALSC) opened. Center for Promotion of International Liberal Arts Education (CPILAE) opened.

2015 April	Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration (IASRC) opened.
2016 September	Institute for Promotion of International Liberal Arts Education inaugurated.
2017 March	Satellite Center was integrated into LDIC.

Note: The names of the organizations and facilities are those that were originally given at the time of their inauguration/construction.

III. Self-Assessment

Chapter 1 [Standard 1: Mission, Goals & Strategy]

1. Current Situation

1-1 Defines Its Mission and Goals

Article 1 of the Articles of Incorporation of Public University Corporation Akita International University (hereinafter referred to as “the Articles of Incorporation”) defines the goals of the Public University Corporation Akita International University (hereinafter referred to as “AIU”). (Material 1-1)

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

In line with the above-defined goals and based on Article 3-1 of the Akita International University Institutional Policies and Regulations (hereinafter referred to as “the University Regulations”), AIU establishes the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and, based on Article 3-2 of the University Regulations, establishes Global Business (GB) and Global Studies (GS) Programs within the Faculty of International Liberal Arts. Article 3-3 of the University Regulations defines the goals of these Programs. (Material 1-2)

The above-defined goals are in essence consistent with the Mission Statement of the Faculty of International Liberal Arts of AIU. (Material 1-3)

(2) Professional Graduate School

Akita International University establishes its graduate school based on Article 3-2-1 of the University Regulations. Article 2 of the Akita International University Professional Graduate School Institutional Policies and Regulations (hereinafter referred to as “the Graduate School Regulations”) defines the goals of the graduate school. (Material 1-4)

The above-defined goals are in essence consistent with the AIU Graduate School Mission Statement. (Material 1-5)

Akita International University establishes its Graduate School of Global Communication and Language as a professional graduate program based on Article 4-1 and Article 5-1 of the Graduate School Regulations. Article 4-2 of the Graduate School Regulations defines the goals of the program. (Material 1-6)

The professional graduate program has three subsections, English Language Teaching Practices (ELT), Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT) and Global Communication Practices (GCP), under the Graduate Program in Global Communication and Language Practices. In line with the AIU Graduate School Mission Statement, these subsections have a mission of training highly advanced professionals who can play significant roles in the global community using multiple languages by cultivating practical and advanced knowledge and skills required in the respective vocational categories.

Considering the above, it is deemed that AIU has an appropriately defined set of missions and goals for itself and has appropriately defined goals for its faculty and graduate school in accordance with its missions and goals.

1-2 Publicity

As described in Standard 1-1, AIU has its goals defined and published in the form of the Articles of Incorporation. It also has the goals of the Global Business (GB) and Global Studies (GS) Programs of its Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the same of its graduate school characterized and published, in the forms of the University Regulations and the Graduate School Regulations, respectively.

Furthermore, AIU clarifies the missions of its Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the professional graduate school in the forms of the Faculty of International Liberal Arts Mission Statement and the Professional Graduate School Mission Statement, respectively.

The above-mentioned missions and goals are frequently quoted in various publications such as AIU's official website, the Undergraduate and the Graduate School Brochures and the Undergraduate Application Information, in order to have the missions widely known to the general public. (Material 1-7, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11)

The missions and goals are also intensively disseminated to the faculty and staff members and students by being printed in the University and the Graduate School Student Handbooks and posted on the intranet called the AIU Total Management System (ATOMS). (Material 1-12, 1-13, 1-14)

Considering the above, AIU is deemed to have its missions and goals as well as the goals of its faculty and graduate school, by having them published in the form of University Regulations and by other appropriate means, fully known and understood by its faculty and staff members and students and widely known to the general public.

1-3 Mid- and Long-Term Plans

The following mid- and long-term plans and other appropriate measures are in place for AIU to pursue its goals and missions as well as the goals for its faculty and graduate school toward the future.

(1) Mid-Term Targets in Accordance with the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law

In accordance with the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, Akita Prefecture, which is the founding body of AIU, has defined a set of management and administrative targets that AIU should pursue and achieve over the six-year period from April 2016 through to March 2022, namely the "Public University Corporation Akita International University Mid-Term Targets" (hereinafter referred to as "the Mid-Term Targets").

As the world is in stronger need for the kind of human resources that AIU is committed to produce, that is to say, people with power for solving problems and taking action, and considering the growing anticipation for AIU to play a greater role in helping to solve problems in the community in the region, the Mid-Term Targets require AIU to pursue the following two fundamental goals during the said six-year period to continuously evolve and develop itself in a path for further improvement while communicating its presence and value to the world. (Material 1-15)

These fundamental targets are in line with AIU's missions and goals described in Standard 1-1 and are consistent with the following provisions included in the Article of Incorporation

and in the University and the Graduate School Regulations. (Material 1-16, 1-17, 1-18)

In addition to the above-described fundamental goals, the Mid-Term Targets present more specific goals to be pursued by AIU, that are mainly classified into the academic and research category, the regional contribution category and the management and administration category. Goals in the academic and research category include further improving the quality of its education content and soliciting diverse students and providing student assistance and research buildup measures. Those in the regional contribution category include providing assistance to local schools, promoting globalization in the region and contributing to the regional community in various other forms. Goals in the management and administration category include streamlining the organizational management, improving the administrative and financial performance, promoting greater commitment to the self-inspection and evaluation scheme and more openness in information management.

(2) Mid-Term Plan in Accordance with the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law

Based on the Mid-Term Targets presented by its founding body, Akita Prefecture, and in accordance with the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, AIU has a “Public University Corporation Akita International University Mid-Term Plan” in place to pursue and achieve the said Mid-Term Targets over the six-year period from April 2016 through to March 2022 (hereinafter referred to as “the Mid-Term Plan”). Akita International University also establishes and implements an annual management and administrative plan each academic year (hereinafter referred to as “the Annual Plan”) within the framework of the said Mid-Term Plan. (Material 1-19, 1-20)

(3) Akita International University Long-Term Vision

In April 2014, which marks the 10th anniversary of AIU’s inauguration, AIU released the “Akita International University’s Long-Term Vision” (hereinafter referred to as “the Long-Term Vision”), which identifies the goals and directions that AIU pursues over the next ten years, seamlessly linking its ongoing efforts and commitments into further development toward the future. Within the framework of the Long-Term Vision, AIU, while firmly upholding its basic principle, takes on new challenges to “Change the Higher Education Landscape in Japan,” including assurance of a world-class education quality, adoption of innovative academic content and especially improvement of the quality of English language education in general through a high school-to-university coordination system. As a world-level educational institution providing the finest international liberal arts education in Japan, AIU aims to produce leader candidates for the global community. (Material 1-21)

(4) Top Global University Project Concept Paper

The concept paper that AIU submitted in connection with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Top Global University Project, of which AIU has been chosen as a beneficiary in 2014, is fully consistent with the above-described Long-Term Vision.

The concept paper states that AIU will, by pursuing four specific educational environment improvement objectives including promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education, enrichment of world-standard curriculums, measures to innovate Japan’s English language

education and introduction of global benchmarking, evolve into a “Japan’s World-Class Liberal Arts University” to produce human resources with a capacity of playing significant roles in the world while confidently retaining their Japanese identity. (Material 1-22)

The Mid-Term Targets and Plan, the Long-Term Vision and the MEXT Top Global University Project concept paper in (1) through (4) above are in essence all consistent with the missions and goals of AIU as well as the goals of its faculty and graduate school described in Standard 1-1. The initiatives described in these targets, plans and visions will be pursued and achieved in line with AIU’s missions and goals accordingly.

The targets and plans have been intensively evaluated and verified in various forms including the self-inspection and evaluation scheme based on the School Education Law, the self-inspection/evaluation and corporate assessment schemes based on the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, the various assessment programs conducted by AIU’s External Evaluation Committee including the external evaluation and the interim assessment of the MEXT Top Global University Project, and the Certified Evaluations and Accreditations for Institutions and for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools awarded by the Japan University Accreditation Association. (Material 1-23, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29)

1-4 Strategy for Internationalization

The Mid-Term Targets and Plan, the Long-Term Vision and the MEXT Top Global University Project concept paper that AIU has created and published as described in Standard 1-3, in line with the missions and goals described in Standard 1-1, describe various commitments and undertakings that AIU is pursuing within the framework of its ongoing globalization strategy.

In addition to the university-wide commitments to globalization such as hiring all its faculty members through international open recruitment and implementing internship programs both in Japan and abroad to produce leader candidates for the global community, AIU is pursuing the following four educational environment improvement objectives within the framework of the Top Global University Project with the aim of producing human resources who can play significant roles on a global scale: (Material 1-30)

- (1) Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education
- (2) Enrichment of world-standard curriculums
- (3) Measures to innovate Japan’s English language education
- (4) Introduction of global benchmarking

Moreover, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts is pursuing the following globalization initiatives: (Material 1-31, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 1-35)

- (1) Implementation of course Regulations based on international standards since establishment of university
- (2) Providing the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program
- (3) Teaching all classes in the English language
- (4) Quantitative assessment of learning achievements based on external examinations (e.g. TOEFL® TEST and IELTS) and Grade Point Average (GPA) grading systems

- (5) Mandatory on-campus dormitory life for 1st-year students
- (6) Requiring all undergraduate students to study abroad for one year
- (7) International partnerships with 191 overseas universities from 49 countries and regions as of May 2018
- (8) Actively soliciting students with foreign nationalities by providing a special entrants selection program for foreign degree-seeking students
- (9) Providing the International Project-Based Learning (PBL) courses
- (10) Providing the Japan Studies Program developed jointly by the AIU faculty members and teachers from overseas universities (Partner's Program).

As the result of the above-described commitments and initiatives, the Faculty has 187 students studying abroad through exchange programs and a total of 177 foreign students studying in Akita (22 as full-time degree-seeking students and 155 on exchange basis) as of May 2018. Of the 60 full-time faculty members, 33 (55%) are foreigners. 51 (85%) of the full-time faculty members have acquired an academic degree at an overseas university.

On the other hand, the professional graduate school is pursuing the following globalization initiatives:

- (1) Implementing a twice-a-year admission system (April and September enrollment options) to allow for a smooth enrollment of applicants from various countries and graduates from foreign universities to the AIU Professional Graduate School.
- (2) Adopting a "Pre-Graduate Student Scheme" to allow for a smooth transition for students who wish to start courses from April after graduating from other Japanese universities and also to avoid imposing excessive amount of learning load on students who enroll in September.
- (3) Teaching all the courses and programs (both lecture-based and practical), except for specialized courses provided as part of the JLT, in the English language in order for students to develop advanced professional language skills for future career opportunities.

As the result of the above-described commitments and initiatives, the graduate school has 14 (35%) students of foreign nationality out of a total 39, five (41%) foreign teachers out of 12 full-time teaching members, and 10 (83%) of the full-time faculty members have acquired an academic degree at an overseas university as of May 2018. (Material 1-36, 1-37, 1-38)

2. Examples of Good Practice

As part of AIU's commitment to its international liberal arts education, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the professional graduate school are each actively and continuously working on their respective educational missions; the Faculty of International Liberal Arts toward producing leader candidates for the global community, and the graduate school toward training highly competent professionals who have both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills required for advanced communication in Japanese and English languages to play significant roles in the global community.

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

The Faculty of International Liberal Arts, in their effort to solicit diverse people from throughout Japan and worldwide, implementing small-group, intensive academic teaching, fostering a multi-cultural and synergistic campus environment and providing exchange programs with overseas educational institutions, upholds the following globalization-oriented educational policies designed to produce robust and broad-minded individuals who can play significant roles in the global community: (Material 1-39, 1-40)

- i Small-group and intensive teaching, given all in the English language
- ii Requiring all the students to study abroad for one year
- iii Multi-cultural and synergistic campus environment
- iv Offering a wide variety of study and career options where individual students can maximize their potential
- v Entrants selection system designed to solicit students with diverse qualities and backgrounds

While AIU's unique globalization efforts in the administrative field including the use of an internationally recognized academic course coding system, introduction of the GPA (Grade Point Average) scheme and the admission system with a September enrollment option are highly significant, the most notable of AIU's globalization initiatives may be its ongoing development of world-standard curriculum (Dual Assembly Line Curriculum) through providing academic courses and programs that are attractive to foreign students, building up the Japan Studies courses to help Japanese students learn the value of their ethnic identity and opening PBL courses where students participate in international joint problem-solving projects. Through these efforts, AIU successfully maintains a great level of interest among both students and potential employers, evidenced by the steady applicant-to-place ratio of around 10 since inauguration and the achievement of 100% employment rate for those seeking jobs almost every year. (Material 1-41, 1-42) Akita International University is also highly acclaimed in public appraisals and journalism, the former evidenced by the high ratings obtained in the legally required corporate evaluations and the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Institutions (Material 1-43, 1-44), the latter by the favorable placement in the Times Higher Education Japan University Ranking 2018. (Material 1-45)

Around the time when AIU was first inaugurated in 2004, there was almost no other university or academic department that held the teaching of international liberal arts as its educational philosophy. In recent years, however, there is an increasing number of universities and their departments in Japan, many of them prestigious national universities, which adopt similar educational policies and commitments to those of AIU. (Material 1-46)

It would be safe to say that the previously described five educational policies of the AIU Faculty of International Liberal Arts and its other related commitments and initiatives have been and still are an important pioneer of the major trend that is now strongly emerging in Japanese higher education, and that they continue to produce significant, meaningful results. The same applies to the underlying missions and goals of the Faculty.

(2) Professional Graduate School

The AIU Professional Graduate School has a professional graduate program called the Graduate School of Global Communication and Language. The Program, while giving an

appropriate degree of importance on theoretical and academic accumulations, places the highest priority on practical knowledge and skills. To avoid excessive one-sided lecturing, efforts are being made to provide bidirectional teaching wherever possible, including discussions and other activities to stimulate critical thinking of the students. The Graduate School has three teaching practices (ELT, JLT and GCP), each of which offers internship and teaching training opportunities where students can practice the theoretical learning they have obtained in the classroom in real-life situations to further build their knowledge and skills.

Such fusion of theory and practice is being pursued through a curriculum developed based on the following five principles. The unique education system is designed to solicit students with diverse qualities and backgrounds. (Material 1-47)

- i Advanced professional and academic teaching given in English language
- ii Education based on the fusion of theory of practice
- iii Common courses offered in the field of global communication practice
- iv Recurrent education for adult learners
- v Use of GPA as a set of internationally recognized criteria for measuring academic achievement.

Since inauguration, the number of new entrants to the professional graduate school used to remain at approximately 20 each year, which was below the school's admission quota of 30. However, the school had 34 new placements in academic year 2018, filling its admission capacity for the first time. (Material 1-48) After completing their graduate program, the students are pursuing diverse career and study paths both in Japan and all over the world. (Material 1-49, 1-50)

In view of these facts and achievements, it can be concluded that the unique academic commitments and initiatives of the AIU Professional Graduate School, which began to offer its professional graduate programs for global communication, the first in Japan, have been and still are an important pioneer in Japanese higher education as are with those of the AIU Faculty of International Liberal Arts, and continue to produce significant and meaningful results. The same applies to the underlying missions and goals of the school.

3. Areas for Improvement

Currently, AIU's official plans and targets are in their intermediate phase, with the current 3rd Mid-Term Targets and Plan in their third year of the six-year period, the 10-year Long-Term Vision in its fifth year and the 10-year plans of MEXT Top Global University Project, of which AIU is a beneficiary, also in its fifth year. Akita International University has received a number of multifaceted expert evaluations throughout the years since its inauguration, including corporate evaluations of its achievement on 1st and 2nd Mid-Term Plans and Annual Plans, the external evaluation and certification evaluation by certified evaluation and accreditation organizations. Recommendations and suggestions received following these evaluations have been actively considered in AIU's activities for improvement.

Although AIU is a young university with only 15 years passed since its inauguration, it is, as described in Section 2, a very unique and energetic educational institution pursuing missions and goals of great value and significance.

However, for AIU to continue evolving amid the drastically changing social and economic

climate surrounding Japanese higher education, including the decline in population under 18 years old, the government-proposed free-of-charge higher education system and re-learning and other national lifelong learning initiatives, it is very important for AIU to retain its superior value described in Section 2 and at the same time advance and differentiate its educational content.

In academic year 2019 and thereafter, when the above-described plans and initiatives enter into a later stage, a phased and exhaustive review will be required for designing and implementing AIU's next steps toward the future in form of subsequent Mid- and Long-Term plans and visions.

4. Action Plan

The legally required annual self-inspection and evaluation should not end with mere short-term improvement suggestions. Akita International University will take the opportunity to review and act on longer-term improvements through examination and discussion by and between the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees, the University Management Committee and the Academic Affairs Executive Committee.

The next corporate evaluation (pre-end evaluation) scheduled in 2020 as required by the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law will also be another opportunity for further actions for improvement. A comprehensive assessment of AIU's entire operation will be conducted and cover the achievement status of the individual goals prescribed in the Mid-Term Plan, the result of which will be utilized to review and improve the next Mid-Term Targets and Plan and other operational and management aspects of AIU.

Overall, efforts for intensive and multifaceted self-inspection and evaluation relative to the ongoing and future plans will be continued to validate the appropriateness of AIU's missions and goals as well as its value to the society.

Chapter 2 [Standard 2: Internal Quality Assurance]

1. Current Situation

2-1 Policy for Internal Quality Assurance and Procedures

The Mid-Term Targets for AIU proposes the internal quality assurance approach. (Material 2-1)

In line with the Mid-Term Targets, AIU's Mid-Term Plan defines the internal quality assurance policies and procedures. (Material 2-2)

The university-wide internal quality assurance policies and procedures required herein are clearly defined and established by the Mid-Term Targets and Plan.

2-2 Organization of the Quality Assurance

(1) University Management Committee, Management Deliberation Committee, Academic Affairs Executive Committee and Graduate School Management Committee

Chapter 3 of AIU's Articles of Incorporation defines various supervisory and examination bodies for AIU, including the scope of subjects to be examined by each of the said body. (Material 2-3)

To provide a permanent and continuous validation and accountability process to assure that AIU will keep improving the quality of its teaching and that its education and research quality will be at an appropriately high level at all times (internal quality assurance process), AIU's Academic Affairs Executive Committee examines important matters concerning its education and research contents and the Management Deliberation Committee examines the same concerning the management and administrative aspects of AIU, while the University Management Committee has the final and all-embracing responsibility and authority on important matters concerning AIU as a whole.

In addition, the Graduate School Management Committee, established under the Rules and Regulations of Akita International University Graduate School Management Committee examines important matters concerning the education and research content of the AIU Professional Graduate School. (Material 2-4)

(2) University and Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees and External Evaluation Committee

According to the University and the Graduate School Regulations, the University Self-Evaluation Committee and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committee each undertake the self-inspection and evaluation part of internal quality assurance duties. In addition, according to Article 2-2 of the University Regulations, AIU shall undergo an external evaluation. (Material 2-5, 2-6)

The University Management Committee, the Management Deliberation Committee, the

Academic Affairs Executive Committee, the Graduate School Management Committee, the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees, the External Evaluation Committee and the Administration Office all operate in coordination with each other and with clearly defined supervisory and examination responsibilities for each to jointly provide internal quality assurance through a cycle of education planning and designing, implementation, validation and review for improvement. The organization chart of AIU illustrates the relationship between the above-mentioned bodies. (Material 2-7)

As clearly shown in the chart and as defined by the Articles of Incorporation, the University Management Committee, which examines important matters concerning AIU as a whole, is the supreme decision-making body of AIU.

However, considering, as defined by Section 1, Article 16; Section 4, Article 17; and Section 1, Article 21 of AIU's Articles of Incorporation, that the primary subject of AIU's internal quality assurance is teaching and education and the core purpose of such quality assurance is to "improve the quality of education for the greater benefits for learners," the Academic Affairs Executive Committee (and the Graduate School Management Committee for important matters concerning the graduate school) is the body primarily and directly responsible for internal quality assurance of AIU as a whole.

Considering that the University Management Committee is chaired by AIU's Chair of the Board, that the Academic Affairs Executive Committee, the Graduate School Management Committee, and the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees are all chaired by AIU's President, and, as defined by Section 2, Article 10 of the Articles of Incorporation, that the Chair of the Board also acts as the President, and that all the above-mentioned committees and supervisory bodies act in harmony and consistency with a shared vision and direction under the common leadership of the Chair of the Board/President.

The University Management Committee is membered by the Chair of the Board, the Board members and up to three other persons appointed by the Chair of the Board, and the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees are membered by the same persons as the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and as the Graduate School Management Committee, respectively. And all the examination bodies and committees are chaired or headed by the Chair of the Board/President. These facts additionally attest that all the committees and examination bodies act in harmony and consistency with a shared vision and direction.

2-3 Efficiency of the System

As described in Standard 2-2, AIU organizes and implements a system of internal quality assurance according to the internal quality assurance policies and procedures described in Standard 2-1.

(1) Examination and Supervision by the University Management Committee, the Management Deliberation Committee, the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and the Professional Graduate School Management Committee

The details of examination and supervision provided by the University Management Committee, which is the supreme decision-making body of AIU, and the same by the

Academic Affairs Executive Committee, which is directly responsible for AIU's internal quality assurance (or the Graduate School Management Committee for important matters concerning the graduate school), are as recorded in the details of the University Management Committee and Academic Affairs Executive Committee. (Material 2-8, 2-9)

Followings are specific examples of topics that will be examined or verified in the Academic Affairs Executive Committee;

- i Annual review for current courses of each semester, new courses, and examine offered courses based on the needs from international students, and their performance
- ii Support for students who need Special Advising Care (SAC)
- iii Offering intensive courses by partner universities, PBL courses
- iv Other improvements based on the result of student (includes exchange students) surveys.
- v Certification of credit transfer from partner universities, screening for new partner universities, and approval of students who study abroad or go on exchange.

(2) Examination and Supervision by the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees and the External Evaluation Committee

The details of examination and supervision provided by the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees are as recorded in the Conference Summary. The External Evaluation Committee is evaluating effectively and efficiently by specializing MEXT Top Global University Project which covers the most of projects in AIU. (Material 2-10, 2-11, 2-12)

(3) Follow-up on the Certified Evaluations and Accreditations for Institutions and for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools by a Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organization

Outstanding issues and tasks presented after the Certified Evaluations and Accreditations for Institutions and for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools on AIU in the past have been thoroughly examined by the University and the Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees that are described in the above (2) and also by the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and the Graduate School Management Committee described in (1), to be put into practice as appropriate. (Material 2-13, 2-14)

(4) Follow-up on the Corporate Evaluations by the Akita Prefecture Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee

Under the provisions of the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, the Akita Prefecture Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee periodically conducts a corporate evaluation on AIU's performance relative to its Mid-Term and Annual Plans, specifically on the achievement/implementation status of the items presented in the Mid-Term and other applicable plans (item-specific evaluation) as well as on the general performance of AIU as a corporation from the operational, financial and management points of view based on the item-specific evaluation.

