FY2024

Institutional Accreditation

Evaluation Report

The University of Aizu

March 2025

Japan Association for Quality Assurance of Education

I Outline of the University of Aizu

1 Name of University and Campus Location

The University of Aizu (Establisher: The Public University Corporation, the University of Aizu)

90 Kamiiawase, Tsuruga, Ikki-machi, Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan

2 Composition of Faculties, Etc. *As of May 1, 2024

[Undergraduate School]

Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Undergraduate School of Computer Science and Engineering

[Graduate School]

Graduate School of Computer Science and Engineering (Master's Program)

Graduate Department of Computer and Information System

Graduate Department of Information Technology and Project Management

Graduate School of Computer Science and Engineering (Doctoral Program)

Graduate Department of Computer and Information System

3 Number of Students, Faculty, and Staff *As of May 1, 2024

[Number of Students] Undergraduate: 1,134, Graduate: 250

[Faculty and Staff] Faculty: 109, Staff: 56

4 University Philosophy, Objectives, Etc.

The University of Aizu was established in 1993 as Japan's first university specializing in computer science and engineering based on Fukushima Prefecture's idea that, in the midst of globalization and advanced informatization, it is of utmost important to foster talents with global perspectives who will lead and develop information science.

The University of Aizu's founding philosophy is "to Advance Knowledge for Humanity," and has established the following five basic principles.

1. Development of Highly Creative Talents
2. Contribution to International Community
3. Substantial Education and Research
4. Outstanding Education and Research Utilizing Regional Characteristics
5. Contribution to the Industry and Culture of Fukushima Prefecture

In order to realize the above basic principles, the following three basic goals are set forth in the Admission Policy and other documents.

1. Educate cross-culturally competent aspiring researchers, IT leaders and entrepreneurs with a strong sense of ethical integrity, who are determined enough to make their mark in tech innovations.
2. Educate enthusiastic students aspiring to make a leap forward in cutting-edge CSE research for the benefit of society.

3. Educate standard-bearers who are eager to salute the growth of Fukushima's local industries, give moral support to them, and uphold Fukushima's homegrown culture through education and research.

The objectives of the University of Aizu are stipulated in Article 1 of the Ruling on the University of Aizu as "1) education and research in specialized fields, 2) development of world-class talent rich in creativity, and 3) contribution to scientific and cultural advancement and industrial development."

The objectives of its graduate school are stipulated in Article 4 of the the Ruling on the University of Aizu Graduate School as "1) education and research on the theory and application of computer science and engineering, 2) nurturing of outstanding and scholarly researchers as well as highly specialized engineers, and 3) world-class contribution to the advancement of academia and culture, as well as to industrial development."

II Evaluation Result

1 Accreditation Results

The University of Aizu meets the University Evaluation Criteria set forth by the Japan Association for Quality of University Education (JAQUE).

2 General Comments

The evaluation was conducted through document analysis based on the "Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio" and other related documents, which indicate the overall status of the University's self-inspection and evaluation, as well as site-visits.

The University of Aizu conforms to the School Education Act, the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, and other relevant laws and regulations, and strives to improve the level of education and research and advance distinctive education and research. Therefore, the University satisfies the University Evaluation Criteria 1, 2, and 3 set forth by JAQUE, and conducts education and research activities appropriate for a university.

In the Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio, the University had not sufficiently described the necessary information in the 10 evaluation items (a) through (j) specified in the evaluation guidelines, and had not sufficiently indicated the functionality of its internal quality assurance. Therefore, we confirmed the details during the evaluation process. During the site-visits, it was confirmed that the insufficient description in the Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio was caused by insufficient preparation by the University, and that the University is still working to develop and implement its internal quality assurance system.

Below is a list of the University of Aizu's outstanding points, points requiring improvement, and points for future development.

[Outstanding Points]
○ The University has been promoting the dispatch and acceptance of students through the expansion and improvement of programs such as study abroad and overseas training, the establishment of the ICT Global All-English Program, and the provision of opportunities for international exchange both on and off campus. It also participated in the MEXT's Top Global University Project, through which it implemented various programs for 10 years from FY2014. In this and other ways, the University has been practicing global education for more than 20 years since its foundation.
○ With the University-Business Innovation Center (UBIC) serving as a contact point for consultation and cooperation with the local community and companies, the University conducts joint research with companies, and provides start-up support in order to develop entrepreneurs. In December 2020, the UBIC was selected along with the Reconstruction and Revitalization Support Center as a Regional Open Innovation Center (Regional Contribution Type) by METI. In these and other ways, the University has been striving to realize one of its basic principles, "Contribution to the Industry and Culture of Fukushima Prefecture."

