

Undergraduate Education

Build the foundation for a “fulfilling and meaningful life” through contribution to the local community and global society.

[Vision]

Between now and 2039, Japanese society is expected to undergo tremendous changes in terms of personnel needs and working environment due to factors such as its shrinking population and advances in AI. Our ultimate goal of undergraduate education will be never altered even we head towards our 150th anniversary: that is to produce graduates who keep the school motto “Mastery for Service”⁴ in their hearts, and live a “fulfilling and meaningful life”⁵ through contributing society and the world by taking on challenges for solving issues and transforming society in various fields.

The OECD’s Education 2030⁶ project proposes certain “21st-century competencies” as examples of the qualities needed to achieve this aim. In addition to knowledge and skills, the project endeavors to organize these competencies into concepts such as “attitudes and values”⁷ and “meta-competencies” (skills necessary to act autonomously). Kwansai Gakuin University adopted a similar approach in its Top Global University project, which was accepted for MEXT’s Top Global University funding program in 2014, proposing “self-direction,” “toughness,” and “understanding of diversity” as the competencies⁸ with the highest priority. Furthermore, ever since its establishment, Kwansai Gakuin has emphasized holistic education based on its founding spirit of the principles of Christianity, and as part of that, the institution has long treasured the “dignity” of a person’s character, including the strengths of self-discipline, integrity, a sense of ethics, and consideration for others.

From the university’s point of view, the end result of undergraduate education should be to graduate individuals who possess the kinds of qualities mentioned above, and send them out into the world. Viewed from the students’ perspective, they are at university to acquire the necessary qualities and set out onto the best path that they themselves wish for (getting a job at a company, starting their own business, further education, etc.). In that respect, a perspective centered on “employability”⁹ is important, as this is a major factor which impacts the university’s brand and its competitiveness with regard to student enrollment. Given these aspects, our target outcome at the graduation stage will

⁴ “Mastery for Service” is Kwansai Gakuin’s school motto, which reflects the ideal for all its members to master their abundant God-given gifts to serve their neighbors, society and the world.

⁵ Indiana University professor Victor Borden, a higher education specialist from the United States who visited Kwansai Gakuin in 2016, said in his lecture, “Improving the Value of Teaching and Learning,” that the ultimate outcome of higher education was the “well-being” of graduates. He cited five indicators used to study well-being: Purpose (Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals); Social (Having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life); Financial (Effectively managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security); Community (The sense of engagement you have with the areas where you live, liking where you live, and feeling safe and having pride in your community); and Physical (Having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis). Kwansai Gakuin also believes these to be the major elements that comprise a “fulfilling and meaningful life”.

⁶ Launched in 2015 (target year: 2018), the OECD’s Education 2030 project aims to redefine the key competencies defined in the DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) project to make them relevant for 2030, an age of growing uncertainty.

⁷ Attitudes & Values includes attributes such as morals, empathy, persistence, ability to concentrate, ability and willingness to engage with others, curiosity, sense of ethics, sense of responsibility, and leadership, all of which combine to form a person’s character and humanity.

⁸ “Competencies” usually refer to the behavioral characteristics of people who achieve superior outcomes in an organization. They include not only knowledge and skills, but the ability to use those knowledge and skills in an integrated manner.

⁹ Employability is also seen as a fundamental issue in tuning projects conducted as part of the EU’s Bologna Process.

be “a guarantee of student quality,” with specific goals of “acquisition of learning outcomes” and “high-quality employment.” We will link all of our long-term strategies and strive to systematize and structure them in a manner designed to achieve these goals.