While AIU's general performance as a corporation has continuously received favorable

appraisal as “functioning well according to plan,” the performance evaluation for the academic year 2016 Annual Plan included a comment on the “Management of the Institution” that “the Financial Statements do not include adequate notes for explanation.” In response to this comment, the General Affairs of the Administration Office has made sure, by learning from comparative practices of other universities and coordinating with AIU’s auditors, that necessary and appropriate notes are included in AIU’s Financial Statements. Thanks to these efforts, the performance evaluation received for the academic year 2017 Annual Plan showed an improvement that “the system is functioning well according to plan.” (Material 2-15)

(5) Others (Analysis by the Administration Office IR Specialist and Student Course Evaluation Survey)

In addition to the examination and supervisory bodies described in the above (1) to (4), AIU has an IR Specialist directly reporting to AIU’s Executive Officer. (Material 2-16)

The IR Specialist collects and analyzes necessary data to support AIU’s strategic planning activities and makes necessary recommendations. The evaluator also measures effectiveness of the systems, activities and commitments that AIU adopts or undertakes. (Material 2-17)

An example of such supporting data is the “Summary of Pre-Admission and Post-Admission Performance Trends and Recommendations for Reforming the Entrants Selection System,” which was used quite effectively in re-designing the entrant selection program for academic year 2020. (Material 2-18)

In addition, student course evaluation survey and satisfaction survey are conducted on academic programs and other aspects of university life to provide insights into how students feel and what they wish for. The course evaluation survey results are fed back to directors as well as faculty members and other relevant parties to improve the quality of teaching and are also used for teacher performance assessment purposes. The satisfaction survey results are also reported to the Administration Office as well as to the University Management Committee and other supervisory and examination bodies to raise the quality of university management. (Material 2-19, 2-20)

As described in the above (1) to (5), it can be concluded that the internal quality system of AIU is functioning in an effective manner.

2-4 Result Accountability

Akita International University includes an “Information Disclosure (Information on Education, Financial Statements and Governance)” page on its official website, where the details of its educational and research activities and its general status are revealed under the following headings, which serves as evidence that AIU appropriately takes social accountability for its performance and activities. (Material 2-21)

- Long-Term Vision
- Mid-Term Targets
- Mid-Term Plan
- Annual Plan
- Information concerning educational and research activities (as per Article 172-2 of the School Education Law Enforcement Regulations)
- Information concerning evaluation of AIU (certification evaluations, self-inspection)

- and evaluation, external evaluation, corporate evaluation)
- Accounting and financial statements

2-5 Mechanism of Review

Based on the university-wide internal quality assurance policies and procedures described in Standard 2-1 and supported by the university-wide organizational system described in Standard 2-2, AIU is actively and continuously committed to internal quality assurance. Of the university-wide organizational system, the Academic Affairs Executive Committee (and the Graduate School Management Committee) is the authority directly responsible for AIU's internal quality assurance.

Inspection and evaluation of the appropriateness of internal quality assurance provided by this authority is conducted, as described in the sample cases that have been completed are listed below, by the University Management Committee (Management Deliberation Committee), which is the supreme decision-making body of AIU.

- Examination during the creation of Mission Statement/Policies (diploma policy, curriculum policy, admission policy)
- Examination of the implementation status of the Mid-Term Plan (curriculum development, campus improvement etc.)
- Examination of Self-Evaluation Report/Improvement Report submitted in connection with certification and corporate evaluations
- Examination of follow-up activities after various external evaluations including certification evaluation, corporate evaluation and the MEXT Top Global University Project intermediate evaluation
- Examination of the appointment of an Admission Officer and other changes in the entrant selection system

As described above, AIU has its Academic Affairs Executive Committee (including the Graduate School Management Committee) to act as the authority directly responsible for its internal quality assurance to appropriately run the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and other schemes to improve the quality of teaching for the greater benefit for learners. The appropriateness and functional integrity of this authority is examined and validated by the University Management Committee (Management Deliberation Committee).

2. Examples of Good Practice

While the general workings of AIU's internal quality assurance system are as described above, it has the following specific features, which mostly focus on obtaining external inputs and especially appointing non-Japanese members to the committees, to guarantee the maximum effectiveness of the system.

- (1) Appointment of external members as part-time Board members and to the University Management Committee
- (2) Establishment of the External Evaluation Committee
- (3) Forming of an advisory body to the President (President's Advisory Board)

- (4) Evaluation by the Akita Prefecture Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee, an evaluation body appointed by an external organization (Akita Prefecture)
- (5) Certification evaluation by a certified evaluation and accreditation organization appointed by an external organization (the Japan University Accreditation Association)

(1) Appointment of External Members as Part-Time Board Members and to the University Management Committee

Akita International University, as specified in Section 1, Article 8 of its Articles of Incorporation, appoints up to six Board members. As of May 2018, it has six Board members (two full-time and four part-time members). They also serve, as specified by Section 2, Article 13 of the Articles of Incorporation, as members of the University Management Committee (Management Deliberation Committee). (Material 2-22) The six Board members include one full-time and one part-time non-Japanese members. (Material 2-23)

(2) Establishment of the External Evaluation Committee

Akita International University, according to Article 2-2 of the University Regulations, establishes an External Evaluation Committee to provide external evaluation focusing specifically on the MEXT Top Global University Project. (Material 2-24, 2-25) The five External Evaluation Committee members include one non-Japanese member. (Material 2-26)

(3) Formation of an Advisory Body to the President (President's Advisory Board)

Akita International University, according to Article 22 of the University Regulations, establishes the President's Advisory Board to provide, upon request by the President, recommendations and suggestions on important matters concerning university management. (Material 2-27) The eight Advisory Board members include two non-Japanese members. (Material 2-28)

(4) Evaluation by the Akita Prefecture Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee

Based on Article 11 of the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law and Section 1, Article 3 of the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law Enforcement Regulations, Akita Prefecture establishes the Akita Prefecture Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee.

Currently, the governor of Akita Prefecture appoints five members to the Committee according to Article 4 of the Enforcement Regulations. (Material 2-29, 2-30, 2-31)

(5) Certification Evaluation by a Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Organization

To fulfill the requirement for AIU to receive evaluation by a certified evaluation and accreditation organization according to the provisions of Sections 2 and 3, Article 109 of the School Education Law, AIU receives an evaluation by the University Evaluation Committee (including the University Evaluation and the University Finance Evaluation Sectional Groups,

of which members are appointed by and within the certified evaluation and accreditation organization. (Material 2-32)

3. Areas for Improvement

Internal quality assurance of a university is defined as a “permanent and continuous validation and accountability process to assure that the university will keep improving the quality of its teaching by running the PDCA cycle and other appropriate schemes and that its education and research quality will be at an appropriately high level.” Such processes must be supported by various parties within the university including individual teachers, Administration Office staff members, the faculty members, executive officers, school evaluation committees and other relevant members. Furthermore, the “Check” phase of the PDCA cycle, which in this case refers to validation of the effectiveness of teaching content provided by the university, also requires substantial involvement of external evaluation bodies such as certified evaluation and accreditation organizations and Akita Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committees, where maintaining close coordination with these evaluation bodies as well as with various other parties both in and outside the university is essential.

Overall, evaluations that the university must receive, including self-inspection and evaluation, corporate evaluation, certification evaluation and external evaluation, are numerous and wide-ranging, each of which involves different steps and documentation, and therefore requires separate attention.

While the value and significance of multiple evaluations on the entire university operation is paramount, it is also true that the need to coordinate with various parties and the wide variety and high frequency of evaluation schemes are making the weight of evaluation-related duties on AIU greater than ever.

4. Action Plan

A small-scale university like AIU must attend to its evaluation-related duties with moderately sized faculty and staff members, where the duties must be streamlined for best efficiency.

However, such streamlining effort may not be enough to clear the increasingly advanced and complex evaluation criteria imposed on educational institutions, which in recent years include internal quality assurance.

An important area of improvement needed in relation with evaluation programs may be to assist and train the faculty and staff members to acquire practical and administrative knowledge and skills, not only to attend to self-inspection and evaluation duties but also to have a better understanding of the internal quality assurance mechanism as well as of general university operations.

Such human resource development effort and the resulting accumulation of evaluation-related experience and expertise will be key to the greater advancement of AIU.

Chapter 3 [Standard 3: Teaching & Learning]

1. Current Situation

3-1 Policies to the Objectives

Akita International University, as described in Chapter 1, clearly defines its missions and goals (in form of Mission Statements). To pursue these missions and goals, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the Professional Graduate School each establish and implement their diploma, curriculum and admission policies.

These missions, goals and policies are frequently quoted in various publications such as the AIU website and the Undergraduate and the Graduate School Brochures so that they are widely known to the general public. (Material 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4)

The policies are also intensively disseminated to the faculty members and students by being printed in the University and the Graduate School Student Handbooks and posted on the ATOMS. (Material 3-5, 3-6, 3-7)

To communicate their admission policies to potential applicants, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts describes in the Undergraduate Application Information what qualities and qualifications are required to be admitted into the Faculty, and the Graduate School prints its full admission policy in the Graduate Application Information. The admission policies are also explained to applicants at admission briefings. (Material 3-8, 3-9)

As these policies have all been designed for the attainment of, and are therefore fully in line with, AIU missions and goals and, as important matters concerning AIU as a whole, have been examined and approved by the University Management Committee, that the policies are interconnected and mutually coordinated in an appropriate manner. (Material 3-10)

The appropriateness and integrity of these policies are examined and validated through and in connection with AIU evaluation programs including the self-inspection and evaluation, corporate evaluation and external evaluation, which involves coordination by and between individual teachers and their organization and the Administration Office staff members as well as examination by and within the respective evaluation bodies. Similar coordination takes place during the creation of admission brochures. Furthermore, AIU has been conducting learning assessment surveys on students finishing their undergraduate or graduate programs since academic year 2016, of which findings are used as part of the validation data. (Material 3-11)

3-2 Curriculum Design Structure

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

○ Current Provision of Educational Programs

In order for students to pursue the eight educational goals defined in the diploma policy in a phased manner over the period from admission into through to graduation, a systematic sequence of educational courses and programs, starting from the EAP Program and moving

on to BE and other Advanced Education Program, is provided. The academic courses are numbered by a three-digit system from 100s to 400s to classify the difficulty level in an easy-to-understand manner.

In the first year following admission, all students are required to take CCS100 “Orientation,” where they learn AIU’s educational goals and curriculum design purposes as well as the variety of learning styles that they can pursue both in and outside AIU and guidelines to make their own credit acquisition plans to achieve their academic goals. This Orientation Course is designed to motivate and guide the students into a learning path throughout their undergraduate years.

The EAP is, also a requirement in the first year and intended to nurture “the capability to use English and/or other languages to interact with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and work with them in an effective manner.” The students will be assisted to acquire the English language proficiency required to receive and understand academic teaching given in the English language and also to communicate their thinking effectively in spoken and written forms.

All the academic courses in AIU are held in the English language, except for five non-English language courses (Chinese, Korean, Russian, French and Spanish) given under the trilingualism promotion policy.

After completing EAP, students proceed to BE, with courses designed to provide “a broad-ranging knowledge about cultures of the world, the human community and the natural world.” Teaching given in diverse fields including social and natural science and humanities will help students develop the foundation for more advanced academic learning.

The BE includes a specific number of required courses and required elective courses, with separate credit completion requirements for each academic field so that the student’s learning content during this stage will be as wide-ranging and well-balanced as possible. A unique feature of BE is, in line with a belief that “learning of different cultures can only be possible with an in-depth recognition and understanding of one’s own cultural identity,” is that it offers the Japan Studies Program as part of the course study.

After obtaining a wide-range of knowledge from the BE courses, students next move on to the Advanced Education Program, where a variety of advanced academic courses are offered to help students acquire systematic academic knowledge in global business and global studies fields and to develop the intellectual and practical capabilities required to attain, in a phased manner, the educational goals presented by AIU such as “disciplined observation and reasoning, principled inquiry, self-reflection and thoughtful action,” “multi-dimensional thinking approach to the complex issues of our times,” “the ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines and resources,” “capacity for creative, autonomous thought and the ability to make independent, informed decisions” and “a sense of personal and social responsibility that stems from and leads to active civic engagement at local and global levels.”

As a part of the career support training, CCS140 “Career Design” (required course) and CCS200 “Internship” (elective course) are provided with the aim of developing professional skills and robust strength needed for action towards global career opportunities.

Akita International University requires all its students to study abroad for one year in order to complete the undergraduate study. Students are sent to one of the 191 partner universities in 49 countries and regions around the world, including both English-speaking and other language regions. Before starting their study abroad, students are required to pass stringent academic criteria including a TOEFL ITP® TEST score of 550 or greater and a GPA of 2.50 or greater. The credits earned during the study abroad can, upon review and approval by AIU, be used to fill the AIU credit completion requirement towards graduation.

Akita International University also offers the TLP to obtain a Type 1 Teaching Certificate for Upper Secondary School for English. It also offers the JLP for exchange students from around the world. (Material 3-12)

- Course Coding

Akita International University uses an internationally recognized course coding system, where each course carries a string of three alphabetical letters denoting the academic field plus three numerals denoting the level of difficulty. The coding system allows the students to select appropriate courses in a phased manner according to his or her academic proficiency. The system is helpful for students to find the most appropriate course or sequence of courses to fulfill their learning path.

- Course Registration

To assist students in the course registration process at the beginning of each semester, the Faculty delivers syllabus on all the available courses giving a course description, detailing the teaching plan and what academic targets are to be pursued and how the learning achievements are evaluated. The Faculty offers a consultation period (“advising week”) before the course registration date, during which students can consult their academic advisor about recommended courses.

The course registration process is completed in two stages comprising of preliminary and final registration. The first week after the commencement of courses is a possible registration change period, where students are allowed to make changes in their course registration upon approval by his or her academic advisor. Even after the registration change period, students are allowed to discontinue a course up to a specified date so that they have the opportunity to select and follow the most appropriate combination of courses through the semester according to his or her learning needs.

Although each student completes his or her course registration process online, registration will not take effect until his or her advisor’s approval is obtained. This system gives the academic advisors a chance to offer appropriate recommendations and guidance to help each student select the most appropriate set of courses. (Material 3-13)

(1) - i English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program

Since all courses and classes with credits held at AIU are taught in English, students are required to have high-level English skills for their academic success. Students enroll in the EAP program right after entering AIU to improve their English skills through intensive study.

All EAP courses focus on helping students establish their foundation in academic English. Generally, the classroom size is small; 18 students on average. Students are assigned to one of four levels of EAP based on the result of the (1) a language assessment test, (2) a writing test, and (3) for the highest level of the EAP, an interview with EAP faculty members.

Students at EAP levels I to III take three courses of “Speaking/Listening,” “Reading” and “Writing,” each focusing on the named area of English language proficiency. Passing scores are required in all classes and to achieve the target score of the TOEFL® TEST in order to advance to the next level.

Moreover, students take “Computer Basics,” which aims to enhance the ability to manipulate computers necessary for learning at a university, in addition to “TOEFL® TEST Preparation.”

Besides EAP I to III, the Faculty provides an “EAP Bridge Program” for advanced English learners with long-term experience living overseas or having received education in the English language. This is literally a “bridging” program to guide newcomers with already high levels of English proficiency from high school education to university learning. The Bridge Program recipients take BRI150 “Bridging Learning Communities,” ENG100 “English Composition I,” ENG101 “Academic Reading Across Disciplines” and CCS120 “Computer Literacy” and can also opt to take Basic Education (BE) courses if desired. (Material 3-14)

Freshman students receive more than just English language training to assist them smoothly to start university-level learning. They receive detailed guidance and instructions on how to study in classes and take examinations and how to conduct academic research and write papers. (Material 3-15)

(1) - ii Basic Education (BE) Program

Basic Education assists students to acquire the necessary skills and adopt an appropriate learning approach to pursue the eight educational goals of international liberal arts education defined by AIU. (Material 3-16)

For this purpose, BE offers a wide range of courses in academic fields such as “Social Sciences,” “Arts and Humanities,” “Math and Natural Sciences,” “Interdisciplinary Studies,” “World Languages and Linguistics” and “Health and Physical Education.” In addition, assistance is given to each student so that he or she can effectively combine the diverse knowledge obtained through such wide-ranging teaching.

By learning in BE, students develop English communication skills that are necessary for their future study abroad, the Advanced Education Program of their choice as well as for their professional career or continuation of education after graduation.

A unique feature of BE is, in line with a belief that “learning of different cultures can only be possible with an in-depth recognition and understanding of one’s own cultural identity,” that it offers more than twenty Japan Studies courses as a part of the program. (Material 3-17, 3-18)

(1) - iii Global Business (GB) Program

The GB Program is not intended for the learning of economics or business studies “per se.” It is designed to help students to develop robust capability to apply their learned knowledge to practical, real-world uses. As it would be difficult to attain such a goal just by taking economics courses or business study courses alone, the GB Program offers courses in both fields to achieve the most balanced learning.

Economics and business studies are divided into many diverse fields and categories. To avoid a situation where each of these studies is pursued in an isolated and disconnected manner, students are advised to select a systematically linked combination of courses - and the courses are strategically organized to assist such selection - to obtain in-depth understanding of a given subject or topic. An example of such course organization is that of data analysis and quantitative study courses and also economics foundation courses

(microeconomics and macroeconomics, mathematics and statistics) that are provided as compulsory subjects.

Students of the GB Program are required to take ECN401 “Global Business Capstone Seminar” after their study abroad. This seminar is not meant to be taken independently; rather, it is part of a sequential education path spanning the student’s learning before, throughout, and after the overseas experience, with preemptive advice for the seminar provided at the orientation before their study abroad. Many of the research papers that students have written as part of the seminar study in the past provide a logical and objective fact-based analysis and are quite sophisticated and demonstrative for an undergraduate learner’s work, which serves as evidence that the educational goals of the GB Program are being achieved in solid a manner.

Findings from student survey also show a high level of satisfaction in this seminar compared to other, more conventional lecture-based courses. It is hoped the GB Capstone Seminar will go through strategic enhancement to provide even greater benefits for learners. (Material 3-19, 3-20)

(1) - iv Global Studies (GS) Program

The GS Program is aimed at helping students to acquire in-depth understanding of situations and issues that are being experienced around the world in the context of globalization and to develop creative thinking skills for problem solving. Through the GS Program, students learn about history, culture, philosophy, religions, community, politics and the world economy. They also learn about relationships between countries and regions, international organizations and their roles and functions, and situations and issues that are being experienced in the global context.

The GS Program is offered in three categories of “North American Studies,” “East Asian Studies” and “Transnational Studies.” Students select one of the categories as their major in the GS Program. Each teacher involved in the GS Program specializes in one of the three said categories and assumes responsibility for program administration and management for that category. They also make effort for the GS Program to be organically linked with the BE and GB Program so as to assure an appropriate level of interdisciplinary exists and to satisfy students’ academic interest that are becoming more diverse and broader-ranging than ever. (Material 3-21)

(1) - v Teacher’s License Program (TLP)

The TLP offers a range of practical activities including group discussions and presentations where students develop skills to communicate their thoughts and to exchange opinions with others in an effective manner, which will be an important asset in their future teaching jobs. Teaching is given on both theory and practice in a systematic manner so as to make the students ready to cope with issues they may face in their teaching job. The program is aimed at training English teachers who will foster the next generation of English learners through a high level of English abilities as well as a rich knowledge and liberal education that is attained through EAP, BE and Advanced Education. The compulsory one-year exchange program also enhances global understanding and practical communication skills in English.

(1) - vi Japanese Language Program (JLP)

The JLP is intended to assist exchange students who study at AIU to develop advanced Japanese language skills and acquire an in-depth understanding of Japanese culture. Learners are placed into one of nine to eleven class levels (the number of levels provided differs depending on which academic semester the Program is taken) according to their Japanese proficiency. The Program offers various classes to address students' diverse learning needs, ranging from a comprehensive Japanese language study class to those focusing on a specific language skill such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The curriculum also includes activities to offer on-hand experience of Japanese life and culture, such as exchange programs with schools and communities in the region as well as field trips to locations in Akita Prefecture where authentic traditional culture still remains.

(2) Professional Graduate School

○ Current Provision of Educational Programs

The AIU Professional Graduate School (Graduate School of Global Communication and Language) offers a number of common courses to all the students to help them learn the basics of global communication in the English language. All the students must fulfill specific credit requirements by completing the common courses. In addition, students take required courses, required elective courses and elective courses from specialized courses of their chosen teaching practices.

The common course of the Program is GCS600 (a required course awarding 3 credits) "Introduction to Global Communication." The Program also offers the following Required Elective Common Courses to offer in-depth knowledge and understanding of global communication:

- GCS601 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Language, Culture, and Identity"
- GCS602 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Contemporary Issues in a Global Context"
- GCS607 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Academic English for Global Professions"
- GCS609 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Strategies for Intercultural Communication"

The Program also offers elective courses in individual teaching practices, such as ELT614 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "English as an International Language" in the ELT, JLT619 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Teaching Japanese to Learners from Diverse Communities" in the JLT and GCP632 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) "Contemporary Issues in a Global Context" in the GCP. Each of these courses is designed, while focusing on the given practices, with relevance to issues and practices in the global context. Students can select up to three elective courses (worth nine credits in total) outside of his or her chosen teaching practices to use the credits earned to fulfill graduation requirements, thus allowing them to choose courses more freely according to their academic interest or career or study prospects beyond their area of teaching practice.

In addition, graduate students take practical activity courses such as teaching practices and internships in his or her chosen teaching practices to build up their teaching and vocational

skills in real-world environments. Students then apply the learned skills and knowledge to work on tasks given by his or her academic advisor to complete the Program study, with theory and practice combined into one learning experience. (Material 3-22)

(2) - i English Language Teaching Practices (ELT)

The ELT program is aimed at training English language teachers with advanced knowledge and practical skills. Learners with a Type 1 Teaching Certificate for Upper Secondary School for English can pursue an Advanced Class Certificate for Lower/Upper Secondary School Teacher for English by taking the ELT courses. Those who do not have the Type 1 Teaching Certificate can obtain it by taking the TLP from the Faculty of International Liberal Arts at the same time with his or her ELT study at the graduate school. (Material 3-23)

The ELT program is designed with special consideration for learners who are already teaching English at a school. For example, classes are offered not only on weekdays but also on Saturdays, and learners can spend up to four years to complete the program by applying for an extended learning plan. Learners who pursue the Type 1 Teaching Certificate at the Faculty of International Liberal Arts are also allowed to do so over a period of up to four years.

Akita International University offers tuition fee reduction or elimination for students who have applied for and have been approved for an extended learning plan for longer than two years. (Material 3-24, 3-25)

The ELT program provides ELT600 “Introduction to Foreign Language Acquisition,” ELT610 “Linguistic Foundations,” ELT660 “Introduction to Research Methods in Language Education” and ELT601 “EFL Teaching Methods and Materials” as required courses. In addition, students can choose from the group of courses on the teaching method and teaching material preparation associated with the basic four skills of English language proficiency. For example, students can take a practical English language teaching course of his or her choice from the options of ELT611 “Pedagogical/Communicative Grammar,” ELT609 “EFL Testing and Assessment,” ELT614 “English as an International Language” and ELT635 “Applied Psycholinguistics for Language Teachers.”

As a general rule, ELT students are required to run three teaching practice sessions in separate periods over the term of a single ELT credit. However, students who are already in active teaching service are allowed to run three sessions concentrated into a single semester to best accommodate the sessions into his or her work schedule.

(2) - ii Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT)

The Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT) program is aimed at training Japanese language teachers who can work on a global scale at Japanese language education institutions around the world.

Students are required to take theoretical study courses in the first year before taking teaching practice courses in the second year. All the JLT specialized courses are taught in Japanese so that learners can refine their own Japanese language skills to assist their future teaching, but many of the documents and materials used in the program are also provided in English.