[Points Requiring Improvement]
○ Regarding the capacity non-fulfillment and exceedance of the graduate school, systematic measures to manage the program capacities and to improve the quality assurance of education are required.

○ The Graduate School Curriculum Policy must specifically indicate "the method and process of learning, as well as how learning outcomes are evaluated," which must also be made known to students, in line with the guidelines of the Central Council for Education.

○ The Undergraduate and Graduate School Admission Policies are required to specifically indicate "the learning outcomes the University require from the students it accepts" in line with the guidelines of the Central Council for Education.

○ From the viewpoint of substantiation of credits, the upper limit on the number of credits a student can take in a year needs to be reviewed based on analysis and verification of, among other things, students' actual pre/post-class time outside of class hours.

[Points for Further Development]

○ Given the intent of Article 109 of the School Education Act, it is desirable to clarify the difference between the self-assessment of education and research activities and the corporate evaluation. Further, it is also desirable to review and clarify the relationship between the President and internal organizations, and to enhance internal quality assurance with the President as the person in charge.

○ From the viewpoint of curriculum systematization, it is desirable for the University to define major courses.

○ From the perspective of learner-oriented education, it is desirable for the University to systematically formulate grading criteria that are described not only in terms of grade points, but also attainment level; clearly indicate said criteria to students; and systematically analyze, verify, and review these criteria in order to standardize the grading criteria.

○ From that same perspective, it is desirable to systematically inspect and verify the content of syllabi, as well as how it is stated, and to strengthen the systematic checking of the content of each course syllabus.

○ Regarding the graduate school curriculum, it is desirable from a learner-oriented perspective to clearly indicate and inform students of the systematic nature of the graduate school curriculum in an easy-to-understand manner.

○ Regarding faculty development (FD) and staff development (SD), it is desirable to clarify the University's policy on FD and SD, set themes according to said policy, and otherwise enhance FD and SD activities to systematically improve educational and research activities, etc.

○ Regarding the understanding and visualization of student learning outcomes, it is desirable that the University enhance its organized efforts to improve education and research activities, such as conducting analysis and verification of various questionnaires as part of Institutional Research (IR).

3 Evaluation by Each Criterion

☐ Criterion 1: Infrastructure Review (Assuring Legal and Regulatory Compliance)

Using the "Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio," which shows the University's overall self-assessed/evaluated state, we conducted an analysis based on the evaluation guidelines for Criterion 1. As a result, we confirmed that the University of Aizu is in compliance with the relevant laws and regulations. The following is a list of the details of the evaluated items, including the matters that were confirmed.

(a) Matters related to the organization that supports the University's education and research

The basic organizations for education and research in the undergraduate and graduate programs, i.e., the undergraduate school and divisions, and the graduate school and departments, are organized in accordance with the objectives of education and research. However, regarding the capacity non-fulfillment of the Graduate School of Computer Science and Engineering's Master's Program in Information Technology and Project Management, as well as the capacity exceedance of the Graduate School of Computer Science and Engineering's Doctoral Program, systematic measures to manage the program capacities and to improve the quality assurance of education are required.

(b) Matters related to the faculty organization

Regarding the faculty organization in the undergraduate and graduate programs, the University has established its "Ideals for Faculty Members" and a "Faculty Organization Policy." Having done so, the necessary faculty members were appropriately assigned according to the size of the education and research organization, the types and fields of degrees to be conferred, etc. In addition, the University has established a Faculty Assembly and other various administrative systems stipulated by the School Education Act. At the time of the submission of the Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio, the roles of the President and Undergraduate Dean were unclear in the Regulations Concerning the Faculty Assembly. However, we were able to confirm that the regulations were revised to clarify the roles of the President and Undergraduate Dean, and this revision was approved at the March 2025 meeting of the Board of Directors.

The five types of courses (General Education, Foreign Languages, Specialized, Graduation Thesis, and Teaching Profession) are taught by faculty members assigned to the Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Information Systems divisions according to their respective specialties, as well as by faculty members belonging to the Center for Cultural Research and Studies (CCRS), Center for Language Research (CLR), and other organizations. However, from the viewpoint of curriculum systematization, it is desirable for the University to define "major courses."