The first year in the JLT program includes JLT616 “Introduction to Japanese Language Teaching,” JLT615 “SLA theories for Japanese Language Teaching,” JLT606 “Pedagogy for

Japanese Speech Sounds and Prosody,” JLT601 “Japanese Pedagogical Grammar for Beginners I” and JLT609 “Evaluation and Testing in Japanese Language Teaching.” These are theoretical studies designed to help students obtain knowledge and skills related to linguistics and second language acquisition.

The second year of study comprises three semesters of teaching practices as a required course, which is aimed for the mastering of practical and professional Japanese language teaching knowledge and skills. Practice in the two semesters is done in Japan and the same in the remaining one semester in an overseas location. The overseas practice requires the learner to conduct language-teaching classes on his or her own at a foreign university with a completely different cultural background. This challenging task, where they have to use their own power to deal with any issue or problem they may encounter, is an excellent opportunity to develop robust and practical teaching skills to be ready for future job opportunities as language teachers.

To complete the JLT program, students are required to write an action research paper at the end of the program. Akita International University believes that the action research approach is very effective in bringing the learned theory and practice together. The action research assignment has been included as an essential part of the JLT program since the inauguration of the graduate school. The entire two-year program itself focuses on the fusion of theory and practice so that the graduates will be ready for active teaching as soon as they complete the JLT program.

To train Japanese language teachers who can work on a global scale, the basic JLT courses are provided with an emphasis on “teaching Japanese as a foreign language.” The theoretical study courses are systematically designed and organized so that students can study about teaching methods and second language acquisition theories that are also applicable to other foreign language education such as English or French.

(2) - iii Global Communication Practices (GCP)

The GCP program offers basic studies of journalism and public relations, including GCP620 “Discussing Global News” and GCP601 “Organizational Communication” as required elective courses. These courses assist students to obtain advanced professional knowledge and skills that would be essential in their future career path.

In addition, the program offers courses on contemporary social issues and information literacy to encourage a broad-range of learning. The second year of the GCP program include internships and field research assignments as part of GCP645 “Design of Graduation Subject.”

The GCP graduation requirement comprises the completion of either “GCP649 Scholarly Research and Paper” and an associated oral examination, or GCP650 “Global Communication Practicum” and an associated oral examination.

The GCP program also offers the following three groups of specialized courses, each focusing on a particular type of career prospects.

(2) - iii - 1) For Students Focusing on Language Interpretation Skills

Students focusing in developing interpretation skills take GCP603 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Interpreting I” first to master the interpretation basics before proceeding to GCP614 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “Interpreting (English/Japanese) II” for an intermediate-level learning. They then receive advanced

interpretation training through GCP645 (a required course awarding 1 credit) “Design of Graduation Project” and GCP650 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Global Communication Practicum.”

Concurrently with these interpretation training, they also take GCP609 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “International News and Global Communication,” GCP620 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “Discussing Global News” and other courses to be familiar with current topics.

Note that AIU now plans to redesign the two “Interpreting” courses in response to comments received as part of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Professional Graduate Public Policy Schools in 2017.

(2) - iii - 2) For Students with Career Prospects in Journalism

Students with interest in eyes on journalistic career paths take GCP643 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Introduction to International Journalism” first to learn the basics of journalism before proceeding to courses including GCP609 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “International News and Global Communication” and GCP620 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “Discussing Global News” to acquire professional knowledge required to work as a journalist. Toward the end of the program, they are trained for practical journalistic skills through GCP645 (a required course awarding 1 credit) “Design of Graduation Project” and GCP650 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Global Communication Practicum.”

(2) - iii - 3) For Students with Interest in Public Relation Careers in International and Governmental Organizations or Private Companies

Students focusing on public relations careers enroll in GCP642 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Introduction to International Public Relations” or GCP601 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Organizational Communication” first to learn the basics of public relations functions before proceeding to courses including GCP604 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “Negotiation and Conflict Resolution” and GCP624 (an elective course awarding 3 credits) “Leadership and Group Communication” to acquire professional knowledge required to work in a public relations position. Toward the end of the program, they are trained for practical public relations skills through GCP645 (a required course awarding 1 credit) “Design of Graduation Project” and GCP650 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Global Communication Practicum.”

For each of the above-described specialized courses, the underlined required elective course are the basic study subject for that area, augmented by other, more advanced and systematically arranged professional study courses. Toward the end of the last semester in the GCP program, students are required to take GCP650 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Global Communication Practicum” or GCP649 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Scholarly Research and Paper” as practical study. In these courses, students are asked to demonstrate to an audience the knowledge and skills obtained through the GCP program.

(3) Student Course Evaluation Survey

Both the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the professional graduate school conduct student course evaluation surveys on all the classes provided, generally in the last session of each semester using a specified evaluation form.

The form includes 15 multiple-choice questions that are answered in bubble sheet format, ten of which question whether or not and to what degree they think their achievement/performance improved by taking the course. The remaining five questions are about the teaching method or the quality of the instruction given by the teacher. The survey also asks five questions answered in free writing format, where students can make suggestions or requests about the teaching content.

The course evaluation survey used to be conducted in a fully free-writing format for graduate school courses, but the format was partially revised in 2015 to include multiple-choice questions so that university wide statistical data can be obtained.

The teacher leaves the room while the students fill the course evaluation survey forms about his or her course, and the completed forms are collected and directly delivered to the Administration Office by students. The survey findings are fed back to the teachers after they finish grading the students. Each teacher then has a personal interview with the Program Director and the Head of Programs to discuss recommendations and suggestions about how the course can be improved.

Since the 2016 Spring Semester, the graduate school course evaluation survey results are also posted online on the ATOMS to disclose the information to the faculty members and the students.

To avoid potentially adverse effects of course evaluation survey by students such as more students choosing to attend highly evaluated courses, the teachers relaxing the level of instruction so as to get favorable answers from the students, or to lower the level of academic challenge so that students can easily glide through the course, the scope of online information disclosure is limited to the statistics of evaluation survey results for the entire professional graduate school or for each teaching practices and excludes evaluation survey results of individual courses. This assures that students can continue to receive an appropriately disciplined level of teaching. (Material 3-26, 3-27)

Since the second half of academic year 2016, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the professional graduate school each conduct an "Exit Survey on Academic Matters" on students who are scheduled to graduate in the next spring or summer.

The Exit Survey covers various topics such as academic achievements through the staged curriculum from the first year through to graduation, feedbacks on active learning and other self-learning initiatives in and outside the classroom, and the perceived usefulness of the Academic Advising System. The survey is intended to obtain insights into the effectiveness of AIU's educational goals and diploma policy from multiple points of view.

The Exit Survey findings are shared and discussed with the Administration Office, the Program Directors and Heads at the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and the Graduate School Management Committee before being released to the general faculty members. The teachers are encouraged to use the findings to review their teaching content for greater benefits for learners. The findings are also fed back to the AIU management system for administrative improvement.

(4) Student Course Evaluation Survey of the Professional Graduate School

An important goal of the professional graduate school is to promote greater job opportunities for graduates and the rate of successful employment of graduates is an important indicator to measure the effectiveness of its education. The employment data is also used for reviewing and improving the teaching methods and content provided.

The courses are evaluated in various ways, including personal observation of classes by the Head of Programs or by other faculty members. The graduate school also implements a periodic student course evaluation survey on all the courses, the findings from which are fed back to review and improve the teaching methods and content. These evaluation efforts will be continued in the future to provide the highest quality and most effective education in line with the AIU Graduate School missions and goals.

The student course evaluation survey details will be continuously reviewed for improvement including refinement of the question and answer format. The graduate school will also continue disclosing the survey findings to motivate teachers for further improvement of their teaching content. The findings are also being used as supporting data for Faculty Development (FD) activities.

3-3 Faculty Organizes and Development

(1) Policy Concerning Teacher Qualification and Faculty Members Organization in Line with the University Vision

Akita International University defines, in its Mid-Term Plan and Long-Term Vision, what qualification is desired in its faculty members. (Material 3-28, 3-29)

The professional graduate school ensures its teaching entails both academic depth and practical usefulness. Therefore, each faculty member who assumes this duty must be someone who has a full understanding of and is capable of presenting to the students advanced theory and practice in his or her academic specialty.

(2) Organization of the Faculty Members

As defined in Standard 2-2, AIU establishes the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and the Graduate School Management Committee in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation. It also establishes the Faculty of International Liberal Arts including its GB and GS Programs, the professional graduate school, the university library, the Institute for Promotion of International Liberal Arts Education, the Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration, the Faculty Forum and other organizations and institutions in accordance with the University Regulations. In addition, AIU establishes the Graduate School of Global Communication and Language under which the Graduate Program in Global Communication and Language Practices and the Faculty Forum of Graduate School are organized in accordance with the Graduate School Regulations.

In line with the University Regulations, AIU appoints the President, the Vice President, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Program Director, the Director of Library, the Director of Institute for Promotion of International Liberal Arts Education, the Director of Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration and the Dean of Students. It also appoints the Dean

of Graduate School in line with the Graduate School Regulations. (Material 3-30, 3-31, 3-32)

Furthermore, according to the Regulations Regarding Heads and others of Education and Research Organizations Other Than Those Stipulated in School Codes, AIU appoints the Dean of International Affairs, the Head of EAP and Foreign Language Education, the Head of BE, the Head of JLP, the Head of TLP, the Director of Active Learning and Assessment Center, the Director of Japan Studies Center, various coordinators and Deputy Directors for the aforesaid organizations, as well as the Director of the Graduate Program in Global Communication and Language Practices, the Head of ELT, the Head of JLT, the Head of GCP and the Coordinator of JLT. (Material 3-33)

The job functions of each of the aforementioned positions are defined in the Bylaws Regarding Job Duties of the Heads and others of Education and Research Organizations. (Material 3-34)

It can be thus concluded that AIU clearly defines its policy concerning teacher qualification and the faculty member organization as well as the actual organizational details of its faculty members and the functions of the heads of its educational and research organizations.

3-4 Measurements of Student Learning Outcomes

In the standard 3-4, items regarding the Professional Graduate School are written in brackets and items pertaining to both the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and graduate school are stated as [for both undergraduate and graduate programs].

(1) Number of Academic Years and Semesters [for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs]

The standard number of years to graduation is four [two] years, which can be extended to a maximum of eight [four] years. The semester system of AIU divides one academic year into two semesters, the Spring Semester and the Fall Semester. As a general rule, each semester completes a course study in 15 weeks.

The two semesters are scheduled as follows:

- Spring Semester: From April 1st to August 31st (summer recess from August 1st to August 31st)
- Fall Semester: From September 1st to March 31st (winter recess from January 1st to March 31st)

Akita International University also provides Winter Program courses in part of the winter-recess period of the Fall Semester (from the middle of January to the beginning of March). The Winter Program courses are optionally offered to all the students. It is completely up to each student whether to take a course or not. Winter Program courses are short-term intensive programs completed in 7.5 weeks or shorter. (Material 3-35, 3-36)

(2) Class Hours and Credit Acquisition [for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs]

As a general rule, one academic credit is awarded to the amount of learning that takes 45 hours to complete. (1) One credit from a lecture course is earned by attending 15 hours of classes. (2) One credit from an experimental, practical or activity course is earned by attending 30 hours of classes [limited to undergraduate program]. (3) One credit from seminar work is earned by attending 15 to 30 hours of classes. (EAP attendance hours and credits are separately defined.)

Akita International University assumes that each student does two hours of self-study for one hour of classroom learning, which is explained to students in the both Student Handbook and Graduate School Student Handbook. Most of the courses award three credits upon completion. (Material 3-37, 3-38)

(3) Characteristics of Classroom Teaching

Half the AIU faculty members are non-Japanese, and Japanese teachers either have received professional education in advanced education institutions in Europe or North America or have overseas teaching experience. Due to such overseas influence, teaching in the classroom mostly focuses on bidirectional discussions and group work that are commonly provided in European and North American educational institutions, augmented by seminars, experiments, practical training and field work as necessary.

Ever since its inauguration, AIU consistently maintains a small-group learning strategy. One class accommodates up to approximately 20 students in order to promote greater communication opportunities between the teacher and each student. Such small-group teaching stimulates the students' power and ability to think, act and communicate on their own.

With about one-fifth of the students being exchange students from overseas partner institutions, even regular classroom activities entail lively discussions and debates among people with various cultural and academic backgrounds; a great opportunity to develop problem-solving skills by overcoming differences in values and viewpoints.

[Facts]

- Average number of students registered to a single course 17.2
- Proportion of non-Japanese members in the faculty members 55.0%
- Ratio of students to a full time teacher 15:1
- Proportion of classes with twenty or fewer students in one class 66.2%
- Proportion of classes with fifty or more students in one class 1.9%

(4) Limit on the Number of Courses that Can Be Registered [for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs]

Akita International University implements a limit on the number of courses to which a single student can register at a time. As a general rule, one student can only register up to 18 [30] credits of coursework in a single semester. In special situations, for example, those in the TLP, the number of credits can be increased up to 24 [36] upon approval by the student's academic advisor.

(5) Academic Advising System [for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs]

To stimulate academic interest of each student and help them cope with and overcome difficulties they may encounter along their learning path, each student is assigned to a full-time faculty member who acts as his or her academic advisor to provide consultation and recommendation on various academic subjects. Students can obtain assistance from the academic advisor for important decisions and tasks such as creating their personal learning plan, selecting a country and university as their destination for studying abroad, selecting a major or selecting a career or study path after graduation to assure smooth and effective learning through to graduation. Faculty members with academic advisory duties post their office hours so that assigned students can easily schedule a visit for consultation. (Material 3-39, 3-40)

(6) Research Paper Assistance as Part of the Capstone Seminar

Full-time faculty members of the GS Program supervising “Capstone Seminar,” a required course to be completed by all the students before graduation, prepare the “Guide to Writing in Global Studies” and share it with all the faculty who are scheduled to teach in the Seminar so that they will be ready to help the students create high-quality seminar research papers as part of the Seminar work.

On the other hand, the course ECN401 “Global Business Capstone Seminar” is for students in the GB Program who have returned from their study abroad. This seminar is not meant to be taken independently; rather, it is part of a sequential education path spanning the student’s learning before, throughout, and after the overseas experience, with preemptive advice for the seminar provided at the orientation before their study abroad. (Material 3-41)

(7) Syllabus [for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs]

Syllabuses for all available courses are offered using the ATOMS, which can be viewed by students. (Material 3-42, 3-43)

Except for courses in the TLP of the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the JLT of the professional graduate school, all the syllabuses are provided in English. As syllabuses are a critically important information not only for Japanese students but also for exchange students who study at AIU as it relates to their course planning before coming to Japan and also for credit conversion after returning home, an internationally relevant and electronically uniform format is used on all AIU syllabuses. Specifically, a course syllabus must be created by inputting all the necessary information to the ATOMS format, including the educational goals pursued, teaching plan, grading criteria and the teacher’s office hours so as to provide a complete information package about the course. By viewing the syllabus, students can find out what will be taught in the course and by what method, what materials are used and how the semester coursework is scheduled.

Course syllabuses are stringently reviewed before being released to students. For a new course, the course syllabus created by the teacher is first reviewed and approved by Directors and Heads before receiving a final review at the Academic Affairs Executive Committee or the Graduate School Management Committee, to be posted on ATOMS upon approval before the start of the advising week for that semester. For an existing course, the syllabus is reviewed and approved by Directors and Heads before being posted on ATOMS in the same timing as described above. Students will also receive a printed syllabus at the first session of

the course.

As a general rule, all the classes must be provided exactly as described and scheduled in the released course syllabus. If a course syllabus needs to be changed, the teacher in charge posts the change on ATOMS to notify the registered students, with the reason for change clearly explained.

Important changes such as those involving the teaching content, the course goals or the grading criteria must be approved by the head of the program or other appropriate authority before being released.

3-5 Evaluations of Student Learning Outcomes

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

The Faculty of International Liberal Arts evaluates and grades the academic performance of its students according to the University Regulations and the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration, which are both printed in the Student Handbook and are also explained to students in various forms including during orientation and academic advising. (Material 3-44, 3-45, 3-46)

Grading of a student in a course is classified to one of twelve letter grades. In addition, they are numerically scored in the scale of 0 to 4 based on GPA according to the content learned, the perceived level of understanding and the academic progress status.

A GPA of 2.00 or greater is deemed a “healthy level of achievement.” Any GPA score below 2.00 requires an interview with the academic advisor based on the special advising care system, as part of student support to provide learning assistance whenever required depending on the level of achievement. Students are required to attain a GPA of 2.50 or greater to start their study abroad and the same of 2.00 or greater to graduate.

At the end of each semester, the highest achievers are honored by being included on the President’s List (GPA 4.00 or greater) or on the Dean’s List (GPA 3.80 to 3.99).

Academic credits earned from other universities can, upon review and approval by the Academic Affairs Executive Committee based on the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration, be used to fulfill the credit completion requirements at AIU. The conversion details may differ depending on whether they are awarded by a partner university as part of the official exchange program or are obtained elsewhere or by other means. Conversion and inclusion of individual credits is executed by the President upon approval by the student’s academic advisor, Directors and Heads. (Material 3-47, 3-48)

Criteria for graduation and degree awarding are specified in the University Regulations, the Regulations Regarding Academic Degrees and the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration, all of which are printed in the Student Handbook so that they are fully known to and understood by the students. The general criteria are as follows: (Material 3-49, 3-50)

○ Requirements for Graduation

Akita International University allows students who satisfy the following requirements to graduate and offers graduation opportunities twice a year, at the end of the Spring Semester and end of the Fall Semester.

- 1) That the student has studied at AIU for a minimum of four years and has completed all the required academic courses to earn a total of 124 credits or more.
- 2) That the student has attained a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or greater.
- 3) That the student has completed his or her study abroad requirement.

○ Degrees

A student who has satisfied his or her graduation requirement will be awarded one of the following academic degrees with an applicable diploma:

Global Business Program: Bachelor's Degree in Global Business

Global Studies Program: Bachelor's Degree in Global Studies

○ Graduation Procedure

A student who intends to graduate must submit an Application for Graduation within a specified period. If a student wishes to postpone his or her graduation even when all his or her graduation requirements are fulfilled, the student must submit an Application for Extension. As a general rule, AIU holds a graduation ceremony once a year in March for all the students who graduate within that academic year.

○ Exemption to Enrollment Period Requirement

A student who has studied at AIU for at least three years may be allowed to graduate on the condition of satisfying all the requirements listed below.

- 1) That the student satisfies all the graduation requirements including that of study abroad and excluding the enrollment period requirement.
- 2) That the student has attained a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or greater.

Graduation is officially authorized by the President based on recommendation by the Faculty Forum. (Material 3-51, 3-52, 3-53, 3-54)

(2) Professional Graduate School

Grading method and criteria are specified in the Graduate School Regulations and the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration of the Akita International University Graduate School, both of which are printed in the Graduate School Student Handbook to be fully known and understood by all the graduate school students. The grading method and criteria are also explained to students in various forms including during orientation and academic advising.

Academic grades are determined in a comprehensive manner depending on examination scores and level of performance and attendance during regular coursework. How each of these factors counts in the grade for a given course is explained in the applicable syllabus.

Similar to the Faculty of International Liberal Arts, academic performance of a graduate student in each course is classified into one of 12 letter grades from A+ to F. In addition, each student is given a cumulative GPA calculated based on the grade points earned up to the given academic stage, which is used as a general indicator to measure the student's learning

content, the level of understanding and the academic progress status. (Material 3-55, 3-56, 3-57)

Students are allowed, if deemed relevant in the academic context according to the Graduate School Regulations to take courses at other graduate schools, and up to 12 credits, to the extent not adversely affecting the integrity and wholeness of the teaching content and evaluation criteria of AIU Professional Graduate School and as permitted by the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration of the Akita International University Graduate School, be used to fulfill the AIU Professional Graduate School credit completion requirements. Inclusion of such credits is officially executed by the President upon review and approval of the Graduate School Management Committee. (Material 3-58, 3-59, 3-60)

Criteria for graduation and degree awarding are specified in the Graduate School Regulations, the Graduate School Regulations Regarding Academic Degrees and the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration of the Akita International University Graduate School, all of which are printed in the Graduate School Student Handbook so that they are fully known to and understood by the students. The general criteria are as follows:

Graduation is officially authorized by the President based on recommendation by the Faculty Forum of Graduate School. (Material 3-61, 3-62, 3-63, 3-64)

○ Requirements for Graduation

Akita International University allows students who satisfy the following requirements to graduate from the Graduate School, which offers graduation opportunities twice a year, at the end of the Spring Semester and end of the Fall Semester.

- 1) That the student has completed all the required academic courses to earn a total of 36 credits or greater (or 37 credits or greater in the case of GCP).
- 2) That the student has attained a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or greater.
- 3) That the student has studied at the graduate school for a minimum of two years.

○ Degrees

A student who has satisfied his or her graduation requirement will be awarded one of the following academic degrees with an applicable diploma:

- English Language Teaching Practices (ELT) program: Master of English Language Teaching (Professional)
- Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT) program: Master of Japanese Language Teaching (Professional)
- Global Communication Practices (GCP) program: Master of Global Communication (Professional)

○ Graduation Procedure

A student who intends to graduate from the professional graduate program must submit a Graduation Application within a specified period. If a student wishes to postpone his or her graduation even when all his or her graduation requirements are fulfilled, the student must submit an Application for Graduation Postponement. As a general rule, the graduate school

holds a graduation ceremony once a year in March for all the students who graduate within that academic year.

- Exemption to the Enrollment Period Requirement

On the condition of satisfying all the requirements listed below, a student who has studied at the AIU Graduate School for at least one year may be allowed to graduate on a special basis upon review and approval by the Faculty Forum of Graduate School.

- 1) That the student satisfies all the graduation requirements excluding the enrollment period requirement.
- 2) That the student has attained a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or greater.

3-6 Accountability of Student Learning Outcomes Evaluations

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

Akita International University uses GPA to measure the academic achievement of its students. The GPA score given at the end of each semester is also used for course selection recommendations for each student for the upcoming semesters. The GPA score is an important criterion to authorize graduation and study abroad. (Material 3-65)

Concurrently, AIU continues to be committed to the government-sponsored academic performance measurement and evaluation initiative that has originated from the Global Human Resource Development Program and has since been carried over to the MEXT Top Global University Project.

From enrollment to their study abroad, the English language proficiency of a student is measured based on his or her TOEFL ITP[®] TEST score. As a requirement to apply for study abroad, the student must attain a TOEFL ITP[®] TEST score of 550 or greater. Students who have come back from their study abroad are offered an opportunity to take the TOEIC[®] TEST, a language proficiency evaluation scheme of which score is widely used as a hiring standard among employers, free of charge.

In addition, from academic year 2013, AIU conducts a Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA⁺) on all the students immediately after enrollment and also shortly before graduation. The CLA⁺ package measures the student's general capabilities such as English composition skills, problem solving skills, analytical power and critical thinking, so as to determine how education at AIU has contributed to the student's growth in these capabilities.

Furthermore, since academic year 2017, AIU selects a focus group and measures their abilities three times: before entering the university, before going abroad and before graduation. The aim is to analyze the students' degree of learning achievement at various landmark time periods: before going abroad, during studying at an overseas institution, and total achievement throughout the entire four years at AIU, in order to gain better understanding of student development and make necessary educational improvements.

(2) Professional Graduate School

i English Language Teaching Practices (ELT)

All the graduates who intended to find a teaching job have successfully done so, which attests to the effectiveness of the program.