(c) Matters related to educational programs

In both the undergraduate and graduate programs, a system has been put to ensure that the selection of applicants is conducted in a fair and appropriate manner. Further, the curricula for both programs are being appropriately organized and implemented.

For the undergraduate program, the University has organized its curriculum systematically by offering the necessary courses on its own, based on the Diploma and Curriculum Policies. In addition, the methods and contents of classes, as well as the annual class plans, are clearly indicated to students in advance. Further, grading, credit approval, and graduation approval are appropriately carried out according to these methods and plans. However, from the viewpoint of substantiation of credits, the upper limit on the number of credits a student can take in a year needs to be reviewed based on analysis and verification of, among other things, students' actual pre/post-class study time outside of class hours.

Regarding the graduate program, the University has established necessary courses by itself in accordance with the Diploma and Curriculum Policies. It has also formulated plans for guidance in the preparation of dissertations, etc., and systematically organizes its curriculum. In addition, graduate students are being informed in advance of the methods and contents of classes and research guidance, as well as the annual class plan. Further, grading, credit approval, and completion approval are being appropriately carried out according to these methods and plans. At the time of the submission of the Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio, research guidance plans were not clearly indicated to students. However, we were able to confirm that the Graduate School Faculty Assembly decided at its March 2025 meeting to address this issue by establishing a form to indicate the research guidance plans to students. However, from a learner-oriented perspective, it is desirable to clearly indicate and inform students of the systematic nature of the graduate school curriculum in an easy-to-understand manner, by, among other things, creating a curriculum map or tree.

From the perspective of learner-oriented education, it is desirable for the University to systematically formulate grading criteria that describe not only in terms of grade points, but also in terms of attainment level; clearly indicate said criteria to students; and systematically analyze, verify, and review these criteria in order to standardize the grading criteria. In addition, from that same perspective, it is desirable to systematically check and verify the content of the undergraduate and graduate school syllabi, as well as how it is stated, and to strengthen the systematic checking of the content of each course syllabus. Regarding grading, we were able to confirm that the Faculty Assembly and the Graduate School Faculty Assembly decided at their February 2025 meetings to develop new grading criteria.

(d) Matters related to facilities and equipment

The University has appropriately-sized sites and buildings, as well as appropriate facilities and equipment, for the size and type of undergraduate school, divisions, graduate school, and graduate departments. It also has a well-organized collection of books and other materials necessary for education and research, and the University library is functioning properly.

In addition, the University is appropriately equipped with the facilities necessary for education and research, such as experiment and exercise laboratories in the Lecture Hall and Research Quadrangles, in accordance with the Standards for Establishment of Universities.

(e) Matters related to administrative organization(s)

In accordance with the Basic Regulation Concerning the Organization and Business Operation of the Public University Corporation, the University of Aizu, the University has established appropriate administrative organizations to carry out the administrative work of the undergraduate and graduate schools, as well as organizations to provide for the welfare and guidance of students.

In order to ensure organized and effective management of education and research activities, etc., the University has secured a system for collaboration between faculty and administrative staff members, etc., and is working to assure that they perform their duties in a collaborative manner.

(f) Matters related to the Diploma, Curriculum, and Admission Policies

A policy for the approval of graduation or completion (Diploma Policy), a policy for the organization and implementation of educational programs (Curriculum Policy), and a policy for the acceptance of students (Admission Policy) have been established based on the educational objectives of the University. However, the Graduate School Curriculum Policy must specifically indicate "the method and process of learning, as well as how learning outcomes are evaluated," which must also be made known to students, in line with the guidelines of the Central Council for Education.

In addition, the Undergraduate and Graduate School Admission Policies are required to specifically indicate "the learning outcomes the university require from the students the university accept" in line the

guidelines of the Central Council for Education. We were able to confirm that revisions to the Graduate School Curriculum Policy were approved at the March 2025 meeting of the Education and Research Council.

As for the Curriculum Policy, a "Diploma Policy and Curriculum Policy Correspondence Table" was formulated for the undergraduate and graduate schools, respectively, to ensure consistency with the Diploma Policy.

(g) Matters related to the publication of information on the status of education and research activities, etc.

The University is appropriately disclosing the status of its educational and research activities, etc. through its website and other means in order to contribute to the dissemination and utilization of the results of its educational and research activities.