The current teacher employment market is becoming more competitive with progressively fewer teachers being hired. To help aspiring teachers cope with this difficult situation, the ELT program supports teaching quality enhancement activities outside the program throughout the year, including the provision of opportunities to discuss educational issues, a topic often brought up by teacher employment test interviewers, or arranging for mock class presentation. These efforts are aimed at providing greater benefit for ELT learners. Whenever possible, AIU contacts the educational institutions where its graduates work to obtain information about the graduate's work situation. The obtained information is fed back to improve assistance for students currently in the program.

ii Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT)

To date, 67% of first to eighth year JLT graduates have found a Japanese language-teaching job in various locations around the world, including AIU's overseas partner universities.

Akita International University contacts these partner universities and other educational institutions where its graduates work to obtain information about their work situation. If any issue is found, special guidance and assistance is provided to soon-to-graduate students who are scheduled to work there to help them better be prepared for the oncoming work.

Feedback and suggestions from institutions where AIU students or graduates work as a trainee or paid professional are a vitally important piece of information, especially to improve the quality of assistance and instruction for the teaching trainees. Efforts are made to continuously monitor and review the appropriateness of assistance and guidance to help the trainees in the effective manner. The annual Japanese Language Teaching Practices Study Meeting is also an important opportunity where JLT graduates who teach Japanese around the world are invited to report about their actual work experience.

iii Global Communication Practices (GCP)

The GCP is intended to train journalists, businesspersons (especially in public relations) and interpreters (in media or business organization). These are not the types of jobs where the position is filled by an open recruitment basis. A typical career path to reach these positions would be to be first hired by an organization as one of broad-range professional candidates and gradually move up the ladder and gain experience until placement opportunities are offered. Therefore, it is not easy to measure the effectiveness of GCP education merely on the basis of after-graduation employment records. To understand the true, long-term effectiveness of the GCP program, efforts are made to continually track the graduates' employment situation years after graduation.

Keeping in touch with the graduates in continual manner to understand how they work in what positions, what tasks and responsibilities they assume and what transfer and promotion possibilities are in sight is an important means to offer better educational support and guidance for students in the program.

3-7 Student Support Systems

(1) Admission of New Students

i Faculty of International Liberal Arts

Based on its admission policy, AIU offers 16 different entrant selection schemes in order to solicit students with diverse qualities and background from across the country. AIU is also taking various admission-related initiatives such as the offering of a September admission option on a permanent basis, scheduling admission test dates independently from those of other national and public universities, and the Special Selection (Gap Year) where voluntary work or other social commitments before the enrollment are positively counted.

Admission details are disseminated and explained in various forms such as Admission Brochures, Undergraduate Application Information, open campus and other in-school events, briefings and consultation events in various locations in and outside Akita Prefecture as well as briefing visits to high schools. (Material 3-66, 3-67)

Admission tests are prepared under strict confidentiality, with all the details including who writes what questions and how answers are scored based on discussion at the Admission Test Committee membered by specially selected faculty and staff members. Thorough measures are being taken to protect the personal identifiable information of the applicants, including handling the documents in specially segregated rooms.

All operations involved in the Special Selection Test are done within AIU premises (selection in some cases may be done solely by document screening), where AIU faculty and staff members conduct all the interviews, supervise tests, guide the applicants and consult their parents or caretakers. AIU faculty and staff members scheduled to be involved in Special Selection are delivered an operation manual and receive briefing in advance so that Special Selection can be conducted in a smooth and fair manner.

The General Selection Tests (A, B and C dates) are offered in seven locations across the country (Sapporo, Akita, Sendai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka). The general headquarters is located inside the Akita test site and other six sites contain testing centers, each of which is headed by an AIU employee for on-site supervision of test operations.

Under the direction of the headquarters or examination center heads, contractor staff provides site management, proctoring and guiding services at the respective test sites. The heads of each examination sites are thoroughly briefed in advance with all the duties and responsibilities explained in a specially prepared operation manual. The outsourcing staff will also receive their own operation manuals and will also be orally briefed for smooth provision of test services.

Unlike the six other sites, the Akita site is staffed by AIU members alone, who are also thoroughly briefed in advanced as to their duties and responsibilities.

The entrance examination results, including the number of applicants and also of those who actually took the tests, how many had passed and also how many are actually scheduled to be enrolled, are published on the AIU websites and also explained to high school students in public events.

The Admission Test Committee, membered not only by AIU employees but also by

external experts on student recruitment, testing and English language proficiency screening, holds meetings several times a year to discuss admission test results, selection methods and the trends observed in prospective applicants. (Material 3-68)

The number of students to be admitted from each different selection scheme is determined based on various factors including the past admission records, the test scores obtained by the applicants, supporting information from their high schools and whether or not the applicants also took admission tests for other universities, to assure that the appropriate total number of students for AIU's education capacity will be admitted. AIU has continuously been accepting new students slightly in excess of, but not grossly exceeding, its stated admission capacity. (Material 3-69)

ii Acceptance of Exchange Students

As of May 2018, AIU accepts students twice a year based on exchange programs with 191 partner universities in 49 countries and regions around the world, where as a general rule the student is exempted from tuition fees at the destination university.

Students from partner universities who wish to study at AIU must submit an Application Form including Statement of Purpose and an Academic Transcript with a GPA of 2.50 or greater, and a letter of recommendation. In the case of a non-native speaker of English, the student must also submit a Language Proficiency Certificate with a TOEFL PBT[®] TEST score of 530 or greater, a TOEFL iBT[®] TEST score of 71 or greater, an IELTS score of 6.0 or greater and a TOEIC[®] TEST score of 785 or greater. The submitted documents are reviewed by the AIU Short-Term International Students Screening Committee.

The GPA and TOEFL[®] TEST scores are transparent and objective criteria that are also applied to AIU students who wish to study at partner universities. (Material 3-70, 3-71)

(2) Professional Graduate School

Graduate school applicants are selected based solely on document screening, which is an internationally accepted selection method for graduate students and is consistent with the AIU Professional Graduate School mission and admission policy to educate globally competent human resources.

Applications are accepted and screened three times a year, in October, January and June. The graduate school in the past admitted new students in September only but has started April admission for the ELT and GCP programs since April 2014 to accommodate students who graduate from other Japanese universities.

Students must possess a level of English proficiency that will not be problematic in taking the all-English classes offered at the graduate school. The English proficiency requirement for admission is determined based on internationally accepted standard test schemes, with consideration to admission practices at other universities in English-speaking nations.

The current AIU English proficiency requirement for admission into its ELT program is, in line with the proficiency standard used widely in undergraduate programs in the United States and also in some graduate schools, set at TOEFL PBT[®] TEST of 570 or greater. A TOEFL PBT[®] TEST score of 530 or greater is required for the JLT since graduates will possibly find a Japanese teaching job in English-speaking nations and will likely need a proficient level of English skills to communicate in their work. The proficiency requirement for the GCP program is set at TOEFL PBT[®] TEST of 550 or greater, which is considered the minimum required level of English language comprehension to take the all-English GCP

classes.

The graduate school has a support scheme for prospective applicants whose English proficiency is not at the required level, where they can participate in the EAP Program at the Faculty of International Liberal Arts of AIU until the required level of proficiency is attained for admission. (Material 3-72, 3-73)

Since 2008 when the professional graduate school was established, the yearly number of new students remained approximately at 20, which was below the school's admission capacity (30 students). Besides moderate invitation efforts such as holding the graduate school admission briefings at the same time with the undergraduate admission briefings, no large-scale publicity initiatives were taken for some time to solicit more applicants.

In 2017, faculty members launched several different recruitment activities, which included advertising in higher education related magazines and disseminating information on SNS accounts. The faculty members took opportunities of business trips in/outside Akita to visit institutions that may have prospective students to the graduate school. Above mentioned activities are thought to have led to the exploration of new markets. 34 students were admitted to the graduate school in academic year 2018, which exceeded the targeted enrollment number of 30.

During the Admission Screening Meetings that are held three times a year to screen applicants, related faculty and staff members discuss the admission/rejection of each applicant as well as the selection method and trends observed in prospective applicants.

The graduate school accepts international students in exactly the same manner as Japanese students. All applicants are required to prepare application documents in English except for the JLT, where the applicants obviously must possess an already high level of Japanese language proficiency. Japanese Language Teaching Practices applicants are required to submit application documents both in English and Japanese.

(3) Student Assistance

According to the provisions of Article 28 of the Statement of Operations Practice, AIU provides assistance and guidance to students on various matters, including academic affairs at AIU, future career/study prospects as well as non-academic aspects such as their personal welfare and financial affairs. Akita International University also works on other operations based on the Mid-Term Plan and the Annual Plan. (Material 3-74)

i Learning Support

o Academic Advising System

To stimulate academic interest of each student and also to help them cope with and overcome difficulties they may encounter along their learning path as described in Standard 3-4, AIU assigns a specific teacher as an academic advisor to each student (including international students) to provide consultation and recommendation on various aspects of university study. (Material 3-75, 3-76, 3-77)

- Nakajima Library

In an effort to provide the best learning environment, the Nakajima Library stays open all day and all year around for AIU students, faculty and staff members. It has a comprehensive collection relevant to AIU's educational content.

The library also offers workshops on information literacy and effective use of databases to help users in their advanced study and research activities. (Material 3-78, 3-79, 3-80, 3-81)

- Active Learning and Assessment Center (ALAC)

To encourage the students' self-initiated learning and assist to develop a sense of self-efficacy, AIU operates the ALAC, which houses and oversees the Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center (LDIC), the Academic Achievement Center (AAC) and the Academic Career Support Center (ACSC). Active Learning and Assessment Center is committed to various activities aimed at encouraging and assisting active and autonomous learning of students. The center provides foreign language proficiency and general capability testing services and also performs FD functions.

- Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center (LDIC)

The LDIC assists students' active and autonomous learning of foreign languages. It offers a wide range of learning materials intended for English proficiency improvement such as extensive reading-assisting materials, listening, critical thinking, public speaking aids and sample exam questions. Materials to assist self-learning are offered for non-English languages, too.

The center also organizes foreign language conversation partner programs and faculty's workshops. The center is open from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. on weekdays.

- Academic Achievement Center (AAC)

The AAC provides learning assistance for students on an individual basis, with graduates and undergraduate students acting as tutors for younger learners. Services offered include academic English enhancement and English proficiency test score improvement. For mathematics and other specialty subjects, a sixty-minute assistance session can be provided by booking in advance. The AAC also offers Japanese language learning support for exchange students.

- Academic Career Support Center (ACSC)

The ACSC provides interdisciplinary and trans-regional support for students who wish to or are considering graduate study through personal consultation as well as public lectures. The center offers assistance for studying at other Japanese or overseas graduate schools in humanities and social science fields. (Material 3-82, 3-83)

- Support for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the AIU Regulations Regarding Support for Students with Disabilities established in April 2016, AIU organizes the Student with Disability Support Committee and

appoints Study Support and Student Wellbeing Coordinators within the Student Affairs. In addition, university employees from related departments and sections form a Students with Disabilities Support Group.

Efforts are made to provide the best useful assistance to handicapped and disabled students, where the Study Support and Student Wellbeing Coordinator receives and processes the support application from the student and work in coordination with the Academic Affairs, counselors, nurses and faculty members.

Exchange students with disability receive support on an individual basis, where the support team works in coordination with the staff members of the Center for International Affairs, collecting advanced information about the specific disabilities inflicted, organizing discussions between the parties who will be involved in the support efforts and holding personal interviews with the student after his or her arrival at AIU.

Even after the semester has started, request for assistance or consultation from a disabled student will be handled in a flexible and effective manner to decide what additional support should be provided and how, with relevant information shared between all parties involved. (Material 3-84, 3-85, 3-86, 3-87)

- Support for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Economically disadvantaged students are assisted in various forms, including the reduction or elimination of tuition fees and AIU's own student loan/financial aid schemes, as well as information and application assistance for financial support programs provided by other organizations such as the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) and other private bodies. (Material 3-88, 3-89)

Requests for partial payment or postponement of tuition or dormitory fees due to financial difficulty (including such requests from short-term exchange students from partner institutions) are addressed by allowing partial payments or in other appropriate forms, with the individual circumstances of the student duly considered. (Material 3-90)

- ii Medical and Personal Support

- Medical and Health Assistance & Personal Counseling Services

Akita International University has full-time nurse and counselor working as part of the University Administration Office staff. They work in coordination with the Student Affairs and other Administration Office sections and professionals to provide multifaceted medical and health support.

The nurse plays the central role in providing physical health-related services, including periodic health checks and influenza vaccine shots as well as dealing with illness and injury cases on an individual basis.

A periodic "Newsletter from the Health and Medical Care Room" is issued in Japanese and English to inform students about seasonally variable ailments and health risks. New students also receive a "Medical Guidebook" written in Japanese and English to supply information about diseases, hospitals and treatments.

In addition, health awareness initiatives including various health education events and information sessions given as part of the enrollment orientation also encourage students to learn to practice good health care on their own.

The full-time counselor provides mental health-related support by offering counseling sessions either in Japanese or English to discuss interpersonal, mental or emotional problems. Counseling sessions and personal interviews are also made available to students who are newly admitted to AIU, those who are soon to leave for or return from their study abroad or those who start job seeking activities, to provide appropriate support in a timely manner according to students' academic and personal situations.

Psychosomatic support must specially address various issues in students' life including academics and interpersonal relations. To enable such support, the nurse and other professionals hold periodic meetings with Student Affairs staff to maintain appropriate coordination and information sharing in order to deal with individual cases with close attention and timeliness. The health professionals also periodically hold meetings with the Academic Affairs and the Center for International Affairs to identify and share information about students with potential health risks so that all the students in need can receive appropriate and timely support. (Material 3-91, 3-92, 3-93)

○ Personal Assistance at Dormitories and Student Apartments

New entrants to the Faculty of International Liberal Arts are required to live in the dormitory (Komachi Hall) during the freshman year. All short-term exchange students from overseas institutions are also required to live in a dormitory or other accommodation within AIU premises.

Even after the freshman year, most sophomores and higher-year students wish to continue to live in in-school facilities except for their study abroad period. To accommodate such needs, student apartments are provided in three locations within AIU. As a result, approximately 80% among degree-seeking students and international students live on campus.

Due to the high percentage of students living inside AIU, a well-rounded support is given to students in relation with their accommodations with consideration to livability, cultural diversity and healthfulness. The Division of Housing and Student Facilities in the Student Affairs supervises management and maintenance of the dormitories and student apartments. Some dormitory management services are provided by a contractor, where a superintendent team is posted at the dormitory 24/7 to provide personal welfare support for students and to deal with emergency situations.

At dormitories and student apartments, sophomore or high-year students are appointed as Resident Assistants (RAs) and involved in various activities as student community leaders at the respective facilities. Specifically, the RAs organize welcoming events, provide assistance for newcomers, hold dormitory or student apartment committee meetings and various exchange events, have personal interviews with individual residents on a periodic basis and conduct nighttime safety patrols. Resident Assistants also play disaster control and response roles, for example guiding the residents and supervising or conducting head-counting during evacuation drills. (Material 3-94, 3-95, 3-96)

○ Personal Support for Students with Disabilities

Handicapped or disabled students receive support on an individual basis, which includes not only making all the buildings and facilities universally accessible but also providing intangible support such as allocating dormitory/student apartment rooms or matching

roommates with special considerations and also coordinating with healthcare and medical institutions. (Material 3-97)

- Harassment Prevention/Response Measures

Akita International University has harassment adviser members to provide consultation and assistance for victimized or concerned students. Efforts are made to inform students as to what support they can receive in the event of actual or potential harassment.

Students who are newly enrolled at AIU or have just arrived on a short-term exchange program receive a briefing as part of an orientation session about potential harassments and available remedies. In addition, the four harassment advisers introduce themselves in the session in order to create a welcoming environment if a consultation is needed. Starting from the 2018 Fall Semester, an “Information on Harassment” handbook prepared in Japanese and English was distributed to new students at the orientation so that AIU’s harassment prevention and response system will be better known to students. (Material 3-98, 3-99, 3-100)

- Assistance Related to Extracurricular Activities

Akita International University’s approved student bodies include extracurricular clubs and societies, the Student Government and its subsidiary committees as well as special-purpose organizations (“AIU Kanto Team,” “Pipe Committee,” “Yearbook Committee,” etc.)

Committees subsidiary to the Student Government include the AIU Festival Executive Committee. These and other university-approved bodies will be offered use of in-school facilities (such as clubrooms and lockers) as well as financial assistance using “Student Activity Assistance Payment” and “Exchange Student Activity Assistance Payment” collected from freshmen and newly arrived exchange students.

Akita International University’s approval on student bodies and the amount (if any) of financial support are determined based on discussion and review by the “Campus Life Committee” formed jointly by student and teacher representatives. Financial support is also available from other sources such as “Ambassador Scholarship,” which is part of the AIU-original student aide scheme, and “5th Anniversary - AIU Honors Program for Extra Curricular Performance.” Support using these sources can be provided based on an application from the group or individual, which will be reviewed and screened in an appropriate manner.

In addition to the above-described facility-based and financial support, student bodies and initiatives, university-approved or otherwise, can request for consultation or assistance to the Student Affairs so that students’ creativity and talent are enhanced not only in academics but also through extracurricular activities. (Material 3-101, 3-102, 3-103, 3-104)

- iii Assistance for Study and Career Paths

- Faculty of International Liberal Arts

The AIU Administration Office has a Career Development Center, staffed by three full-time and one temporary staff as of May 2018. The Center provides career development assistance focusing on personal consultations.

The Faculty of International Liberal Arts provides CCS140 “Career Design” as a required

course, which is intended to encourage understanding and cultivate motivation in career development. The Faculty also promotes internship programs both in Japan and overseas as part of its elective courses as opportunities for students to better understand various jobs, particularly cooperating with firms and businesses in Akita Prefecture. A steady number of students, using vacation periods, participate in overseas internships during their study abroad.

Various other forms of employment and career development support are provided, including in-school seminars with human resource and recruitment representatives from more than 150 companies from Akita and other prefectures, career development guidance for students who are scheduled to begin their study abroad, Skype-based consultation sessions with students on exchange programs, and consultation meetings held in the Tokyo area.

The ACSC also provides assistance to students who wish to continue studying at other Japanese or overseas graduate schools by providing information about potential study destinations. Personal consultation by full-time faculty members is available on a regular basis. In addition, various events and forums including “High-Level Professionals Special Lectures Series” with invited external lecturers, experience-sharing and consultation meetings with AIU graduates learning at other graduate schools, and Graduate School Admission Forums with representatives from other Japanese and overseas graduate schools, are provided. The 2018 Graduate School Admission Forum was held with representatives from the London School of Economics and Political Science, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London, the University of Sheffield and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Study of Sustainability.

○ Professional Graduate School

Career development assistance for graduate students is provided by sharing employment and other relevant information with the heads of practices.

Employment situations of graduates are monitored by faculty members belonging to the respective practices or by the Career Development Center. The information obtained is used to create and publish job- and industry-specific employment statistics posted on the AIU website. The employment situation of graduates from the respective practices is also published in the Graduate School Brochure. (Material 3-105, 3-106)

3-8 The Quantity and Maintenance of Facilities and Equipment

Akita International University’s Mid-Term Targets, proposes the vision to foster students’ learning and encourage faculty’s educational and research activities: (Material 3-107)

In line with the above-proposed vision, AIU’s Mid-Term Plan defines the goals that it should pursue: (Material 3-108)

(1) Provision and Maintenance of Land and Buildings

The AIU campus is located in the Yuwa District of Akita City, approximately 30 minutes from the city center and 10 minutes from Akita Airport by car. The campus is surrounded by beautiful nature and is an open premise without gates or fences and is thus seamlessly linked to the regional and global community outside. On the south side, the campus borders with the vast Akita Prefectural Central Park, where people gather for recreational and sports

activities. To the east is Plaza Crypton, a lodging and training facility where AIU-related parties (including applicants, students and their families) can stay or dine at discount rates.

Both the land and the building areas amply satisfy the legally required scale for a university, including the more than required amount of free, unused space.

All AIU facilities are built and provided with due consideration for students' learning and the teachers' educational and research environment. The following is a list of buildings provided within the premises:

i Administration Building (Building A)

The Administration Building houses the Chair of the Board/President's Office, the Managing Trustee's Office, the Vice President's Office, faculty's offices, administrative offices and conference rooms, as well as an auditorium with a seating capacity of approximately 100, and chemical and physical science laboratories.

ii Lecture Buildings (Buildings B, C and D)

The Lecture Buildings contain classrooms and teachers' offices. Building C also houses the Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration and a classroom specially equipped with a simultaneous interpreters' booth. This classroom is used for interpretation skill training in the GCP program.

Building D, completed in December 2008, houses a lecture hall that has a seating capacity of approximately 250 and is often used for open lectures, and graduate students' offices. Classrooms in the building are fully equipped with computer and projector systems, making them suitable for seminar work and discussion-based classes.

iii Faculty Club (Building E)

The Faculty Club houses a music room, part-time teachers' offices, the Health and Medical Care Room where a full-time resident nurse is posted, and a counseling room where a full-time counselor is posted.

iv Student Hall (Building F), Student Cabin, Club House

The Student Hall is a base for students' extracurricular and non-academic activities and contains recreational spaces, lounges, Student Center, Meeting Room, Tatami Room, studios, College Café, and AIU shop. The building also houses the Career Development Center that provides employment support, the Center for International Affairs that provides liaison with overseas universities as well as exchange student dispatch and receiving services. It is an important hub for student activities where people gather on a regular basis.

Additionally, the Student Cabin is available for students' gatherings including conferences and parties. The Club House is offered for students' club and committee activities as a meeting place or for storage.

v Library Building (Building L)

The Library Building houses the Nakajima Library, which is open all-day and all-year around, the ALAC and Information Technology (IT) Labs. It is a place primarily for students'

self-learning activities.

The building contains three IT Labs, equipped with a total of 150 computers that are available for students' free study. Two of the IT Labs are, similar to the library, open to students all-day and all-year around.

vi Center for Student Initiatives (Building I)

The Center opened in 2015 mostly as a hub for activities related to the MEXT Top Global University Project, of which AIU was chosen as a beneficiary in 2014.

As part of the Top Global University Project, graduate school students participate in activities related to their specialty area. For example, the "English Village," a program that teaches English to elementary and high school students using English only, is supported by students from the English Language Teaching Practices (ELT) program. The ELT students play a central role in the program, where they develop practical English teaching skills by actually teaching in the program.

vii Dormitory (Komachi Hall)

All new students at AIU are required to live in the dormitory (Komachi Hall) on campus during their first year at AIU.

The Komachi Hall has 185 rooms with a total of 277 bed capacity. One dormitory unit comprises a pair of two-bed rooms sharing a bathroom (toilet, shower and bathtub). Due to consideration for livability, one unit is normally shared by three students instead of the potential four.

Akita International University considers living in a dormitory is an integral part of an international liberal arts education for students, as learning to live side by side with people from different cultural and personal backgrounds, including students from abroad, a great opportunity to develop social adaptability, robustness and problem solving skills.

As a unit is normally shared by three residents, one bed will always be vacant. This vacancy is used for visitor accommodation for summer and other seasonal short-term programs (including high school students taking the Global Seminar or the Start Now Seminar or participants in the Japanese Intensive Winter Program). This will be another opportunity for both resident and visiting students to meet with new people.

viii Student Apartments

Akita International University has three on-campus student apartments, namely the "University Village," "Global Village" and "Sakura Village," that accommodate sophomore and higher-year students.

Including those staying at Komachi Hall, approximately 80% of AIU students live on campus, allowing them to liberally spend time on study or extracurricular activities.