(h) Matters related to the system for continuous improvement of education and research activities, etc.

As a system to continuously improve educational and research activities, etc., the Evaluation Office consisting of the Vice President and Regents was formed under the supervision of the Chairperson of the Board of Executives and the President, in accordance with the "Basic Regulation Concerning the Organization and Business Operation of the Public University Corporation, the University of Aizu." The Evaluation Office compiles the results of self-assessment conducted by each department, etc., and reports the results to the Undergraduate Dean, who is the Regent in Charge of Education. Based on the results, the Dean of Undergraduate School provides guidance and instructions for improvement, develops plans for education, and works with faculty members, the FD Promotion Committee, and the Academic Affairs Committee to improve education and research activities. In FY2023, the Internal Quality Assurance of Education Working Group was newly established as a subordinate organization of the Evaluation Office. The new WG took the lead in organizing a system for internal quality assurance of education and research, and formulated the "Policy for Internal Quality Assurance of Education at the University of Aizu" in April 2024. Based on this system and policy, the University conducts self-inspections and evaluations of the status of education and research, etc., and the results are summarized in the Business Achievement Report, which is disclosed on the website. However, given the intent of Article 109 of the School Education Act, it is desirable to clarify the difference between the self-assessment of education and research activities and the corporate evaluation. Further, it is also desirable to review and clarify the relationship between the President and internal organizations, and to enhance internal quality assurance with the President as the persons in charge.

Appropriate training opportunities, etc. are provided for faculty and administrative staff members. In addition, necessary training is provided to teaching assistants. However, it is desirable to clarify the University's policy on FD and SD, set themes according to the policy, and otherwise enhance FD and SD activities to systematically improve education and research activities, etc.

(i) Financial matters

The University is endeavoring to develop its environment so as to make it suitable for education and research by ensuring the necessary budget, for the purpose of achieving its purpose of education and research.

(j) Matters related to education and research activities, etc. other than those listed in (a) through (i) above

In addition to the matters listed in (a) through (i) above, necessary matters concerning education and research activities, etc. (especially student support and maintenance of the ICT environment) are being appropriately addressed.

□ **Criterion 2: Review of Standards (Raising the Standard of Education and Research)**

Using the "Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio," which shows the overall status of the University's self-assessed/evaluated state, we conducted an analysis based on the evaluation guidelines for Criterion 2. We analyzed whether the University is systematically conducting initiatives to raise the standard of education and research, and whether these initiatives are functioning effectively.

Initiatives to raise the standard of education and research at the University were self-assessed by each department and other organization as part of the process of managing the medium-term and annual goals and plans. The results were complied, inspected, evaluated, and reported to the Undergraduate Dean, who is the Regent in Charge of education, by the Evaluation Office consisting of the Vice President and Regents formed under the supervision of the Chairperson of the Board of Executives and President. Based on the results, the Undergraduate Dean provides guidance and instructions for improvement, develops plans for education, and works with faculty members, the FD Promotion Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, the various centers, and other organizations to raise the standard of education and research activities. In addition, the University has established the Internal Quality Assurance of Education Working Group as a subordinate organization of the Evaluation Office. This WG is supporting activities related to the university-wide internal quality assurance of education. Based on the above initiatives, the University is making efforts to understand and visualize student learning outcomes. However, it is desirable to enhance such organized efforts of the University to improve education and research activities, such as conducting analysis and verification of various questionnaires as part of Institutional Research (IR).

In line with the stipulations of the Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio, the University presented the maximum of five self-analysis efforts aimed at improving the standard of education and research. Our analysis of these efforts, as well as the situations, etc. identified by said analysis, are as follows.

·No. 1 "Efforts to improve the quality of education through the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance of Education Working Group"

The University is aware of the problem of differences in the degree of commitment to educational quality assurance among faculty members. The University's lack of organizational measures for internal quality assurance was also pointed out during the preliminary review by the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE) in FY2022. In response to these and other issues related to internal educational quality control, the University has established university-wide policies, systems, etc. for self-assessment and evaluation to improve internal quality assurance of education throughout the university organization.

As a specific initiative, the University revised the Guidelines for the Establishment of the Evaluation Office of the Public University Corporation, the University of Aizu, and established an Internal Quality Assurance of Education Working Group specializing in internal quality assurance of education in December 2023. The WG has discussed and specified the details, priority levels, etc. of internal quality assurance activities. Based on guidelines and other documents indicating the thinking of MEXT, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Reform, and other relevant authorities, the University formulated and published the "Policy for Internal Quality Assurance of Education at the University of Aizu," spelling out the procedures for university-wide internal quality assurance. Said policy specifies the following procedures: Every fiscal year, the Undergraduate Dean reviews and approves the plans prepared by committees, etc. and subsequently orders the committees and faculty members to implement the plans. The Evaluation Office then conducts a continuous and systematic inspection and evaluation of the results of these activities every fiscal year. In addition, the FD

Promotion Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee are discussing how to proceed with the future activities of the WG.

In the future, we hope and expect to see the University establish a mechanism to promote continuous internal quality assurance, and clarify the roles of the various committees, etc. so that the PDCA cycle can function effectively.

· No. 2 "Enhancement of English education [Learning outcomes]"

In order to improve students' four English language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and to equip them with the English language skills necessary to study the latest computer science and engineering, the CLR is taking the lead in English language education aimed at improving all four skills.

The University has implemented various initiatives at each grade level. For example, for first-year students, the University implements a Fluency Program to significantly change students' perception of English, and to build up their skills such as reading and listening (including to English speech by non-native speakers), as well as their vocabulary. In the second year, students prepare to read specialized books and take specialized courses in English by learning things such as the structure of editorial writings. The University has also made an effort to provide practical English education for third- and fourth-year students in the form of CLIL (Content-language integrated learning) required in elective English courses and English courses on graduation thesis on writing. This creates a foundation for conducting research and writing a graduation thesis, allowing students to write a graduation thesis in English.

In addition, the University has made various initiatives to improve English education by utilizing a standardized test (TOEIC) to measure students' English proficiency. For example, in AY2018, the University stipulated that students must obtain a TOEIC score of 400 points to advance to the third year. In AY2019, the e-learning system "Kickoff for TOEIC" was made mandatory in first-year English classes. In AY2021, the standard TOEIC score for advancement to the third year was raised from 400 to 450, and other efforts are being made to improve English education. Students struggling to meet the two TOEIC benchmarks (450 and 525) are encouraged to attend the TOEIC preparation course and receive individualized instruction to improve both their English proficiency and TOEIC scores. Students who need intensive support are encouraged to take the one- to two-week intensive TOEIC preparation course before the determination of whether their TOEIC score meets the requirements for advancement, or during summer or spring break. As a result, while the percentage of students who obtained a TOEIC score of 500 or higher was 31.7% as of AY2020, it rose to 62.9% in AY2023.

The CLR tabulates and statistically analyzes TOEIC results each time and prepares a report on students' scores twice a year. These reports show changes in scores over time and compares them with the national average for information science departments. The results are evaluated within the CLR and shared with the faculty. Score reports are given to the Academic Affairs Committee, which discusses measures to improve English language education.

· No. 3 "Efforts to strengthen research through the research cluster model"

In order to improve the University's research level and to obtain medium and large external competitive research grants, the Committee for Strengthening Research Capability took the lead in reviewing the research system and formulating a research cluster system in FY2020. The University of Aizu Research Cluster Model was created by designing a roadmap that enables growth from a Basic Cluster (B Cluster) to an Advanced Cluster (A Cluster) and then to a Center of Excellence (CoE). Since it takes some time for research clusters to grow into CoEs, we expect that the University will enhance its support system to promote the growth of research clusters, leading to the invigoration of each research cluster in the future.

In the past, single faculty member provided research guidance to students alone. Now, the research cluster system allows multiple faculty members in the same cluster to provide guidance to students from the start. As a result, students are able to acquire a variety of knowledge and know-how from different perspectives. Further, students from different laboratories have more opportunities to interact with each other, thereby fostering technical skills and cooperation.

·No. 4 "University-wide efforts to improve research capabilities (competitive research funds, etc.)"

Led by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Committee for Strengthening Research Capability, the Faculty Assembly, the Deans and Directors Council, etc. are deliberating and implementing measures such as the introduction of a competitive research funding system within the University, as well as the enhancement of the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) application support system.

The internal competitive research funding system is reviewed and revised every year in order to improve faculty motivation. One example of recent discussions about the system was a proposal to prioritize funding for young researchers and newly hired UoA faculty members. This proposal was approved after deliberation at the Deans and Directors Council.