Akita International University also provides a Graduate House (with a total of 24 rooms) as living accommodation for graduate students. As of May 2018, approximately 60% of graduate students live in the Graduate House.

ix Suda Hall (Multi-Purpose Hall)

The Suda Hall, normally used as a sports hall, is equipped with a retractable seating system

(with a seating capacity of approximately 500) and is used for enrollment and graduation ceremonies as well as for music events.

(2) Maintenance of Buildings and Facilities

The Regulations for Management of Facilities specifies that a Supervisor shall be appointed to supervise the maintenance of buildings and facilities as well as authorization and management for the use of building and facilities. In practice, the Chair of the Board acts as the Supervisor. In addition, a Facility Manager is appointed for each building or facility to be responsible for authorization and management of its use, theft and damage prevention measures including fire and natural disasters, cleaning and organizing the building/facility and maintaining it in a safe and healthful condition and all other required duties and tasks related to appropriate maintenance of the building/facility.

The “Akita International University Facility Management Plan” was established in academic year 2015 as an action plan to define the management policy related to buildings and facilities owned by AIU. In accordance with this Management Plan, individual facility plans are scheduled to be completed by academic year 2020 to define a mid- and long-term maintenance, repair and renovation strategy for existing and proposed buildings and facilities in AIU premises, assuring that they will be repaired or updated as required in an organized and timely manner. (Material 3-109, 3-110)

(3) Disaster Control and Response

The Regulations for Disaster Prevention Management specifies that the Chair of the Board shall supervise AIU’s entire disaster control and response operations. Under the Chair of the Board’s supervision, a Disaster Prevention Committee is organized and chaired by the Executive Officer. The other members of the Committee include the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Students, the Senior Director of the Administration Office and the heads of other related departments and offices.

According to the proviso of Article 6 of the Regulations for Disaster Prevention Management, the Senior Director of the Administration Office acts as the Fire Prevention Manager required to be appointed under Section 1, Article 8 of the national Fire Service Act. It is specified that a fire source controller must be appointed to be in charge of each room of the AIU building. In practice, the Facility Manager appoints such fire source controllers and reports the appointment to the Fire Prevention Manager. The Fire Prevention Manager must also appoint an Inspector for fire extinguishing and evacuation equipment and other fire control-related tools and systems. The Inspector is responsible for inspecting the equipment, tools and systems in accordance with the applicable criteria. Akita International University also forms a voluntary disaster control squad to minimize damage in the event of fire or natural disaster. (Material 3-111)

(4) Property Management

The Regulations Concerning Property Management specifies that the Executive Officer shall be responsible for the management of fixed assets and the like and the Director of the General Affairs shall be responsible for the same of non-fixed assets and commodities. (Material 3-112)

(5) Risk Control

Akita International University establishes the Guideline for Responding Crisis to specify the general approach and framework for risk management so as to be able to respond to individual risks in an appropriate and timely manner. (Material 3-113)

(6) Safety and Hygiene Control

In accordance with its Regulations for Establishment and Management of the AIU Health Committee, AIU established the Health Committee to implement measures required by the Industrial Safety and Health Act and other applicable safety and health laws and regulations and also to implement other necessary measures to prevent occupational disasters or health damages at AIU in an organized and comprehensive manner and to thereby offer a pleasant and healthful environment for its workforce.

The Health Committee is membered by a hygiene control expert, an industrial physician, AIU faculty appointed by the Chair of the Board, the Director of General Affairs, the Director of Faculty and Staff Support, the person in charge of managing campus facilities and a nurse. The Committee is chaired by one faculty and staff member that is appointed by the Chair of the Board. The Committee meets once a month to discuss and investigate relevant agenda according to the Committee Regulations. (Material 3-114)

The Committee also provides support for AIU members with physical or mental health concern or risks in coordination with the university nurse and the industrial physician. The Health Committee used to meet approximately once a year only, but the meeting frequency and the Committee membership have since been significantly reviewed and improved. Now the Committee meets once a month to provide better supervision over hygiene and health issues.

(7) Providing Facilities and Equipment Accessible for Disabled or Handicapped Users

The hallways and staircases in all the buildings are thoroughly equipped with handrails and non-slip materials. Height differences are made smoothly accessible by installing a slope. In addition, elevators, universally accessible bathrooms, studded paving blocks to aid the visually impaired, and magnifying reading machines are provided in an effort to provide a safe, functional and pleasant environment for students and visitors with a handicap or disability.

One room in the dormitory and six rooms in student apartments (four in Global Village and two in Sakura Village) are handicap-accessible rooms.

(8) Provision of an Information Infrastructure

In addition to IT Labs, the graduate students' offices and laboratories are equipped with computers (a total of 40 units) and printers. A network is configured to make the printers accessible and usable from any of the computers. Each teacher's office is also individually equipped with its own computer and printer.

Internet connectivity is provided via a high-speed connection as part of the Science Information Network, or SINET (an information communication network configured and operated by the National Institute of Informatics), creating a connected environment where

document database and electronic book services can be accessed speedily and conveniently. A wireless LAN network managed by an authentication system covers all AIU buildings, serving the needs of students, faculty and staff members.

(9) Current Status of Library and Academic Information Service Systems

As of academic year 2018, the library has 52,000 foreign and 29,000 Japanese books, 100 foreign and 63 Japanese magazines, 313,000 electronic books and 2,000 electronic journals and 3,000 video and audio materials to support learning, education and research of the university. It also offers four electronic databases.

The Nakajima Library collects library materials based on the “Library Acquisition Policy.” The AIU Library Administration Committee discuss and approve the Acquisition Policy as well as selection of library materials. Books, journals and audiovisual materials can be searched through Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) which is available from the “AIU Catalog” tab of the Library website. The “ONE-Search” tab on the same website is a discovery service launched in 2017 and searches all library materials of the Nakajima Library (including digital resources) all at once.

Students, faculty and staff members of AIU can use the library 24 hours a day, all year around. They may borrow materials at the counter or by using the automatic lending machine, which operates until midnight.

The library counter service is open until 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and Sundays, and to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and holidays. Service is provided in both Japanese and English languages. The library provides information literacy guidance and workshops and teaches students how to use its database effectively.

The library has a website, which offers information and access to digital resources anytime and from anywhere. Users can check the status of borrowed items, his/her past records, and request new library materials. (Material 3-115, 3-116, 3-117, 3-118)

(10) Linkage with Domestic and Overseas Educational Institutions via Mutual Academic Information Service System

The Nakajima Library participates in the Japanese inter-library loan (ILL) system, “NACSIS-ILL” of the National Institute of Informatics. This system supports inter-library services for document reproduction and lending of literature to researchers and provides students, faculty and staff members access to books and articles at other Japanese university libraries. The Nakajima Library also offers its collection to other libraries and has an agreement with the Akita Prefectural Library for a mutual book loan service. (Material 3-119, 3-120)

(11) Staffing the Library with Employees with Librarian or Other Professional Qualifications, Open Hours and Reading Rooms

The Nakajima Library is operated by 11 staff members (two university staff and nine outsourced staff.) Four staff members (1 university staff and 3 outsourced staff) have librarian licenses.

The library is open 24 hours a day, all year around. When there is no staff member working in the library, students, faculty and staff members can enter the library using their ID cards. The library floor area is 1,890 m² and contains 81,000 books. There are 300 seats, three group

study rooms, and a library counter and free Wi-Fi in all areas. Students can access the library without going outside, by using the sky-walk from other buildings.

(12) Teaching Assistants (TAs)

At AIU, graduate students are hired as Teaching Assistants to support smooth and efficient provision of academic programs. Teaching Assistants work under the supervision of the course teacher to provide various undergraduate and graduate course assistance services, such as helping the teacher prepare for classes or making educational materials, offering recommendations and suggestions to help students during classes, acting as an examination proctor or helping to organize guest speaker lecture meetings. Teaching Assistants do not assist in students' grading.

The hiring of a TA lasts a single semester. To hire TAs, a hiring plan must be submitted to the Graduate School Management Committee before the start of the semester and hire the required number by open recruitment, which must be accessible for all the graduate school students. The hiring and work results must be reported to the Graduate School Management Committee at the end of the semester. (Material 3-121)

(13) Research Management Committee

Akita International University, in accordance with Article 21 of the University Regulations, establishes the Research Management Committee to discuss matters concerning academic research to improve the general quality of research as well as to assure effective and meaningful use of research funds.

Provisions governing AIU's independent research funds are specified in the Research Funds Regulations to furnish appropriate research funds to the faculty. In addition, to promote greater participation in the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science's Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Program, research fund aid will also be received from the Program on an open screening basis by applying one year earlier.

Research fund management details are explained in a Research Funds Manual, prepared in Japanese and English in an easy-to-understand manner to assist teachers to access the available financial research aid sources. (Material 3-122, 3-123, 3-124)

Regulations are also in place to govern potential misconducts related to research activities. The Regulations are intended to provide an appropriate monitoring and control system over research misconducts and to thereby contribute to maintain and improve the research ethics of AIU faculty. In accordance with the Regulations, faculty members periodically receive research ethics education sessions. Ethics of or related to individual research activities of AIU faculty are subject to examination by the Research Management Committee. The Committee establishes the Guidelines for Research Ethics as well as the Guidelines for Research Ethics Involving Human Subjects and disseminates them to AIU researchers as the basic ethical criteria for them to be involved in academic research. (Material 3-125, 3-126, 3-127)

In addition, the AIU Press supports AIU faculty to publish findings from their research projects to contribute to greater academic, educational and cultural advancements.

(14) Faculty's Offices

Each full-time teacher is assigned an individual office room (15 m²/room). A shared

workspace is offered to part-time teachers. In some cases, one office room is shared by a number of part-time faculty members belonging to the same academic program. These are part of an effort to provide an environment where they can safely and comfortably concentrate on their educational and research activities.

Except for time spent in teaching classes and for administrative and student guidance duties, faculty members are free to spend all their time on their research activities.

2. Examples of Good Practice

(1) Small-Group Teaching and Students' Academic Achievements in the Faculty of International Liberal Arts

The small-group teaching style allows faculty members to pay closer attention to individual students. Group discussions and other self-initiative learning activities are widely implemented in the Faculty courses.

Students' learning performance is closely monitored by GPA and English proficiency tests to understand the effectiveness of the programs provided. Academic degrees are awarded in accordance with the University Regulations, the Regulations Regarding Academic Degrees and the Academic Standards and Regulations for Registration.

The average number of academic credits that an AIU student earns from a partner university during his or her exchange program (C- or better) is approximately 26. This is an evidence that the high quality education received at AIU before students leave for their study abroad equips them with a high level of English proficiency as well as advanced knowledge and skills in various academic disciplines.

The average TOEIC® TEST score attained by soon-to-graduate students is 893, which attests to the fact that AIU successfully produces students with excellent English language skills.

Despite the stringent achievement criteria imposed in all the courses and programs, the current dropout rate of AIU students is 3.0%. This is significantly lower than the average dropout rate of 6.2% of students in social and international study programs in Japanese universities, attesting to the quality of AIU's freshman year education and the systematic and well-thought out organization of its academic courses. (Material 3-128)

At the same time, half the undergraduate students took more than four years to graduate, which indicates that AIU, in the persistent and responsible pursuit of its education goals, never awards credits to students or allow them to graduate in an overly easy and relaxed manner.

(2) Class Organization in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program

The EAP is designed fully in accordance with AIU's educational goals and offers courses based on its curriculum policy. It is also provided with due consideration to allow the students to transfer smoothly from high school education to university learning.

Students are placed into leveled classes according to their English language proficiency. With the improvement in average English proficiency of new students in recent years, the threshold TOEFL® TEST scores for level placement have been raised 20 points in academic year 2013 to - 479, 480 - 499, and 500 or greater for Level I, Level II, and Level III, respectively.

The Faculty separately provides an “EAP Bridge Program” for advanced English learners with long-term experience of living overseas or having already received education in the English language.

(3) Education Programs in the Basic Education (BE) Program

Continuous efforts are being made for education method improvement toward achieving the eight educational goals of AIU, through BE Council and FD activities focusing on curriculum development. Many improvements have been discussed and were actually introduced into BE courses.

Many different changes were discussed, designed and implemented in each of the BE divisions. For example, there were several changes in the mathematical curriculum. Students entering AIU are coming in with a very diverse background, and therefore consideration was made for this diversity of students in addition to the variety of educational goals of students, their choices of GB or GS Advanced Studies, plans to enter the labor force or continue on to graduate study, and diverse discipline oriented interests. For this reason, in addition to the courses of College Algebra and Statistics that are necessary for GB, several additional math oriented courses were developed and implemented, such as “Math for Liberal Arts” (focusing on logic and general view of mathematical methodology), “Calculus” (in which students learn about the analysis of functions), “Mathematics Behind the Technological Society”, and “Poetry of Programming” (both serving an extension of knowledge of mathematics useful for computer science).

Another focus in curriculum development was in adapting new pedagogical methods. One example is the implementation of PBL courses, in which Japanese students work together with international students in the same team on some practical issues requiring problem solving and learn about their local communities in Akita.

(4) Educational Effectiveness of the Basic Education (BE) Program

By taking the BE Program, AIU students have successfully achieved a GPA 2.50 or greater and TOEFL® TEST 550 or greater, which are the requirements for them to start their study abroad. The high levels of credit acquisition performance that the students exhibit at partner universities during their exchange program is another strong indication that the BE Program has been effective in building their academic foundation before they leave for their study abroad.

Not only does the BE program prepare students for studies at overseas universities, the content and diversity of BE courses contribute to making AIU’s liberal arts education one of the highest quality academic programs in Japan.

(5) Faculty Members and Organization of the Global Business (GB) Program

The GB Program is taught by a balanced team of faculty members with excellent academic knowledge and qualification and those with strong real-life experience and training as businesspersons. Graduation-required courses (Principles of Microeconomics, Principles of Macroeconomics) taught by multiple full-time faculty members help to increase the breadth of the teaching content and accelerates the sharing of teaching experiences between faculty members. Continuous efforts are being made to provide an in-depth and extensive liberal arts education curriculum taught by the finest teaching team.

Besides performing teaching duties, faculty members are actively involved in a “brown bag-lunch initiative” to have research information actively shared between participating members and to thereby build up their collective research capability. To maintain and improve the educational quality of a university in the long term, it is imperative to continuously enhance its academic capability, which can only be done by an academically competent teaching/research team. The faculty members currently serving in AIU’s GB Program, though small in number, are creating an excellent research and educational environment in the university and successfully fulfilling the above-described requirement.

(6) Courses and Education Programs in the Global Business (GB) Program

As a new commitment that has started a few years ago, the GB Program offers courses that are intended to help students develop the skills to process real-life economic and financial data. A number of specialized core courses not only teach theories and concepts by themselves but also explain how they relate to real-life data. Due to the effect of these courses, some students have actually achieved fairly high skills to process and analyze data in the real-life economic or financial context, thus developing a sense of self-confidence that they can apply these skills to address problems in real-life situations. Some of them have even started to learn more advanced mathematics on their own initiative. Another positive outcome of the GB Program team’s effort to offer advanced specialized courses including those intended for data analysis skill development is that it is successfully fulfilling the academic interests and needs of exchange students.

Instead of merely handing out patchworks of knowledge, the GB Program is intended to offer a high-quality liberal arts education where the student’s self-discovered intellectual process is the most valued. Further enhancement of the GB Capstone Seminar is planned to include a series of comprehensive studies, where each seminar teacher uses his or her unique academic and personal strength to guide and assist their students to autonomously study a research subject, which would be equivalent to the writing of a graduation paper in conventional programs. Participation in such seminar study, experiencing in-depth academic research and exchanging constructive criticism with other members of the seminar, will be a great opportunity for the students to grow as a person and to learn about the importance of teamwork and leadership.

(7) Teaching Approach Used in the Global Business (GB) Program

There are four key elements in the teaching and curriculum approach of the GB Program. One element is that it does not only offer business-oriented courses such as management, marketing, organization and strategy but also include studies of basic and applied economics for broader learning.

With many of the full-time teachers in the Program having obtained a doctorate in world-class universities outside Japan and some of them also having globally recognized academic research records, it is safe to conclude that the educational quality of the AIU GB Program is at a competitive level with that of major universities around the world, including AIU’s partner universities.

The second element is that it does not only focus on the acquisition of academic knowledge but also covers its relationship with and applicability to real-world situations. The students first learn theoretical, conceptual and principal aspects of a given academic discipline and

then are guided into more in-depth study involving its application to and relationship with the real-world economy and politics including correlation between theory and data.

The third element is that the courses are designed to encourage students' self-initiated thinking, where too much reliance on unidirectional lecture-based teaching is avoided. The GB Capstone Seminar, a required course for all, asks students to proactively find important issues and study them as their research subject to submit a paper on it, collecting and organizing data and analyzing them in a statistical, quantitative and econometric manner.

A student's achievement in the Seminar is measured in a comprehensive manner based on rubric-based quantitative scores as well as qualitative assessment of the learning attitude, motivation, and quality of his or her communication with the teacher as well as with other students.

The final element is that, although the GB Program primarily focuses on business and economics-oriented areas of a liberal arts education, the Program has recently started to offer other advance specialized core courses that can be beneficial for learners eyeing graduate studies in the future.

(8) Courses and Education Programs in the Global Studies (GS) Program

The GS Program comprises three specialties of North American Studies, East Asian Studies and Transnational Studies. Each faculty member serving the GS Program is responsible for the program design and management of his or her specialty and also makes effort to maintain organic linkage between the teaching practices to make sure that the whole Program curriculum will remain as useful and meaningful as possible for all.

To address the increasingly greater level of interdisciplinary topics that students expect from the GS Program and their academic interests that are becoming more diverse, some faculty members of BE Program offer part of their courses as GS courses, and students in the GS Program are allowed to take some GB courses if desired.

In an effort for further curriculum improvement, the Program has recently hired three more full-time faculty members and has started to offer a number of short-term special courses taught by guest lecturers invited from overseas institutions as part of the MEXT Top Global University Project.

In addition to offering a systematically organized academic curriculum centered on social science, it also provides a variety of language learning courses including not only English but also French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Korean for greater foreign language learning opportunities.

The GS Capstone Seminar, which is a graduation-required course to complete the students' learning entire GS Program, requires the student to select, before departing for their study abroad, a Capstone Seminar that he or she wants to belong to according to his or her academic interest. The student then conducts the Capstone research assignment and completes the research paper over the period of two years including the one-year exchange program and the remaining one year after coming back from study abroad.

(9) Teaching Approach Used in the Global Studies (GS) Program

All GS courses are periodically reviewed through periodic faculty meetings to maintain and improve their educational quality. At meetings, opinions and information are exchanged between members to see if the courses offered are not academically biased or redundant, what the active learning status is in the individual courses, whether team teaching and other

joint initiatives of faculty members are working well, whether or not the assignment setting, testing/examination, and rubric (numeric assessment scheme) evaluation methods are appropriate, and what specific assistance and guidance is given to the students on an individual level. These efforts assure that faculty members serving the Program work with a shared understanding.

(10) Education Programs in the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

In order to make sure that learners who intend to acquire the Type 1 Teaching Certificate for Upper Secondary School can take all the necessary courses in the Program, guidance sessions are provided at the beginning of each semester to offer the students course selection recommendations. Courses are provided in a small-group environment and with a focus on self-initiative and mutual interaction to enable in-depth learning.

Students also have an opportunity to learn about the pedagogical methods of teaching English and to observe student-teacher relationships via practical experiences at actual schools. Such experiences include mandated teaching practices at high schools inside and outside Akita Prefecture, classroom visits to schools in Akita, and active engagement with students and pupils.

(11) Educational Effectiveness of the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

Although taking the TLP courses is not part of requirements for graduation and most of the TLP courses are provided in the evening, the number of students who register to the TLP courses is increasing each year. Every year, multiple students from the TLP successfully pass the teacher employment test to be employed as full-time teachers.

(12) Education Programs in the Japanese Language Program (JLP)

Exchange students who come to study at AIU are divided into nine to eleven Japanese language proficiency levels (the number of levels provided varies depending on in which semester the Program is taken) based on the placement test they take during the orientation period.

In each level, students take a general language learning course that is worth six academic credits and other specific language skill courses that are each worth one to three credits. To address the needs of intermediate and advanced-level Japanese language learners, content-oriented courses that give academic teaching in Japanese instead of focusing solely on language learning are provided in an effort to provide a curriculum that suits the diverse academic backgrounds and needs of exchange students. For the best learning effect, the largest number of students that may be accommodated in each class is limited to 15.

Japanese Language Program courses are open not only to short-term exchange students but also to regular undergraduate and graduate students who are not native Japanese speakers.

(13) Educational Goals and Courses Common to All Professional Graduate School Programs

Although the specific educational focus of each practices of the professional graduate school differs, the three practices have a common goal of developing human resources with a capability to work on a global scale using advanced language communication skills and

cooperate between the fields by offering courses common to all three practices.

The following paragraphs describe the current educational and research situation in the respective practices as well as ongoing efforts and commitments taken toward broadening the practical knowledge base and achieving greater teaching skills and competence.

○ Courses and Education Programs Offered in the English Language Teaching Practices (ELT) Program

All the specialized courses offered in the ELT program is intended to link theory and practice involved in the education of the English language. The courses are designed to help the learner develop in-depth academic knowledge as well as excellent teaching skills that are required of English language teachers, a job requiring high levels of professional capability. A key feature of the ELT curriculum is that all students must take “English Teaching Seminars,” which are teaching practice courses and can be registered as ELT700 (awarding 3 credits) or separately as ELT701, 702 or 703 (awarding 3 credits in total), which is a great opportunity for the students to apply learned theory to practice by actually teaching in the classroom. During the teaching practice, students are expected to put into practice all the knowledge and skills they learned in the ELT courses, and required to declare in advance what specific theory will be carried out in the classroom during the practice sessions. (Material 3-129)

All the required and elective ELT courses are designed with special consideration to help the students develop practical teaching skills. For example, all the courses use MEXT-approved school textbooks as a study material to explore how the learned educational theory can be best applied to real-life teaching.

Many of the courses are given in a workshop style augmented by lectures. Teaching is focused on linking educational theory to actual school textbooks so that students can figure out how theory can be applied to actual English language education environment in Japanese schools.

○ School Class Observation by Faculty Members Serving the English Language Teaching Practices (ELT) Program and Their Feedback to Schools

The faculty members of the ELT program include those who have actually served as English teachers at elementary, junior high and high schools and other educational institutions. To monitor and respond to changes in school education, the members periodically visit elementary, junior high and high schools throughout the year to observe their English language classes. As part of these visits, the ELT faculty interact with teachers to discuss the teaching content and approach and offer necessary recommendation and suggestions. This is a valuable opportunity for faculty members to understand the issues and problems that teachers face in contemporary educational environment. (Material 3-130)

Findings and insights from the above-described practice and research activities are fed back to teachers in various forms, for example as part of teaching license renewal sessions or at “Teachers Seminars” that are organized and provided by AIU.

○ Faculty Members and Organization of the Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT) Program

The team teaching system, supported by multiple faculty members to assist the second-year teaching practice and to supervise action research activities, assures that all members serving the JLT program work with a shared understanding and approach as to how a Japanese language education should be implemented and what educational theory should be applied to action research supervision and reflective practitioner training.

In the JLT program, efforts are made to maintain constant communication between faculty members in the program. A team research project by the members is underway on the subject of reflective practitioner training, which is critical to the teaching content given in this teaching practices.