Regarding KAKENHI, the University is working to create an environment that encourages faculty members to actively apply by holding on-campus information sessions, informing new faculty members about KAKENHI individually, checking their application forms before submission, etc. Through collaboration between the UBIC faculty members and the Administrative Office, the University provides information to faculty members on how to actively utilize joint research, commissioned research, scholarship donations, etc. It also responds to requests for consultation from faculty, companies, etc., and also supports KAKENHI applications by faculty members.

·No. 5 "Assistance in obtaining patents"

Since its establishment, the University has worked in accordance with the "University Regulation Concerning Employee Inventions, Etc. of University of Aizu Faculty Members, Etc." to establish an intellectual property management system in order to appropriately maintain and manage the employee inventions created by faculty, etc., and to effectively utilize employee inventions created at the University. In 2003, the JPO dispatched an intellectual property advisor to the University of Aizu to establish an intellectual property management system at the University. In July 2005, the University formulated the "University of Aizu Intellectual Property Strategy," which sets forth its basic approach to intellectual property, compensation of inventors, policies for utilizing intellectual property, etc. The strategy provides direction for the management of intellectual property, etc., for the University as a whole. For example, it states that the UBIC will centrally manage operations related to intellectual property. In FY2011, the University established the Intellectual Property Advisor (IPA) position in an effort led by the UBIC to promote the protection and effective utilization of the University's intellectual property rights and to provide expert advice. In addition, the faculty member on loan from the JPO provides support for conducting prior art searches and responding to notices of reasons for refusal when filing new applications. With these and other efforts, the University provides researchers with consultations regarding inventions, and also supports them with new applications and examination request procedures.

The University also provides an environment that facilitates the creation of inventions by faculty members, etc. As specific examples, when the University is assigned the patent rights for employee inventions, it pays registration compensation. It also pays implementation compensation to the inventor when it receives income from the licensing, sale, etc. of patent rights.

Through the above efforts, the number of patent applications has been maintained at an average of about 12 each year since FY2017.

□ Criterion 3: Review of Distinctiveness (Progress in Distinctive Education and Research)

Using the "Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio," which shows the overall status of the University's self-assessed/evaluated state, we conducted an analysis based on the guidelines for evaluating Criterion 3. We analyzed whether the University is systematically conducted initiatives to contribute to progress in distinctive education and research, and whether these measures are functioning effectively.

In line with the stipulations of the Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio, the University presented the maximum of five main efforts in the area of distinctive education and research. Our analysis of these efforts, as well as the situations, etc. identified by said analysis, are as follows.

·No. 1 Promotion of research partnerships and collaborations with local communities as well as regional contribution activities

Under the basic philosophy of "Contribution to the Industry and Culture of Fukushima Prefecture," the University Business Innovation Center and the Revitalization and Creation Support Center serve as centers for industry-academia-government collaboration, promoting regional development and social contribution activities aimed at creating innovation and promoting and developing industry through research and problem solving in cooperation between the University, companies, and the community. The UBIC and RACS were selected as a Regional Open Innovation Center (Regional Contribution Type) by METI in December 2020.

In addition to holding Aizu Open Innovation meetings since FY2013 in an effort to solve social issues, the University has established the Aizu Industry-University Consortium as an organization for industry-academia-government collaboration. In this way and others, it is building a system to promote industry-academia-government collaboration in cooperation and collaboration with local ICT-related companies, etc. In addition, the University is implementing a project to support the development and employment of female IT talent. Further, in an effort to resolve regional issues using ICT, a field in which the University specializes, it is conducting research studies on 10 themes as part of the Aizu DX Nisshinkan Project. This is in collaboration with the Aizu Regional Promotion Bureau and 13 municipalities in the Aizu region.

In FY2023, the University started a project to redevelop UBIC into an open innovation environment utilizing cutting-edge ICT with the aim of accelerating the creation of new industries and start-ups in the region as a core center for future digital innovation. This was funded using a subsidy for industry-academia collaboration promotion projects (for the development of incubation and industry-academia fusion centers at core regional universities, etc.).

It is expected that UBIC will continue to promote this initiative with an aim of creating new industries by providing consultation, cooperation, collaboration, and other services to local companies, etc. as a base for industry-academia-government collaboration.

·No.2 Efforts to support reconstruction and revitalization following the Great East Japan Earthquake, etc.