Initiatives to promote shared understanding between teachers and to encourage their continued training have been ongoing since the inauguration of the professional graduate school. A number of joint research and co-authored publications have been released in the fields of Japanese language teaching and reflective practitioner training.

○ Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT) Program

The JLT program offers teaching practice sessions as a key element to its practical education. The program curriculum, comprising the Fall Semester practice where students learn about basic classroom teaching skills (JLT650 (a required course awarding 3 credits) “Design of Japanese Language Teaching Practicum”), the winter intensive practice where students have an opportunity to be involved in class management (JLT651 (a required course awarding 3 credits) “Japanese Language Teaching Practicum”) and the Spring Semester overseas practice where students work in a group to complete all the steps involved in the teaching training, from planning and implementing the classes to conducting on-site coordination (JLT652 (a required course awarding 3 credits) “Japanese Language Teaching Practicum on Abroad and Writing Action Research Paper”), is a truly unique one. (Material 3-131)

○ Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Global Communication Practices (GCP) Program

Courses in the GCP program offer discussions, presentation assignments and other activities that are geared to help students attain greater communication skills in the English language. A unique feature of the GCP teaching approach is that it also offers highly specialized professional training courses such as the interpretation skill training course, which is conducted in a classroom equipped with a simultaneous interpreters’ booth (GCP614 “Interpreting (English/Japanese) II”), a practical seminar course where students conduct mock media conferences in English (GCP642 “Introduction to International Public Relations”) and a training course for writing news articles, also in the English language (GCP643 “Introduction to International Journalism”). (Material 3-132)

(14) In-Service Teachers in the English Language Teaching Practices (ELT) Program

There is a greater need for English language teachers who are already teaching in schools to obtain further practical training at graduate schools. On the other hand, learning side by side with teachers that are in active service is a valuable opportunity for young students without any teaching experience and are yet to obtain feedback based on actual teaching experience. This is one of the unique features of the AIU ELT program.

Moreover, the “Special Topics in Language Teaching/Learning (a) ~” courses starting from ELT680 (each an elective course awarding 3 credits) focus on different themes each academic year to address the changing learning needs of the students. This is another unique feature of the ELT program, allowing an annually variable teaching content without significantly changing the whole curriculum.

(15) Education Program Design Considerations at the Professional Graduate School

In order to allow graduates from Japanese and overseas universities to smoothly enter the professional graduate school program, the ELT and GCP programs offer April and September admission options. (Material 3-133) On the other hand, as most of the students in the JLT program find employment in overseas educational institutions after completing the program, completion of the program and new admission are scheduled in August and September, respectively.

When graduates from other Japanese universities wish to start JLT courses at AIU from April, they can use the Pre-Graduate Student System to register for a maximum of two courses, worth a total of six credits, before being officially admitted into the professional graduate school. The Pre-Graduate Student System also offers a gap-year admission option where credits can be awarded to work before enrollment, which is applicable to all of the three practices. Specifically, students who take this gap-year option must write a paper that academically reflects on their professional job experience, which can be deemed as equivalent to taking GCS610 (a required elective course awarding 3 credits) “Reflective Professional Experience.”

This is one of the efforts to address to the diverse academic needs of the students through the Pre-Graduate Student System. (Material 3-134, 3-135)

(16) Teaching Approach of the Professional Graduate School

All classes of the AIU Professional Graduate School are conducted in a small-group format, with all except for specialized courses in the JLT program given in the English language.

Japanese Language Teaching Practices courses that are provided as a common course are also offered in English, and in accordance with the graduate school policy it expects all its newcomers to possess an already high level of English language proficiency. This English-based education is intended for the development of advanced global communication skills that would be required of highly professional individuals that the graduate school aims to train in an effort to respond to the need of the global community.

(17) Validation of Educational Targets, Education Programs and Learning Achievements

As part of a periodic validation scheme, the Administration Office has newly appointed an Institutional Research (IR) Specialist in 2016. The IR Specialist was charged with a task to

collect and organize students' academic achievement data from inauguration to graduation, in an effort to understand how effective AIU's education has been. The Specialist divided the students into separate groups according to what selection scheme they have been admitted into and analyzed their academic achievements in multiple aspects, such as their basic academic competence, English language proficiency, cumulative GPA since enrollment, and career or study track record after graduation so as to understand the current effectiveness of AIU's education and to thereby identify issues and problems that can be improved upon.

Findings from the above investigation prompted discussion of the need of a pre-admission education, resulting in the opening of a new "Global Seminar Intake Program" in academic year 2017. The Intake Program, delivered with the assistance of EAP teachers and offered specially to entrants who are admitted through the Global Seminar selection scheme, is designed to help students improve their academic English proficiency to prepare for courses at AIU and to also motivate them for their upcoming academic education.

Concurrently with the above-described investigation, AIU started a student course evaluation survey on all the courses that are offered by the Faculty of International Liberal Arts and the Professional Graduate School. Questions asked are each associated with AIU's specific educational goals. The survey as a whole asks the students whether or not and how they feel their academic achievement has improved by taking the course in question. Course scores are gathered and averaged for each program to understand how the program is viewed in the eyes of the students.

In addition, a pre-graduation learning assessment survey is conducted as a form of indirect evaluation on the perceived degree of educational goal achievement. Findings from the pre-graduation survey revealed that the students are generally satisfied that they successfully have attained AIU's educational goals and have learned useful academic research skills, which obviously indicates AIU's curriculum policy is functioning in an effective manner. However, the findings also revealed that students lack confidence in their skills to quantitatively validate a research approach, to apply empirical techniques or to participate in debates or field work related to teaching methods. Through the survey findings, faculty members now work with a shared understanding of what needs to be improved and enhanced.

(18) Admission of New Students

○ Faculty of International Liberal Arts

For academic year 2018, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts had 1,651 applicants (including both April and September enrollments). Of those, 1,478 actually took the admission test and 199 were admitted. In addition, two students are taking courses as special non-degree seeking students and six had their status changed from special non-degree seeking student to degree-seeking student. As far as April admission is concerned, the Faculty had 10.5 times more applicants to the general selection scheme than its admission capacity, far exceeding its Mid-Term Plan target of five. (Material 3-136)

This excellent popularity among potential entrants is a result of various promotion efforts including visits made to more than 300 high schools in and outside Akita Prefecture, application briefings offered in six cities across the nation, participation to commercially organized joint guidance events targeting high school students, AIU students visiting their high schools to talk about their experience of successful admission and life in university, and open campus events with more than 2,000 participants from around the country.

- Professional Graduate School

In line with the type of selection schemes commonly adopted by American and other overseas graduate schools, the AIU Professional Graduate School selects its new students solely on a document screening basis. This helps reduce the amount of financial burden for applicants, especially for those from overseas. Applicant screening is done three times a year (October, January and June), and successful applicants are admitted in April or September (September only in the case of the JLT program).

As of May 2018, 14 of the 39 graduate school students (35.9%) are overseas students (those who are residing in Japan on a student visa) and add to the diversity of AIU student composition. (Material 3-137)

To avoid situations where the teaching content of the chosen practices do not match the student's learning needs, the graduate school recommends applicants to have a personal interview in advance. As a result, most of the applicants opt to receive an interview, typically by video calling. (Material 3-138, 3-139)

For those who wish to apply to the graduate school but do not have the level of English proficiency that meets the application requirement, AIU advises them to take its undergraduate EAP Program courses first to improve their English proficiency. They can then re-apply for admission to the graduate school after fulfilling the language proficiency requirement. This scheme is intended to allow more students to apply to or enter the graduate school and also to assist in the transition of learning in a smooth fashion.

The scheme was introduced in academic year 2012, and the number of enrollees who applied in the last three years is only one, in academic year 2017.

However, from the result of the above-described initiatives and schemes, the graduate school, for the first time, accepted 34 new students in academic year 2018, fulfilling its admission capacity. (Material 3-140)

(19) Student Assistance

- Learning Support

The Nakajima Library provides a convenient and comfortable study environment 24 hours a day, all year around. At the library counter, staff members provide reference service from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and holidays in both Japanese and English. The library staff offer new student orientations, information literacy guidance and workshops in classes with cooperation of faculty members.

- Personal Support for Students

Akita International University is a small university where a high percentage of its students live on campus. This enables AIU to provide a flexible and timely support to students in many aspects of their life in AIU, including academic, personal welfare and health care support.

With many foreign students studying at AIU and with all classes held in the English language, it is natural for the Administration Office staff to provide student support services in both Japanese and English.

Additionally, the Campus Life Committee and the Student Affairs staff work together to provide more daily-basis assistance in an effort to provide a pleasant and supportive environment for the students to live and study in with both creativity and risk hedge advantages.

- Study and Career Path Support

Due to the meticulous and individualized support to its students, which is an advantage that a small-scale university can offer, and also due to potential employers' high expectation for the globally competent human resources that AIU develops, 100% of the students who wish to find employment after graduation have successfully secured job offers almost every year since academic year 2007.

Forty to 50 percent of the employers who hired AIU graduates are in the manufacturing sector. (Material 3-141, 3-142)

(20) Teaching Assistants (TAs)

The TA hiring practice, where graduate students provide course management assistance services to faculty members, is not only helpful for teachers but also for students working as TAs, as it provides valuable training opportunities to help prepare to work as a teacher, researcher, or apply the skills gained to other professions in the future.

(21) In-School Facilities

Since its inauguration and expansion throughout the years, AIU has been making continuous effort to provide the best appropriate facilities and infrastructure for its students and employees to support their educational and research activities. A particularly noteworthy element of AIU's infrastructure is its library. Its all-day and all-year around service and beautiful architecture make the library widely known to and loved by people both in and outside of AIU.

(22) Exchanges with Overseas Partner Universities

Akita International University accepts a steady number of students on exchange programs from excellent partner universities overseas every year, adding to the global campus culture, and also dispatches its students to partner universities, who enroll in courses while there and study alongside the local students. They earn an average of 25 to 30 academic credits by the end of the exchange study, which can be included in the credit completion requirement for graduation (124 credits needed) at AIU. (As of May 2018, 155 students from 29 countries and regions are studying at AIU, and 187 AIU students are studying at 36 countries and regions overseas). (Material 3-143)

Akita International University also has exchange opportunities for faculty members with partner universities, which enables the students to receive high-quality classes given by instructors from overseas even in rural Akita Prefecture. The exchange programs are also a valuable opportunity for AIU faculty to experience teaching or researching at overseas

universities, which greatly adds to their educational quality improvement. (As of academic year 2017 Winter Program, six courses were taught by visiting lecturers from partner universities, and four AIU faculty taught at partner universities.)

The “Partner’s Program,” where courses are jointly provided with overseas partner universities, is also in place (a three-week program has been implemented from May to June 2018 with the College of William and Mary and another educational institution. And a six-week program is scheduled from January to February 2019 with the Australian National University). This is part of the efforts to accelerate international standardization among faculty members and universities.

3. Areas for Improvement

(1) Measurement and Clarification of Learning Achievement

Previously, academic achievement of AIU students has been measured mostly by their GPA and TOEFL[®] TEST scores, the number of credits that they earn from partner universities during exchange program, and the rate of successful employment after graduation. Currently, AIU is looking at other approaches to measure the students’ learning achievement more effectively, which will likely incorporate a wider variety of assessment indices in an effort to gain meaningful insights to the effectiveness of its education method and curriculum.

Generally, it is not easy to maintain the course’s academic difficulty at a constant level when there is a significant variation in the levels of knowledge and skills that the students have. Especially, courses that are taught to a large group of students often involve a mixture of learners for whom the classes are too easy and not challenging enough and those for whom the classes are too difficult to understand. To address this issue, it may be beneficial to redesign the entrant selection and admission scheme so that admission test scores and other academic records of the incoming students can be used more effectively to determine if they are academically ready to take certain courses.

The Active Learning and Assessment Center already offers individualized support to students who face learning difficulty after enrollment. Furthermore, more effort is needed to present to students more clearly on how much more academic achievement they are expected to attain before graduation, which currently includes improvement in English language proficiency, GPA score growth, and the number of credits to be earned from the partner university during the exchange program. Contemplation as to what other indices would be appropriate, in terms of ease of understanding for both the students and the stakeholders supporting AIU so as to better present to them the degree of academic achievement are being made.

(2) Academic Courses and Education Programs

To fulfill not only the learning aspiration of AIU students but also that of exchange students from overseas, some of whom are from world-class educational institutions, AIU must offer dynamic and the best-quality teaching on a continuous basis so that exchange students will be satisfied with the same or superior quality of education as the ones they have received at their home universities.

Measures have been taken to offer a systematically organized curriculum, for example,

streamlining required and elective courses, improving the course coding and reviewing the composition and balance of academic fields being taught, and individualized guidance through the Academic Advising System has added to the effort to assure that students will take and complete courses in the best sequential and progressive manner. However, further enhancement of the curriculum, especially the Advanced Education Program, is desired, for example with the introduction of course registration requirements or stronger association of teaching content with that of BE courses, to provide greater benefit for learners.

With 16 different selection schemes being used to admit new entrants, there will naturally be a truly diverse composition of students in both cultural and academic aspects. To effectively address such diversity, further course design improvement efforts may be required to assure for each student a smooth transition from high school learning to university-level education.

(3) Teaching Approach for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program

Following the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Institutions in 2015, AIU has been tackling the following four issues identified through the Evaluation/Accreditation:

- i Promoting the pan-skill activity that would allow students to understand how each of the skills they are taught in EAP work together in academia and in the working world
- ii Promoting the understanding of what is meant by the “liberal arts” or how they may be applied to study and life
- iii Meeting the skill-specific needs for EAP III students in regard to the TOEFL ITP® test, especially for those who have not yet reached the minimum score for study abroad
- iv Fostering an even more multicultural and tolerant approach to diversity at AIU and in the wider community

These issues are shared among EAP faculty and the whole AIU faculty member. Comments from students referring to these issues have also been noted in focus group meetings.

More coordination effort will be made by the EAP Director to control, by coordinating the dates of events that involve the students’ academic evaluation, such as tests, assignments, projects and their deadlines, and the amount of workload that may be placed upon the students at a given academic level, so as not to discourage their motivation for learning.

(4) Teaching Approach for Basic Education (BE) Program

Although the average size of a single class in BE is approximately 17 students, this does not mean that all the classes are taught in a small-group style. For example, many of the mathematics, natural science, health and physical education, intercultural communications and computer literacy courses have more than 40 students in a single class. Especially, students who are not confident in mathematics need to receive instruction and assistance in small-group teaching to obtain an adequate educational effect. More coordination effort, such as providing more teaching sections, may be necessary to attain AIU’s educational goals.

(5) Number of Students in a Class and Other Issues Involving the Global Business (GB) Program

- i With a focus on building basic knowledge to start business education, the GB Program has provided basic economic courses (microeconomics and macroeconomics), that are graduation-required courses to complete the Program, in small-group classes. However, as popularity of the GB Program grows, with more students selecting the Program and with a greater need to broaden the scope and diversity of advanced education courses, continued provision of small-group teaching is becoming increasingly more difficult. To maintain the educational quality of critical courses, this issue must be addressed in an effective and timely manner.
- ii The GB Program is supported by a small number of teachers but yet is required to provide a broad range of diverse business and economics-related courses. A currently perceived weakness of the Program is that it is not always successful in presenting a clear path connecting the acquisition of knowledge to its application to real-life use cases.
A key element and most intriguing and inspiring aspect of GB education is the application of learned knowledge to real-life situations. Regrettably, some courses actually end without covering such application scope. This issue must be addressed by a dual effort of reviewing and improving the program course design and also building up the educational skills of teachers serving the Program.
- iii Due to the small number of full-time teachers available, the GB Capstone Seminar that follows study abroad period may not adequately address the diverse academic interests and needs of the students who have returned from the exchange program. Some students feel that they have not successfully obtained the practical knowledge and skills that would more adequately support their research and paper writing works in the Seminar.

(6) Teaching Approach for the Global Business (GB) Program

Firstly, there are only limited learning or teaching opportunities to form a link between the primarily lecture-based economics courses and the more practical business study courses giving discussion, presentation and case study assignments.

Secondly, with the academic interests and backgrounds of the students registered to a course becoming increasingly more diverse, it is becoming more difficult to provide classes that will similarly satisfy the learning needs of all the participating students at the same time. For example, some students who have opted to take the mathematics test in the admission selection scheme are often ready for and eager to take very advanced levels of economics studies while most of the other students are much more interested in business and marketing-oriented studies. It is essential to strategically design an optimized combination of courses that will best satisfy the largest number of students.

(7) Educational Effectiveness of the Global Business (GB) Program

To study and measure the educational effectiveness of a given program for improvement, it is critical to monitor and understand all the factors that may possibly involve the program, including what specific courses and teaching contents are being offered in the respective

academic disciplines, which in the case of the GB Program are business and mathematics studies, as well as what improvements are desired by the students and what specific needs they may have. To actually carry these tasks through, constant and unobstructed communication and exchange of information must be maintained between faculty members and also between the faculty and administrative staff.

An in-depth look into how faculty members can be best motivated toward such ideal communication must be taken.

(8) Specialty Programs in the Global Studies (GS) Program

The GS Program offers three specialty programs of North American Studies, East Asian Studies and Transnational Studies. Students are asked to select one of the three specialty programs to pursue. While the graduation requirements that are common to all the GS students are clearly defined, those for the individual specialty programs are not, including what specific courses must be taken to complete a given specialty program. Instead, the seminar teacher presents to each student a “Model Study Plan,” a non-binding plan that proposes a recommended combination of courses that is considered to offer the best relevance and consistency with the student’s academic interest and his or her chosen specialty program. The student is expected to plan the course registration by referring to his or her Model Study Plan presented, but some students veer from the plan, taking courses that may not be associated to Model Plan. This situation needs to be addressed in terms of academic guidance improvement.

As globalization continues apace, the GS Program is required to anticipate an increasingly broader and more diverse range of topics and situations and the students are having a much wider variety of academic interests and learning needs than before. However, the current specialty program scheme may not consistently be successfully responding to the need for diversity and variety.

(9) Educational Effectiveness of the Global Studies (GS) Program

While students are exhibiting an increasingly greater awareness of the importance of their “Model Study Plan,” there are still a number of isolated cases where the course selection is not very logical or appropriate according to the student’s chosen specialty or academic interest.

(10) Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Teacher’s License Program (TLP)

Courses in the TLP provide classes during the evening, after the other classes are closed. This makes it difficult for some students to take the courses despite their obvious interest in acquiring a teaching license. Some measures are desired to assist students who cannot or are hesitant to take the TLP courses due to scheduling difficulty or other reasons.

(11) Educational Effectiveness of the Teacher’s License Program (TLP)

As AIU has only a small number of full-time faculty members available for the TLP, many courses have to be supported with the help of lecturers from other educational institutions that serve the Program on a part-time basis. As a result, information of individual students,

including his or her academic strengths, weaknesses and personal skills, are not being shared between the faculty in an adequate manner.

(12) Student Course Evaluation and Learning Assessment Surveys

Further improvement of the student course evaluation survey must be pursued to design a scheme that can effectively obtain insight into the students' true feelings and intentions and logically analyze the answers given by students, whose level of learning motivations and academic knowledge and capabilities vary significantly, and fed back to university administration and management in the best effective manner.

Since the learning assessment surveys has just been started from March 2016 and has been conducted only three times so far, it is still early to make any conclusions. Continuous research and analysis is warranted for understanding the patterns of learning outcomes and the underlying causes.

(13) Admission of New Students

○ Faculty of International Liberal Arts

The number of new students from the local Akita Prefecture was 28 in academic year 2018, which is below AIU's Mid-Term Plan target of 35 students. This has been pointed out as a room for improvement in the corporate evaluation scheme, where increased effort was requested.

While various initiatives have been taken to solicit more applicants from within Akita Prefecture, including visits to all the high schools in the Prefecture, pre-admission education programs offered specially to successful Global Seminar participants, and visiting lectures given by AIU faculty members, the insufficient number of students from within the Prefecture may be partially due to the popularity of AIU that is recently increasing on a national scale, which is raising the level of competition among potential applicants and possibly causing some local students to not apply. Another factor may be the local students' inherent tendency of wanting to live and study in big cities. (Material 3-144)

(14) Student Assistance

○ Personal Support for Students

A small number of students are financially disadvantaged but for various reasons are not eligible to apply to existing financial aid schemes, and there are others that have difficulty repaying an uncontrollably increased amount of student loan due to a lack of monetary management. To address these issues, additional means of financial assistance as well as guidance for better financial management are desired.

○ Study and Career Path Support

The number of students who opt to work at or find employment in the in-Prefecture companies remains very low.

- In-School Facilities

Some living facilities and their installed equipment, such as those of the student dormitory (Komachi Hall) and apartments (University Village), are getting old. Repair or renewal of these facilities is desired.

In addition, the general accommodation capacity of student apartments is not sufficient to respond to the large number of students wishing to live on campus.

The university cafeteria has not been expanded for years despite the larger number of students being accepted and therefore does not have sufficient capacity to serve the students' need. Both the infrastructure and operation must be reviewed for improvement.

With approximately 80% of the students living on the campus including many overseas students and also considering the geographical remoteness from urban areas, best effort must be taken to provide a safe, pleasant and convenient on-campus environment for the students of various nationalities with risk control (disaster response functionality, stress mitigation etc.) considerations.

4. Action Plan

(1) Measurement and Clarification of Learning Achievement

To assure a world-standard education level, which is defined as one of the Long-Term Vision targets, benchmarking initiatives on AIU's educational effectiveness and other factors will be taken with cooperation from overseas universities and other educational institutions, to achieve and maintain a quality of teaching comparable to the global standard. (Material 3-145)

In both the GB and the GS Programs, which are provided as Advanced Education Programs, preparations and data collection are underway for a full-scale introduction of rubric evaluation system. A proposed measure is to study the EAP Program report that all new students write in English shortly after enrollment and compare it with the seminar research paper that complete the student's entire undergraduate learning.

New initiatives have just been started to directly assess the students' learning achievements primarily using existing cumulative data that is available at AIU, including course grades and proficiency test scores.

Further discussion on how to best associate findings from indirect investigation and student course evaluation surveys with those from direct investigation such as learning assessment surveys in order to effectively determine the effectiveness of teaching given by AIU is warranted.

(2) Academic Courses and Education Programs

To provide a curriculum with greater international relevance and promote it to the global academic community, AIU must maintain and increase its effort to address existing issues and to thereby evolve into a world-class liberal arts university.

Initiatives that have been taken as part of its involvement in the MEXT Top Global University Project will be continued and increased in the coming years, including enhancement and extension of Japan Studies courses in the curriculum, stronger

commitments to international PBL projects and also to the Partner's Program working jointly with faculties from world-class overseas partner universities, inviting guest lecturers from overseas to provide special lectures, and dispatching AIU teachers to teach at partner institutions to build up their instructional skills. To fulfill not only the learning aspiration of AIU students but also that of exchange students from overseas, some of whom are from world-class educational institutions, AIU must offer dynamic and the best-quality teaching on a continuous basis so that exchange students will be satisfied with the same or superior quality of education as the ones they have received at their home universities.

To support the existing curriculum, AIU must depend heavily on the work of part-time faculty (18.5% of faculty serving the AIU curriculum work on a part time basis). Therefore, the best consideration must be taken to maintain and improve the quality of teaching given by part-time lecturers. Although not at all easy due to time restrictions, an increased effort must be made to develop and implement university-wide measures for the improvement of the quality of teaching that AIU offers.