The University of Aizu Revitalization Support Center was established in March 2013 with the aim of contributing to the recovery of Fukushima Prefecture from the Great East Japan Earthquake, etc. By advancing various projects utilizing ICT, the University's field of expertise, the University is working to realize its founding principles such as "Development of Highly Creative Talents" and "Contribution to the Industry and Culture of Fukushima Prefecture."

As part of the Reconstruction Knowledge Project starting in FY2018, the University has utilized its robots and ICT knowledge related to robotics to develop the talent needed to create and develop the robotics industry in the Hamadori Region, with a particular focus on high school students in Minamisoma City, with which the University has a partnership agreement. In addition, by implementing projects in collaboration with Minamisoma City, companies, high schools, and other educational institutions, and

other partners, the University is contributing to the strengthening of the industry-academia-government collaboration system that serves as the foundation for the promotion of the robotics industry in the region, as well as the promotion of the robotics industry. In response to the recent shift of the national and prefectural governments' objectives from "reconstruction" to "reconstruction and creation," the Revitalization Support Center was reorganized into the Revitalization and Creation Support Center in July 2023, and its structure was enhanced, with an aim to promote industrial promotion and talent development in the Hamadori Region of Fukushima Prefecture.

· No. 3 Research on space informatics

The Aizu Research Center for Space Informatics (ARC-Space) has taken the lead in concluded cooperative agreements with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ). In FY2019, the Center was designated as a joint usage / research center, the Center for Lunar and Planetary Exploration Archive Science, by MEXT. ARC-Space will accumulate information on lunar and planetary exploration from all over the world on its server, providing necessary information and other support to researchers participating in joint use / joint research projects. It will also engage in publicly solicited joint research projects in collaboration with local ICT companies.

As for educational programs, two proposals, "Practice of Problem-based ICT Learning Using Space Remote Sensing Data" and "Moon/Mars Garden (Hakoniwa) Education Program on Computer Science Based Technology for Space," were adopted by MEXT for its Advancement of Aerospace Science and Technology Grant Program in FY2017 and 2023, respectively. Two problem-solving learning courses based on each proposal were offered at undergraduate and graduate schools. In addition, three core courses in space informatics are offered at the graduate school.

· No. 4 Initiatives for international exchange, overseas training, etc.

Based on the University's basic philosophy of "Development of Highly Creative Talents" and "Contribution to International Community," the University made efforts since its establishment to promote international exchange in education and research by faculty members, cross-cultural exchanges by faculty and students, the sending of students abroad, and the acceptance of international students.

Efforts related to sending students abroad include offering three levels of short and medium-term study abroad programs according to students' objectives, providing them with opportunities to improve language skills and deepen cross-cultural understanding. In addition, the University established in the University of Aizu Silicon Valley Office in the United States in FY2015, as well as educational exchange centers in Shenzhen and Dalian in China in FY2018. The University is conducting overseas internship programs, etc. at these hubs to provide students with opportunities to experience the making of things while interacting with local engineers, and to learn about the global entrepreneurship spirit. In addition, these internship programs were incorporated into the Extracurricular Activity Courses of the Innovation and Start-up Education Program (ISEP), which was established in FY2020 to develop talents with an entrepreneurial spirit.

As efforts to accept international students, the University established the ICTG Program, which allows students to graduate by taking liberal arts and specialized courses only in English from year one. It is also promoting the acceptance of international students through education and research collaboration programs with partner universities, etc.

International exchange activities on campus and with the local community include the Global Lounge activities, which promote international exchange and cross-cultural understanding and provide students with an opportunity to learn by, among other things, having students introduce their countries'

cultures and customs. The University also organizes international exchange activities with local residents, providing opportunities to understand the region's characteristics and diverse cultures.

In 2014, the University was selected by MEXT for its Top Global University Project. In response, it developed the University of Aizu Logic Model, which details the University's vision and what kind of students the University is developing, as well as the processes through which it will achieve these goals, and published it on the University's website. In addition, the University expanded its study abroad programs and training programs, strengthened the acceptance of international students, and promoted international exchange activities on campus and in the local community.