Although a number of unique initiatives such as bidirectional classes and PBL courses are already in place, more innovative teaching approaches such as the "Flipped Classroom" method must be considered to provide better, more in-depth teaching.

With a focus on interdisciplinary approaches spanning different academic fields, efforts to review and improve the existing curriculum must be continued to achieve a synergistic effect between programs while maximizing the strengths of individual programs. This is a part of AIU's commitment to evolve into a world-class liberal arts university.

In order to allow for a continuous cohort study based on CLA+, AIU selected a group of students who agreed to participate in the test from each examination types, with the entrance quota for the respective types taken into account. The students of this group will be encouraged to take the series of this test during their time at the university by being briefed on the purpose of conducting CLA+ and its individual results.

(3) Educational Effectiveness of the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program

Addressing the need for a pan-skill culminating activity or project, the Capstone Project was developed by the EAP faculty. Students in EAP III and in BRI 150 (EAP Bridge) must complete a "Capstone Project." The Capstone Project is a pan-skill project that incorporates work done in unison in the EAP Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening courses. The Capstone Project involves research carried out through the auspices of the EAP III Reading course, an academic paper developed from research that is written in the EAP III Writing course, and a TED Talk™ type presentation that is conducted in the EAP III Speaking and Listening course. The best presentations and presenters are selected by peer and faculty in each of the EAP sections and those students selected are invited to give their presentations again at a university-wide assembly called the "AIU Showcase," held in July of each year. Those students selected for the AIU Showcase are also invited to give their presentations to the wider community during Open Campus events that are held several times a year.

Addressing the concern about a lack of understanding of the liberal arts among AIU students, the EAP faculty (1) developed a reader that explores cogent essays to help students explore the meaning of, and appreciate the importance and applicability of the liberal arts, and (2) initiated a series of "EAP Liberal Arts Workshops" for EAP III and EAP Bridge students. The reader, *Introducing the Liberal Arts*, was compiled and edited by Mr. Miguel

Sosa of the EAP department with the assistance of faculty from throughout the university. Students of EAP III and EAP Bridge are required to read the essays compiled in the text and explore their meanings through a series of four workshops conducted by Mr. Sosa, and invited guests. In addition, students are required to prepare and deliver a poster presentation on aspects of the liberal arts and/or the essays from the reader as a finishing activity for the workshop series.

Regarding the TOEFL® TEST skill-based needs for our EAP III students, we have initiated a voluntary set of TOEFL® TEST workshops for EAP III students who have not yet achieved the minimum of a 550 TOEFL® TEST score. Students register online for one or all of the workshops and each workshop addresses a particular part of the TOEFL ITP® TEST and focuses on a specific skill or area (reading, grammar, or listening). The workshop series culminates with a practice test, the results of which are analyzed with the students, and as needed, study for improvement either individually or through the AAC (AIU tutoring center) is continued.

Addressing the need to foster a multicultural perspective and a tolerant attitude toward diversity, the EAP faculty has also introduced a session on multiculturalism to its student advising program. Students are given the opportunity to discuss the matter of diversity with their peers at one of the sessions after watching a documentary on issues of diversity. EAP-wide facilitated discussion thereafter is held where students are given further opportunities to discuss diversity and racial and social tolerance issues in today's society.

(4) Teaching Approach for Basic Education (BE) Program

Recent economic and political events show an increasing role of technology in all aspects of social life. To be able to understand and to engage in technological innovation, students must learn more about science and its methodology. The AIU Curriculum should be enriched with science-oriented subjects, not only courses in traditional sciences, but courses in other disciplines that address the influence of scientific and technological thought.

(5) Number of Students in a Class, Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Global Business (GB) Program

- i Improvements can be made by improving the teaching skills of the existing full-time faculty members, having more full-time members in the program to provide more required courses, and offering more in-class group work and other practical assignments.
- ii Make increased efforts to have a shared understanding between GB Program teachers to offer classes where knowledge and concepts are more actively applied to real-world scenarios.

Another focus for improvement is to import not only theory but also actual data into the teaching content. While an "Economic Data Handling" course, where students are guided to obtain the practical capability and skills to process economic data, is already included in the curriculum, a new course should be designed where the same teaching approach is more extensively pursued.

- iii A "3C Policy" that is maintained to educate the GB Program students is to encourage each student to be wholly "Committed" to the set of values that he or she truly believes in, to develop the "Competence" to be able to face any professional challenge, and to always have a sense of "Compassion" to care for others.

The GB Capstone Seminar is intended not only as an opportunity to complete the student's personal learning but also as an opportunity to put the "3Cs" into practice. More thought should be given to how to encourage a deeper pursuit of the "3Cs."

Other improvement efforts are being considered to enhance the Capstone Seminar. To enable each student to effectively summarize and complete his or her entire undergraduate learning in a given specialty area with the help of the seminar teacher who is competent in that specialty, the student must be guided to find and select the study subject on his or her own initiative, an intangible mechanism must be in place where students can mutually review each other's research content for improvement, and the students must be assisted and empowered to achieve desired results within a defined time frame and to have a multifaceted approach to look at a subject so that they are interested not only in their own research but those of their peer to enhance the research quality of the entire group they belong to.

- iv Academically speaking, the quality of courses provided in the GB Program is at a competitive level with those of major universities and educational institutions overseas. A weakness, however, is that the number of available courses is far limited than that of overseas business schools and economic departments due to the small number of teachers serving the Program. Solution to this issue must be sought, in view of AIU's financial structure.

(6) Specialty Programs, Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Global Studies (GS) Program

To create a better, more beneficial curriculum in line with the aim of the GS Program, the current specialty system, where study areas are geographically divided into three regions of the world, may need to be fundamentally reviewed. While the primary focus may remain on social science studies, a more interdisciplinary list of specialties covering humanities and natural science, or, as a more drastic measure, discontinuation of the specialty system altogether may need consideration.

Either way, such alteration of the curriculum should include review and renewal of both the GS-common and specialty-specific credit completion and graduation requirements, which are not working perfectly under the current condition.

(7) Teaching Approach for the Global Studies (GS) Program

The GS Program has introduced a new teaching quality enhancement system on a trial basis since the 2014 Fall Semester. The trial system prepares guidelines for educational methods and guidance that AIU pursues and allows participating full-time faculty members to discuss possible improvements by mutually observing the classes of other members and having meetings before or after the observation.

System implementation will continue in the future, being added with improvements whenever possible.

(8) Educational Effectiveness of the Global Studies (GS) Program

Effort must be increased to encourage the students to have a greater awareness of the importance of his or her "Model Study Plan." Faculty members should also be motivated to place a stronger emphasis on personalized guidance and instruction to assist the students

through the academic advising system and during office hours. Steps must also be taken to enhance coordination between faculty members to provide better student guidance and instruction.

(9) Courses and Education Programs Offered in the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

Ways must be sought to provide more daytime courses, especially during the Winter Program, where a much fewer number of courses, except for those in the TLP are offered compared to regular semesters.

(10) Teaching Approach for the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

Every year, the TLP has several students from the graduate school. They are able to play a greater role in course activities such as in discussions or presentation assignments and academically stimulate the class.

(11) Educational Effectiveness of the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

More effort is needed for to understand the personal qualities and strengths of each individual student taking part in the TLP to understand whether or not and how he or she is suited for the teaching profession, for example, by having repeated personal interviews with the student or by more actively exchanging information with other faculty members, including part-time members. At the same time, more effort should be made to grow and develop the positive qualities and strengths that each student possesses.

In addition, closely personalized instruction and guidance will be continued to help as many Program participants as possible to successfully pass the teacher employment test to find a teaching job.

(12) Student Course Evaluation and Learning Assessment Surveys

For the student course evaluation surveys, increasing efforts to obtain insight into how the students view AIU's teaching content and approach and what they desire will be continued. For example, seeking the assistance of the Student Government and other student bodies to gain access to students' honest feelings and wishes as to how the courses and programs can be improved. The student course evaluation survey format itself should also be reviewed for improvement, including how to word questions and how questions can be answered. Analyzed survey findings may be used to provide a theme to work on as part of university-wide FD/SD initiatives.

Findings from the learning assessment surveys should be more extensively analyzed to accelerate both stage-specific and holistic program improvements.

(13) Admission of New Students

○ Faculty of International Liberal Arts

Continue and increase efforts to invite more new students from within the local Akita Prefecture, including the student solicitation initiatives being taken by the Admission Officer, which began in academic year 2017.

- Professional Graduate School

Although the number of new students for academic year 2018 has reached the graduate school's stated admission capacity, additional and increased publicity efforts should be made to further raise the number of applicants from the next academic year onward. (Material 3-146)

Continuous effort to obtain enrollees will be made based on strategic PR activities such as providing more in-school admission briefings for AIU undergraduate students, hold solo briefings or participate in the joint multi-university briefings in major cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, join commercially offered graduate school student invitation websites, and visiting other universities from which graduates have entered the AIU Graduate School in the past to offer admission briefings for their undergraduates. (Material 3-147)

(14) Student Assistance

- Personal Support for Students

To assist students to better manage their financial situation and offer help where required and appropriate, as part of the newcomer orientation and through other channels, provide financial literacy awareness sessions and explain about and invite participation in the available external scholarship and student loans programs. Review the AIU's own student loan/financial aid schemes, and enhance individualized guidance and instruction for students in need.

- Study and Career Path Support

Find ways to promote students' interest in working in the local Akita Prefecture companies, including financial assistance to students who opt to work at an in-Prefecture company on an internship program or closer coordination with municipal and governmental organizations as well as with other universities in the Prefecture.

(15) In-School Facilities

Continue the maintenance and management of on-campus buildings and facilities as scheduled in the Mid-Term Plan. Consider timely repair, renewal or replacement of old or deteriorating buildings. In addition, find ways to extend the service life of buildings and facilities, for example by providing a better organized and scheduled maintenance plan depending on the age of each building/facility, based on the Long-Term Vision. To respond to the most immediate needs, start working on the repair or renewal of the student dormitory (Komachi Hall) and apartments (University Village).

Seek opinions and feedback from on-site assistance staff, faculty members, students and graduates to find ways to provide a better living environment that harmonizes with the geographical surroundings and at the same time that best serves the diverse needs of the AIU students.

As theme-specific houses are a must-have under the MEXT Top Global University Project, space shortage issues, such as not having enough lounge spaces in the student dormitory and apartments, must be addressed by utilizing the available space in the theme-specific houses as a place for students' gathering and relaxation.

Chapter 4 [Standard 4: Faculty]

1. Current Situation

4-1 Faculty Development System

(1) Faculty Development (FD) Committee and Related Initiatives

Akita International University implements FD activities, under the supervision of the FD Committee and based on an annual plan, as a means for discussion to find educational issues and seek their solutions.

For academic year 2018, a total of eight FD sessions for all AIU faculty members are planned. Four of the sessions are provided as a “teaching practices workshop,” which focuses on the teaching approach and discusses possible improvements on the theme of “Aligning and Redesigning Courses through the Syllabus.” Faculty Development activities also promote increased use of information and communications technology (ICT) such as electronic portfolios and online learning management system (LMS).

Faculty Development initiatives cover wider aspects beyond just improvement of classroom teaching. For example, current commitments and initiatives taken by other Japanese and overseas higher education institutions are studied to gain insight as to how AIU’s education can be improved in the future. It is hoped that these initiatives will all eventually contribute to a better quality of education given by AIU. (Material 4-1)

In addition, the following schemes are in place.

(2) Sabbatical System

A Sabbatical System exempts a full-time faculty member from all non-research duties for a given period, including those related to teaching, administrative and community contribution, so that he or she can fully concentrate on personal research activities during that period. The Sabbatical System is intended to enhance the teaching and research capabilities of full-time faculty. A sabbatical period lasts either a single semester or one year. All expenses incurred by using the System will be borne by the faculty member.

Faculty on a sabbatical will be paid 75% of their regular salary in the case of a single-semester scheme and 50% of their regular salary in one-year scheme. To date, two faculty members have used the Sabbatical System. (Material 4-2, 4-3)

(3) Special Training Scheme

Faculty members whose years of service is below the sabbatical eligibility requirement can apply to the Special Training scheme. The Special Training scheme is offered in semestral units and can last up to one year. The member on a Special Training scheme will be paid 50% of their regular salary, except for during the Winter Program period where 100% of the regular salary will be paid.

To date, nine AIU members have used the Special Training scheme. (Material 4-4, 4-5)

(4) Professional Graduate School

In addition to what is defined in Standard 3-2, graduate school faculty also participate in the yearly eight FD sessions. One of the sessions (3 hours) focuses on issues specific to the graduate school.

As the students' learning needs in the graduate school are diverse and individualized, the graduate school must make efforts to improve and enhance its teaching quality to fulfill such needs. Various schemes and initiatives involving graduate school faculty members, such as the Term System, the Tenure System, the Sabbatical System and FD, are all provided with consideration for teaching quality enhancement.

Additional efforts such as mutual class observation by faculty members and class observation by the heads of teaching practices and suggestions and recommendations based on findings from the observation, are being made to provide an environment where input and feedback for class improvement can be obtained throughout the year.

As a new initiative started in academic year 2016, classes given by the heads of teaching practices are observed by the Vice President of AIU to provide recommendations and suggestions. Faculty Development efforts, including those focusing on "Education Philosophy" as a discussion theme, continue toward class improvement.

The following paragraphs describe the current educational and research situation in the respective teaching practices as well as ongoing efforts and commitments taken toward broadening the practical knowledge base and to achieve greater teaching skills and competence.

i English Language Teaching Practices (ELT)

The faculty members of the ELT program include members who have served as English teachers at elementary, junior high and high schools and other educational institutions. To monitor and respond to changes in school education, ELT teachers periodically visit elementary, junior high and high schools throughout the year to observe their English language classes.

As part of these visits, the ELT teachers interact with schoolteachers to discuss the teaching content and approach and offer necessary recommendation and suggestions. This is a valuable opportunity for the ELT teachers to understand the issues and problems that schoolteachers face in a contemporary educational environment. (Material 4-6)

Findings and insights from the above-described practice and research activities are fed back to schoolteachers in various forms, for example as part of the teaching license renewal sessions or at "Teachers Seminars" that are organized and held by AIU.

ii Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT)

The team teaching system, supported by multiple faculty members to assist the second-year teaching practice and to supervise action research activities, assures that all members in the JLT program work with a shared understanding and approach as to how Japanese language education should be implemented and what educational theory should be applied to action research supervision and reflective practitioner training. In the JLT program, efforts are made to maintain constant communication between teachers in the program. A team

research project by the members is underway on the subject of reflective practitioner training, which is critical to the teaching content given in this teaching practice as well as to Japanese language education as a whole.

Initiatives to promote shared understanding between teachers and to encourage their continued training have been ongoing since the inauguration of the professional graduate school. A number of joint research and co-authored publications have been released in the fields of Japanese language teaching and reflective practitioner training.

iii Global Communication Practices (GCP)

As part of a university-wide initiative, the GCP head personally observes courses that are ranked highest in the student course evaluation survey to find out the reasons for their favorable ratings.

Information and insights obtained through these activities are effectively used for giving recommendations and suggestions in faculty interviews that are held after mutual class observation between members or after the student survey is completed at the end of the semester.

4-2 Faculty Recruitment and Evaluation

(1) Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion of Faculty Members

In accordance with policies defined in the Mid-Term Plan and Long-Term Vision, AIU solicits motivated faculty members regardless of their age, gender or nationality by open recruitment that is accessible from all over the world. All administrative and management practices regarding its faculty, including recruitment, hiring and promotion, are done in accordance with the Regulations for Faculty Hiring and Promotion and Employment Regulations. (Material 4-7, 4-8)

When the need to hire a new faculty member arises, the AIU President organizes a Faculty Selection Committee meeting to discuss necessary matters including what academic specialty and courses should the new member undertake, what professional ranking the new faculty will belong to, what qualities and qualifications are required of the new member, and what recruitment and selection criteria should be used. The Faculty Selection Committee is chaired by the President and is membered by other persons including the Vice President in charge of academic, international and social contribution, the head of the program that the new teacher will belong to, one faculty member that serves the program, and other required members appointed by the President.

As a general rule, all new faculty are hired through open recruitment. In the event of emergency or where open recruitment is not appropriate due to the specialty being very selective or restrictive, other selection criteria may be used based on discussion at a Faculty Selection Committee meeting. In each recruitment case, position-wanted advertisements will be placed on an international scale, describing the proposed specialties and courses to be undertaken in the new position, the academic degree and research record requirements and explaining other requirements and desired qualities including experience of having taught at higher education institutions through the English language and high educational motivation and willingness to work as a team.

Candidates will be screened by the Faculty Selection Committee through a thorough examination process including document screening, mock class presentation assessment and personal interviews, to finally select the most appropriate person.

If the finally selected candidate is required to receive a qualification review by MEXT officers, applicants are notified in advance that the terms of employment may change depending on the result of such qualification review.

(2) Employment Term of Faculty

○ Term System and Tenure System

Akita International University employs all its faculty members for a term of exceeding one year and up to three years (up to five years in special cases where the Chair of the Board deems it unavoidable to do so). To renew the employment term, AIU notifies the member whether or not it desires to renew the term at least six months before the end of the current term and he or she is expected to reply to the notification within one month of receiving the notification. (Material 4-9)

Concurrently with the above-described term system that helps maintain and improve the ongoing educational and research activities, AIU has introduced its original Tenure System in April 2010, which is being continuously reviewed and improved for best appropriate implementation.

The current Tenure System is based on the April 2013 and April 2014 amendments to the Labor Contract Act of Japan. The Employment Regulations define that faculty members who have been hired on or before the end of academic year 2014 are eligible for a transfer to the Tenure System depending on in which academic year he or she was hired. Those who have been hired after April 2015 can, based on special measures defined by the Labor Contract Act, renew his or her employment term of three years up to two times before being eligible to apply for a transfer to the Tenure System, which will be finally determined based on an excellent performance record. (Material 4-10)

As of May 2018, 16 faculty members are employed under a tenure contract, and 14 others are already scheduled to transfer to a tenure contract upon the completion of their current service term. (Material 4-11)

(3) Promotion

When a reason to promote a specific faculty member arises, the AIU President organizes a Faculty Promotion Committee meeting. The Faculty Promotion Committee is chaired by the President and is membered by other persons including the Vice President in charge of academic, international and social contribution, the head of the program that the member proposed for promotion belongs to, and other required members appointed by the President.

Examination concerning the promotion of a faculty will be conducted based on his or her performance evaluation and in accordance with the defined promotion criteria or other applicable rules. The Chair of the Board will report the examination result to the University Management Committee, which will finally determine and execute the promotion.

If the member proposed for promotion must receive a qualification review by a MEXT officer after the Committee examination, the official promotion notice is released on an appropriate date after the MEXT review result notification is received.

All of the above processes are executed according to defined regulations and based on discussion by the Faculty Selection Committee or Faculty Promotion Committee and the University Management Committee in a fair and appropriate fashion. It can thus be concluded that the recruitment, hiring and promotion of faculty members are done in a fully appropriate manner.

i Current Employment Situation at the Faculty of International Liberal Arts

As of May 2018, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts employs a total of 60 full time faculty members (33 of them are non-Japanese) including 12 full professors, 15 associate professors, 23 assistant professors and 10 lecturers. The Faculty also hires 32 part-time faculty members including eight select professors, seven visiting professors and 17 lecturers.

More than 50% of full-time faculty members are non-Japanese and over 80% of the entire faculty have experience teaching at an overseas institution using the English language. Akita International University places a special emphasis on hiring highly motivated Japanese teachers who can adequately perform the challenging task of teaching Japanese students fully in the English language.

Full-time faculty members are hired over a wide age range, including one in their twenties, 13 in their thirties, 28 in their forties, 11 in their fifties and 7 in their sixties. The core of faculty members comprises the most richly experienced group of teachers in their forties. (Material 4-12, 4-13)

ii Current Employment Situation at the Professional Graduate School

The Graduate School's rules for recruitment, hiring and promotion of its faculty members are basically the same as those for the Faculty of International Liberal Arts, except that, due to high academic and practicality requirements, more clearly defined academic and practicality criteria are implemented to screen candidates for new teaching positions. In line with the graduate school's policy to provide courses to assist students to be capable of addressing and solving problems that they may face in actual work situations with a focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its application to practice, the graduate school places a strong emphasis on hiring persons with a proven leadership and excellent work performance record as its faculty members.

As of May 2018, the Graduate School employs a total of 12 full time members (five of them are non-Japanese) including four full professors, six associate professors, one assistant professor and one lecturer. The graduate school also hires three part-time lecturers including one select professor and two visiting professors.

As for practically experienced faculty members to serve their respective practices, AIU has a total of four persons: one person for the ELT program with at least five years of experience of teaching English language in an elementary, junior high, high school or college or university, two persons for the JLT program with at least five years of experience of teaching Japanese language in a college, university or other educational institutions, and one non-Japanese person for the GCP program with at least five years of experience serving in a public relations or similar position in mass media or business organization.

Approximately half the full-time faculty serving the graduate school programs are non-Japanese, and 83% have obtained academic degrees from overseas universities.

Full-time faculty are hired over a wide age range, including one in their thirties, four in

their forties, four in their fifties, two in their sixties. The core of faculty members comprises the most richly experienced group of teachers in their forties and fifties. (Material 4-14, 4-15, 4-16)

(4) Assessment of Performance

AIU conducts a “fully performance-based assessment” on all its full-time faculty members. The assessment result will be used as a basis for improvement recommendations and the amount of the annual salary for the next academic year, promotion and contract renewal decisions and tenure contract applicability.

Assessment of faculty is conducted over the period from April to March of the given academic year and covers the three categories of education, research and service. For the education category, assessment is based on student course evaluation surveys plus assessment by his or her director or supervisor. For the other two categories, a draft assessment report is created by the faculty’s director or supervisor based on the self-performance report submitted by the teacher in question. The AIU President will make a final assessment in the “contribution to AIU” section of the service category.

The assessment process occurs in two stages. The first stage involves discussion by and between the Vice President, the Dean of Academic Affairs and the faculty’s director or supervisor to examine the draft assessment report created by the director or supervisor. The examination result will be reported to the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board presents the received examination result to the University Management Committee, which will examine and finally determine the faculty member’s assessment.

The proportion of importance of the three categories in the assessment will be determined through discussion between the teacher and his or her director or supervisor based on the teacher’s strengths/weaknesses and performance record. (Material 4-17, 4-18)

4-3 Industry Cooperation

(1) Faculty of International Liberal Arts

As part of the AIU Press initiative, a group mainly comprising EAP faculty created and published an electronic book “Introducing the Liberal Arts” which is used as a textbook in EAP. The book is a compilation of articles covering the subject of liberal arts.

(2) Professional Graduate School

In each of its three practices, the professional graduate school, as described in the following paragraphs, makes an effort to effectively utilize products and findings from internal or industry-academic joint research projects in coordination with the community to offer new learning opportunities for its students.

i English Language Teaching Practices (ELT)

As most of the graduates from the ELT program strongly wish to find employment in public schools and the graduate school often receives requests from regional Boards of Education across the nation to dispatch lectures to their training programs, the ELT program

team maintains close coordination with the regional Boards of Education throughout the year.

For example, the “Teachers Seminars,” that are organized jointly with the Division of Akita Prefectural Board of Education as a training event as part of the MEXT Top Global University Project initiatives, are served by AIU’s ELT faculty. They provide guidance and recommendations to schoolteachers in active English education service and also present research findings that are directly relevant to real-life education situations.