·No. 5 Efforts to develop the talents who will support our information-based society (PC Koshien)

The University of Aizu, the All-Japan High School Computing Contest Executive Committee (of which the university president serves as vice chair), and Fukushima Prefecture have hosted the All-Japan High School Computing Contest (PC Koshien) every year since 2003. PC Koshien is a contest in which high school and technical college students from all over Japan compete in the area of information processing technology with their superior ideas, expressiveness, programming skills, etc. The purposes of the competition are to improve the skills of students involved in modern information processing through competition, and to broaden the base of talents who support the information society.

By collaborating with faculty members and students to organize PC Koshien, the University fosters student independence and proactivity. By making the event a "place for learning from each other" where participants and University personnel can interact and gain new insights from each other, the University aims to realize one of its basic philosophy since the time of its founding, "Development of Highly Creative Talents."

The University conducted general discussions, which was a participatory evaluation of its "Initiatives for international exchange, overseas training, etc." (initiatives No. 4 of this criterion), with university faculty, staff, students, stakeholders, and other relevant parties.

At the general discussions, the University gave a presentation on the characteristics of the initiatives, as well as the details of specific activities. These were followed by exchanges of opinions with students, graduates, related parties from the region, etc. One student who participated in ISEP commented that their internship at a Vietnamese company gave them the opportunity to speak directly with local business owners and others, deepening their understanding of companies. This student is now using their experience in ISEP to start their own company. A former international student commented that although they could not speak Japanese when they came to the University, they received supports in terms of language and daily life. This enabled them to learn the differences in ways of thinking from their home countries, which was useful at the Japanese company where they found employment. A graduate commented that in addition to gaining a variety of knowledge from hardware to software, they also learned about communication by participating in international exchange activities, which has been useful in their current job. From the above, we were able to confirm that the University is working through these initiatives to develop internationally active talents who not only have language skills, but also the ability to collaborate with diverse people.

In addition, one company supporting the internship program commented that its collaboration with the University of Aizu has led to the recruitment of international students and globalization of their companies. From this, we can confirm that these initiatives have led to regional development and the invigoration of regional globalization.

Overall, we were able to confirm the initiative has contributed significantly to the advancement of the University's distinctive education and research, embodying its founding philosophy of "Contribution to International Community."

III About the Evaluation Conducted by JAQUE

1 About the Institutional Accreditation Evaluation

Article 109, Paragraph 2 of the School Education Act mandates that universities must undergo evaluation (accreditation evaluation) by an entity accredited by MEXT (accrediting institute) every seven years or less. The evaluation conducted for the University of Aizu this time was an accreditation evaluation as stipulated by the School Education Act.

2 Structure of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation report consists of the following three items I to III.

I Outline of the Auditee University

This section summarizes basic information on the auditee university, including its name, campus location, faculty composition, number of students and faculty members, and the University's philosophy and objectives based on the Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio.

II Evaluation Results

This section presents the results of the evaluation conducted based on the University Evaluation Criteria, which consists of the following three major points.

1. Results of the Accreditation Evaluation

This section indicates whether the University Evaluation Criteria are met or not.

2. General Comments

This section indicates the reasons for the decisions indicated in "1. Evaluation Results," as well as outstanding points, points requiring improvement, and points for future development.

3. Evaluation by Each Criterion

This section describes the items that were confirmed or pointed out for each of the three criteria set forth in University Evaluation Criteria. For "Criterion 1 Assuring Legal and Regulatory Compliance," each of the 10 evaluation items (a) through (j) set forth in the evaluation guidelines is described.

III About the Evaluation Conducted by JAQUE

This section explains the structure of the evaluation report and the evaluation process.

3 Points Raised in the General Comments

The general comments on the evaluation results indicate both the "outstanding points" and "points requiring improvement" based on the implementation outline. It also indicates "points for future development" from the perspective of contributing to the improvement of the quality of education and research at the University, etc.

The "outstanding points" section highlights the University's unique initiatives and proactive efforts to advance education and research. The "points requiring improvement" section highlights points that require prompt improvement in light of the intent of relevant laws and regulations or other issues needing attention. The "points for future development" section highlights aspects where further efforts are desirable to enhance the quality of education and research.

4 Evaluation Process

The evaluation was performed by the following process.

End of May	Submission of Self Inspection and Evaluation Portfolio by the auditee university
June - September	Document analysis
October 18	First site-visit (conducted online)
December 5	Second site-visit (conducted in person)
January	Notification of the draft evaluation report to the auditee university
February	Period for submission of opinions by the auditee university
March	Finalization and publication of the evaluation report