In addition, ELT students provide administrative and teaching services to the “English Village,” an English learning program for junior high and high school students that offer a two-night, three-day sessions about fifteen times a year. The students work in cooperation with active schoolteachers to gain valuable training experience.

ii Japanese Language Teaching Practices (JLT)

The research commitments of the JLT program including industry-academia joint research projects include the joint initiatives with eight Japanese universities and eight governmental-private Japanese language education institutions as well as with 39 overseas universities and institutions in 16 countries and one region where AIU graduates work. The JLT program has mutual visitation and interview schemes with several of the above-mentioned Japanese and overseas institutions.

The products and findings from these initiatives are actively used to increase education and training opportunities for the students, such as inclusion in classroom teaching and practical activities and also to find new internship locations.

To learn about the actual Japanese language teaching situation in Japan and overseas from practicing professionals, lecture meetings are provided by inviting teachers from Japanese and overseas universities, the Teacher’s Consultant and international exchange team members from the Akita City Board of Education, and members from local international exchange societies give feedback to the students of the research products and findings including those from industry-academic joint research initiatives.

iii Global Communication Practices (GCP)

For the purpose of maintaining and increasing coordination with actors in the journalism, public relations and business sectors and actively including the research products and findings in these sectors into its teaching content, and as part of the “Introduction to International Public Relations” and “Introduction to International Journalism” courses, the GCP program organizes field trips to visit major public relation companies based in Tokyo as well as industry organizations such as the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan (FCCJ) and the Japan National Press Club to meet and have exchanges with professional practitioners.

In the journalism sector, a new project has been initiated to try to have the students’ English articles published in prestigious and trusted international news media. Five articles credited with the name of the authoring student and also the name of AIU have been published in the Japan Times, an English-language newspaper, in collaboration with AIU’s “Introduction to International Journalism” and “International News and Feature Writing” courses.

To support the internship program offered as a required elective course, coordination with the local cable TV company, public relations sections of the local banks as well as with public relations businesses in the Tokyo area is being maintained and increased to assure acceptance of AIU interns on a continuous basis in order to offer the students joint working opportunities with various industry sectors.

(3) Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration (IASRC)

The IASRC upholds a mission of promoting in-depth research initiatives through coordination with Japanese and overseas universities and research institutions, actively inviting AIU students to participate in the research initiatives to contribute to enhance AIU's liberal arts education.

As part of a joint research initiative with the University of the Free State in South Africa, researchers from the University visited Akita Prefecture to conduct field researches in Gojome Town and also to provide special lectures at AIU. In addition, questionnaires have been conducted on foreign tourists visiting Japan on passenger ship cruisers, a form of tourism that is increasing in number in recent years, as a joint research initiative with a private company. Findings from the questionnaires are being used to help accelerate inbound tourism in Akita Prefecture.

Under the cooperation agreement with the Japan Rail (JR) East Akita Branch Office, a JR-East funded course "Sustainable Heritage Tourism in Tohoku Region" has been provided since academic year 2016. This course aims to train human resources to help boost the regional tourism through industry-academia cooperation. As part of the course and in addition to its regular classroom lectures, several field work projects and lecture sessions by guest speakers have been conducted with the help of JR East, Kinki Nippon Tourist, Hoshino Resorts and municipal governments in Akita Prefecture (Cities of Yokote and Oga) both in planning and implementation stages. (Material 4-19)

Students have presented study findings at the end of the course to be viewed by and receive comments from representatives from JR East and tourism sections of the municipalities. This is part of IASRC's industry-academia joint initiatives to offer new learning opportunities to students.

Another IASRC initiative is a Hokuto Bank-funded course "FIDEA Global Management Program: Global Management and Leadership." The course has been started since academic year 2017 under the cooperation agreement with the Hokuto Bank and with instructors dispatched from FIDEA Holdings Co., Ltd., which is the parent company to the Bank. The course offers practice-focused study opportunities provided by actively practicing professional and covers such topics as industry-academia joint global management and business strategies, contributing to the training of globally competent human resources. (Material 4-20)

2. Examples of Good Practice

○ Hiring of Faculty Members with Advanced Professional Knowledge, Strong Teaching Skills and High Motivation to Contribute to AIU's Education

Due to active hiring of non-Japanese faculty members through international open recruitment and the same of Japanese teachers with teaching experience in overseas universities, more than 50% of full-time teachers serving the Faculty of International Liberal Arts are non-Japanese and more than 80% have teaching or research experience overseas. The selection scheme to hire a new faculty member involves screening the candidates on document basis with participation of multiple Selection Committee members. The final candidates have a personal interview and are also required to present mock classes to the examiners. With such thorough screening and selection process to hire new members, it can

be concluded that AIU is successfully hiring faculty members with advanced professional knowledge, strong teaching skills and a high motivation to contribute to AIU's teaching and research initiatives.

3. Areas for Improvement

- Hiring of Faculty Members for the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

A faculty member serving TLP must present to and teach students both the willingness to deal with academic research tasks as well as robust power to handle and solve practical problems. Due to these requirements, a member for the program is desired to have experience of actually having taught at high schools but it is not easy to solicit adequate candidates through open recruitment.

4. Action Plan

- Hiring of Faculty Members for the Teacher's License Program (TLP)

As it is more difficult to hire adequately qualified teachers for TLP than for other academic Programs, ways to recruit candidates than by open recruitment alone must be considered. For example, actively soliciting candidates who have experienced managerial positions in high schools.

Chapter 5 [Standard 5: Social Connection]

1. Current Situation

5-1 Policies and Implementations

Akita International University is set to offer learning opportunities according to the provisions of Article 30 of its Statement of Operations Practice and be actively committed to connect itself to the regional community and to make contribution to the global community according to the Article 31 of the same. Akita International University's Mid-Term Targets and Mid-Term Plan also state the contribution to the community. (Material 5-1, 5-2, 5-3)

(1) Providing “Project-Based Learning” (PBL) and Commercially Funded Courses

Building on the success of the Japan-US PBL initiatives as part of the five-year “Inter-University Exchange Project” that AIU participated from academic year 2011, a new series of PBL courses is being provided jointly with ASEAN institutions.

Since academic year 2016, a team of teachers from partner universities in Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines as well as those from AIU has developed a PBL program, on which students from these universities worked jointly as a team to tackle issues being experienced in both regions. Findings from the PBL work as well as proposed solutions have been presented to representatives from the municipal bodies and supporting parties.

Under the cooperation agreement with the JR East Akita Branch Office, a JR East funded course “Sustainable Heritage Tourism in Tohoku Region” has been provided. The course covers an interdisciplinary subject of how to preserve regional heritages and at the same time use them to promote local tourism, a topic that must be looked at to provide a successful and sustainable tourism industry in the Tohoku region. The course aims at promoting practice-oriented learning with the help of JR East, municipal and governmental bodies and tourism industries and also meeting and having exchanges with human resources that are expected to support the regional tourism in the future. In addition to regular classroom lectures, the course has provided several field work and lecture sessions, the latter by inviting guest speakers. Both is supported by funding from JR East.

Students have presented study findings and products at the end of the course and it is well-received by representatives from JR East and also from tourism sections of the municipal bodies. The representative also exchanged opinions with the students. As a report of the course work, the Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration (IASRC) published the fifth Journal of the Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration to feed back the findings to industry, municipalities and the regional community. (Material 5-4, 5-5)

(2) Community Services Based on Educational and Research Findings

Products and findings from faculty members' educational and research activities have been published in the “Global Review,” an English academic journal released by the AIU Press, to provide AIU's educational and research commitments on a global scale to Japanese and overseas higher education institutions.

Additionally, a “Research Week” initiative has started since academic year 2017, where posters illustrating AIU research initiatives are displayed in the Library Building and also at

Akita Airport. An open campus event that is held during the Research Week includes a public explanation of the research content by faculty members, as part of AIU's commitment to actively communicate its research work to the regional community.

To accurately understand the prefectural residents' needs and to encourage them to take renewed learning initiatives to build up the collective intellectual power of the region, AIU offers open courses and other various learning opportunities to the local residents.

In addition, the IASRC is undertaking research projects focusing on issues that Akita Prefecture is facing such as aging of the community, depopulation, and lack of adequate nursing workforce to care for its elderly. The Institute also makes useful recommendations and suggestions to help promote tourism and other measures to boost the regional economy. The recommendations and suggestions have been summarized in the Journal of the Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration, which was submitted to AIU business partners and published online. (Material 5-6, 5-7, 5-8)

(3) Promotion of Educational and Research Initiatives through Cooperation with External Organizations

Akita International University is taking part in the "Consortium of Universities in Akita," which provides high school-university joint classes at the College Plaza near the center of Akita City. In academic year 2018, AIU will dispatch a total of ten teachers to the joint classes. In the first half of the academic year, a total of 65 high school students participated in the project in the first half session and a total of 40 high school students will participate in the second half session.

In a separate initiative, a joint symposium has been held based on a four-university cooperation agreement (between Akita University, Akita Prefectural University, Akita University of Art and AIU). This is part of the AIU's effort to promote and stimulate the intellectual curiosity of both high school and adult residents of Akita Prefecture. (Material 5-9, 5-10)

(4) Active Participation to Regional and Global Exchange Programs

Akita International University has an international exchange promotion agreement with seven municipalities in Akita Prefecture to provide multicultural and global exchange events on a continuous basis.

Akita International University is also actively engaged in bidirectional exchange activities with elementary and junior high schools, for example dispatching Japanese and foreign AIU students to the schools or inviting schoolchildren and junior high school students to AIU.

In addition to providing visiting lectures at high schools in the Prefecture and holding various English skill seminars targeting high school students, AIU offers the use of the LDIC to the local residents free of charge, where visitors can have an opportunity to chat with foreign exchange students at certain hours. These are part of AIU's commitment to offer various channels of foreign language learning and Intercultural exchanges to the regional community. (Material 5-11)

(5) Validation of Appropriateness of Feedback of Educational and Research Findings to the Community

Validation of whether or not AIU's educational and research findings are being fed back

to the community in an appropriate manner is being conducted as part of the Regional Contribution Committee in AIU, annual self-inspection and evaluation scheme and the corporate evaluation scheme. (Material 5-12)

2. Examples of Good Practice

(1) “Project-Based Learning” (PBL) Programs

In academic year 2017, a joint PBL course was held in rural villages in Akita Prefecture and Thailand. Six students from Kasetsart University in Thailand and the same number of students from AIU joined the course to learn about regional issues such as depopulation and the difficulty in keeping the local traditional culture and the potential roles that green tourism can play such as supporting sustainable maintenance of the “satoyama” landscape.

At the presentation meeting after on-site survey tours that was held with the attendance of 15 survey supporters, students presented analysis results on the regional issues and proposed solutions. After the presentation, the students vigorously exchanged opinions with regional activists and supporters, which indicates that the positive effect of AIU’s education is fed back to the community in a useful manner.

In a PBL-based course where field work and interviews with the local residents plays a major role in identifying and addressing regional issues and where the course work must be completed by presenting the study results and suggesting improvements to the local municipalities and survey supporters, use of the Japanese language as a dominant means of communication is unavoidable in conducting extra-school activities. To help PBL team members from overseas partner universities and those on an exchange program to understand and participate in PBL work, the escorting teachers provide assistance by offering oral interpretation, delivering translated documents or handing out portable translator machines.

(2) Regional and Global Exchanges and Open Lectures

Akita International University is actively engaged in exchange programs with young residents in Akita Prefecture including schoolchildren, junior high and high school students as well as preschoolers. In academic year 2017, AIU had a total of 156 exchange sessions with schools and preschools in municipalities in the Prefecture that have an international exchange promotion agreement with AIU. A total of 897 exchange students participated in the sessions, greatly contributing to accelerate multicultural understanding in local youth.

Akita International University also had 56 exchange sessions with general residents in regional communities, where a total of 409 exchange students participated. The Mid-Term Plan upholds a target of maintaining at least 200 exchange sessions a year with elementary, junior high schools and other related bodies. This target is being met and exceeded every academic year. (Material 5-13)

The Mid-Term Plan upholds a target of holding at least 10 open lectures (including citizens’ seminars, global conferences and commercially funded courses) each academic year. In academic year 2017, this target has been exceeded by providing 12 open lectures. (Material 5-14)

The Institute for Asian Studies and Regional Collaboration has its faculty members participate in events organized by the municipal and local commercial bodies in an attempt to boost economic ties of Akita Prefecture between far east regions of Russia and northeast

provinces of China, providing insight and advice particularly on the subject of the economic and political environment surrounding Russia and its relationship with Japan.

Starting from the academic year 2016, a JR East funded course “Sustainable Heritage Tourism in Tohoku Region” is provided under cooperation agreement with the JR East Akita Branch Office. The course includes field work focusing on the effective use of cultural and other heritages found in Akita Prefecture, findings from which are presented by students in an open project report meeting. This is an effort to take an in-depth academic look into the possible forms of tourism promotion that can benefit Akita Prefecture in a meaningful manner.

Starting from August 2018, a “Global Business Human Resource Training Program,” an undertaking financially supported by Akita Prefecture as a Prefectural Aid Program, is underway. The Program aims at educating companies and their workforces to develop a global viewpoint.

The Program will include a lecture meeting by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Vice President, domestic and overseas training sessions having East Asian business experts as instructors and also language learning lessons targeting adult learners. (Material 5-15)

The “Teachers Seminar” program provided under the MEXT Top Global University Project includes workshops where AIU faculty members guides the audience to gain a principled understanding of the importance of “teaching English in English” and explains about practice-oriented teaching methods and class management techniques. The program helps feed back to the community the valuable knowledge and skills that AIU has accumulated in the field of practical English teaching approach. A goal of the program is “recurrent education,” which involves efforts to train teachers who can help educate globally competent human resources for the future in elementary and junior high schools.

An undertaking in the framework of this “Teachers Seminar” initiative is the “Intensive Seminar for Foreign Language Education in Elementary School,” which is jointly held with the Division of Akita Prefectural Board of Education and aims at training teachers to lead foreign language education in elementary schools across Akita Prefecture to build up and enhance the quality of language education in the region. The Program offers intensive training sessions to help learners acquire effective foreign language education techniques to teach students as well as achieve greater English communication proficiency for themselves.

3. Areas for Improvement

With its continuous engagement since inauguration in exchange programs with adult and young residents of Akita Prefecture including schoolchildren and junior high and high school students, AIU’s unique regional exchange approach where foreign students play a major role has started to solidly take root in the local community.

Meanwhile, requests from organizations in and outside the Prefecture wishing to exchange with AIU students are increasing rapidly year after year, reaching almost 200 a year. With the existing management system at the Administration Office, AIU will soon be unable to adequately handle all such requests. To respond to the increasingly greater need for exchanges in communities in and outside the Prefecture, an organizational shift to a higher-quality but less frequent exchange scheme must be considered, including a review on the exchange implementation system.

4. Action Plan

As a participant in the MEXT Top Global University Project, AIU upholds a goal of “Transforming English Education in Japan.” Beyond providing exchange events between foreign students and young residents including schoolchildren and junior high and high school students, AIU is planning to increase its effort to feed back the valuable knowledge and skills concerning practical approaches to English language education to benefit students and teachers in elementary, junior high and high schools in Akita Prefecture to help improve the quality of elementary and intermediate English education, specifically in the forms of “English Village” and “Teachers Seminar” projects.

To more actively address the needs for assistance in English language education from in and outside the Prefecture, AIU will continue its commitment of “teaching English in English” to schoolchildren and junior high and high school students in the community and will also train their teachers to learn “how to teach English in English.” Under cooperation between the Division of Akita Prefectural Board of Education and AIU teachers, direct commitment to high school education improvement will be continued to help train globally competent human resources around AIU and to thereby present an innovative English education model for Japan.

Chapter 6 [Standard 6: Governance]

1. Current Situation

6-1 Administrative Policies

Akita International University was inaugurated in 2004 as the first Public University Corporation in Japan under the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law. Among other provisions, the Law provides an opportunity for a publicly-funded university to be established as a corporation and to undertake some administrative and business duties which have previously been handled directly by local governments to promote more efficient and streamlined organizational management.

Under this Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, Akita Prefecture, which is the founding body of AIU, established the Articles of Incorporation defining the purpose and name of the university corporation as well as its scope of business, under which AIU was established. The detailed operation specifications of AIU are defined in its Statement of Operations Practice. (Material 6-1, 6-2)

As previously described in Chapter 2 in the section referring to the current situation of internal quality assurance, Article 2 of the Articles of Incorporation defines its organizational heads including the Chair of the Board and Article 3 of the same defines its executive and deliberation bodies including the University Management Committee, the Management Deliberation Committee and the Academic Affairs Executive Committee. Article 2 of the AIU Statement of Operations Practice states the basic policy of AIU's management operation.

Chapter 2 also provides the scope of subjects to be handled by the respective bodies including the University Management Committee and the Academic Affairs Executive Committee. The Chair of the Board also acts as the President so that the whole of AIU is consistently steered under the leadership of the Chair of the Board/President.

The organizational structure is illustrated in the organization chart of AIU.

6-2 Mechanism

Akita International University is managed fully in accordance with applicable rules and regulations including the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, the Articles of Incorporation, the Statement of Operations Practice and the various internal regulations. This has been thoroughly verified through a number of internal and external evaluation and assessment schemes including those by the in-school executive and deliberation bodies, the University and Professional Graduate School Self-Evaluation Committees, the External Evaluation Committee and the Local Incorporated Administrative Agency Evaluation Committee.

The evaluation findings have been appropriately fed back to university management for improvement. It can thus be concluded that AIU is managed in a fully appropriate manner. (Material 6-3, 6-4, 6-5, 6-6, 6-7)

6-3 Implementations

Management organization of AIU covering the management of the corporation and the university and the assistance of its educational and research activities are all as previously explained. On the other hand, details of its administrative system are defined in the Regulations on Organization of the Administration Office of Akita International University. (Material 6-8) Moreover, the Regulation on Administrative Decision-Making clearly defines the scope of administrative authority and responsibility of the Chair of the Board, the Board Members, the Executive Officer, the Senior Director and Directors so that administrative duties can be completed in the most efficient and appropriate manner. (Material 6-9)

The entire university management including its administrative functionality is subject to validation through internal and external auditing under the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law, the Articles of Incorporation, the Statement of Operations Practice and other internal Regulations. (Material 6-10, 6-11, 6-12)

Measures to maintain and improve the quality of administrative staff and to adequately motivate them are provided through training programs based on the Regulations for Staff Development. (Material 6-13, 6-14)

Administrative staff members, along with the faculty members, are subject to the employee evaluation scheme. This helps to improve the job performance quality of both faculty members and administrative staff members. The evaluation results are appropriately fed back to determine the amount of compensation and rewards to motivate them for better job performance. This will ultimately lead to greater achievement of AIU as a whole and bring the university closer to the attainment of its goals and missions. (Material 6-15)

2. Examples of Good Practice

The Chair of the Board and the President supervises corporation management and university management, respectively. As the Chair of the Board acts as the President, AIU is consistently steered under the leadership of the Chair of the Board/President.

Similar to the characteristics described in Chapter 2 (Internal Quality Assurance), AIU focuses on obtaining external input and appoints non-Japanese members to the committees, which is significantly related to AIU's mission and goals, to guarantee the maximum effectiveness of the system.

Employee evaluation is determined through a personal interview between the evaluator and the evaluatee, where proposed targets and other recommendations and suggestions are discussed. Employee evaluation therefore does not only work as a means to determine the amount of salary but also helps each employee to seek ways to improve his or her professional performance and to develop wider career paths.

3. Areas for Improvement

Due to the amendments to the Local Independent Administrative Agencies Law that took effect in April 2018, AIU and other Public University Corporations are now required to have an internal governance system in place to assure and verify its compliance with all applicable

laws and regulations including its own Articles of Incorporation. Akita International University has already established regulations on internal control and is taking prompt actions based on discussions at the Internal Governance Committee and other supervisory bodies. As the amendment has been released very recently, the university corporations do not have adequate expertise on how to handle internal governance.

With the English proficiency stated as an application requirement to enable appropriate performance of administrative duties, AIU is having more difficulty in securing adequately qualified administrative employees, where advanced English language skills and a level of professional competence ready for immediate engagement are required. An increased effort to secure adequately qualified administrative workforce in an organized and scheduled manner is critical to assure stable management of the Administration Office.

4. Action Plan

Akita International University appoints a commercial company executive as its Board member in charge in internal governance. It is planned to effectively utilize his commercially accumulated internal governance expertise and to have staff members actively participate in external seminars on auditing and internal governance to gain more useful knowledge and know-how regarding internal control.

To accelerate administrative workforce procurement, AIU will continue to solicit potential employees who are considering working in Akita Prefecture, including participation in the briefing events for “A-turn workers,” aspiring workers seeking employment in Akita.

IV. Conclusion

Since its inauguration in 2004, AIU has continuously pursued the mission of training leaders for the global community under the educational vision of “international liberal arts education.” In the pursuit of its mission, AIU has created and implemented various innovative educational schemes such as offering all its classes in the English language, a compulsory one-year study abroad and living in the dormitory with foreign students.

These initiatives would not have been sustainable without the support of various parties and organizations, including students, faculty, administrative staff members and the regional community. The innovative undertakings of AIU have proved to yield valuable results, such as producing highly motivated and self-independent graduates and a broad and in-depth contribution to the regional community in cooperation with the local society.

Despite being located in a heavily snowed-in rural area and far from the capital region, AIU successfully maintains excellent popularity among applicants and potential employers every year, evidenced respectively by the number of applicants, which is many times greater than the admission capacity, even after 15 years have passed since its inauguration, and 100% successful employment rate of its graduates almost every year. The high popularity is also attested by the large number of students who come to study at AIU from countries and regions from all over the world as well as by the favorable placement in the Times Higher Education Japan University Ranking 2018, which was ranked 12th among all Japanese universities (1st among non-national public universities) and 1st in the Engagement and Environment category and the degree of globalization. All these point to the true competence and significant value of AIU.

However, as many other universities are beginning to offer educational schemes and programs that are very similar to AIU’s unique educational system, the university should not remain satisfied of its excellent success and acclaims achieved. It should continue its improvement and enhancement efforts in an attempt to successfully differentiate itself from other universities and to take even greater challenges.

Therefore, as the pursuit of evolution into a “Japan’s World-Class Liberal Arts University” continues as part of the MEXT Top Global University Project, AIU will keep implementing its four improvement projects to attain a world-class education quality. Its increased effort to train human resources who are globally competent while solidly retaining their Japanese identity and to establish a globally relevant liberal arts education system and promote it to the world will be key to AIU’s greater advancement into the future.

Akita International University will also steadily improve the students’ dormitory and apartments, which will become a new symbol of its ‘multicultural campus’, and a feature of the university. At the same time, the university recognizes that it is necessary to work towards enriching its education and enhancing learning outcomes in terms of ‘educational quality assurance’, by involving and deepening the curriculum.

Based not only on the evaluation and accreditation schemes that AIU has received in the past, but also on this International Joint Accreditation jointly conducted by the Japan University Accreditation Association and the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association, findings and feedback from those evaluations will give AIU a valuable clue to its management such as a clearer understanding of the hopes and expectations that the global community has on AIU including the training of globally competent human resources and

the creation of a solid internal quality assurance system. Furthermore, the successful awarding of the International Joint Accreditation will be a great asset to AIU, attesting to its internationally recognized quality assurance capability and successful assurance of internationally competent educational quality and will significantly advance AIU into a greater future.