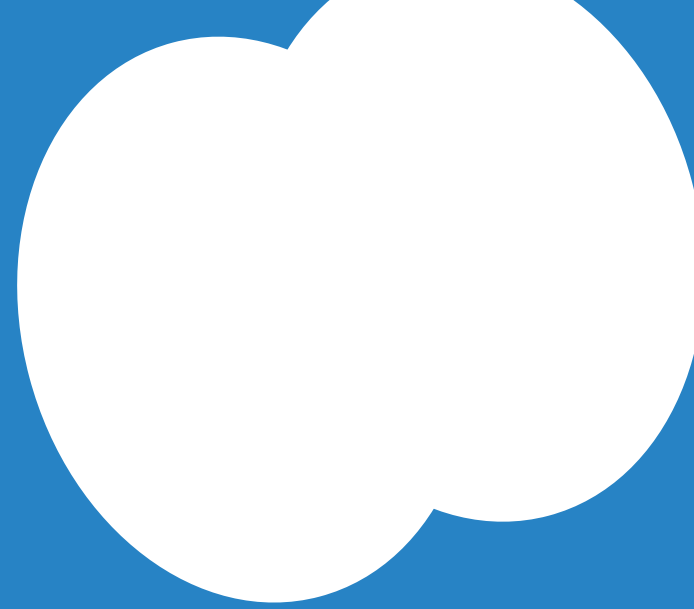


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Evaluation and  
Quality Assurance  
of Higher Education  
in Japan

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# Preface

The education of a country is largely influenced by the social conditions of the times such as politics and economy. When we look back on the educational reforms of modern Japan, the major reforms of the Meiji period was associated with the reforms of society as a whole in the form of the Meiji Restoration. The grand reform of the Showa period after the World War II was for rebuilding the educational system which deteriorated during the war. The major reforms which are currently taking place in the Heisei period aim to create and pass down new “knowledge” which enables Japan to meet the needs of society in the twenty-first century in the era of globalization and to build higher education institutions which can contribute to its progress. As one of the measures for Japan to secure a reasonable position in the international community, emphasis has been placed on the creation of “knowledge” in higher education including universities. In terms of global competition, there has been a tendency to focus on the aspect of economy or industry until today. However, in the twenty-first century, it is also important to become sufficiently competitive in the field of academics and culture.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, advanced nations actively developed policies for expanding universities. As a result, the number of university students in Europe and the United States including Japan increased significantly. Expanding a university is a project which requires vast amount of funds, and in order to achieve its objectives, an extensive social approval is essential. Therefore each country devoted valuable public funds to expand the universities while making efforts to obtain the social approval.

Now we are in the twenty-first century, advanced nations are faced with a common problem. With the arrival of an advanced knowledge-based society, will the universities which expanded over the past half a century be able to play their role and meet the increasing expectations of the creation, transfer and progress of “knowledge?” A new image of a university is now sought, but what is that image like?

In Japan, in order to maintain and assure reform, to improve the quality of universities and to demonstrate accountability to the community, the third-party evaluation system has been introduced and the incorporation of

national universities is being encouraged. However, the inseparableness of such trends and the nation's financial issues is making the situation complicated. At the same time, when we consider the importance the results produced in universities have in society now, it would be impossible and wrong to separate them from the nation's financial issues. In the 1990's, each advanced nation was forced to reexamine the items of expenditure in its national budget because of the increased welfare budget due to the aging of its population in addition to revenue shortages caused by economic recession. The budget related to higher education is not an exception and there will be little hope for a public funding like that of the period of expansion in the past. A more efficient public expenditure is now required. Those involved with higher education must explain the importance and necessity of their various activities and visually show society their contributions. From this perspective, this book will describe the culture of evaluation which serves as the premise of the image of a university to be hoped in the twenty-first century and then define the basic concept, methods and issues for carrying out an evaluation.

February 2008



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# Chapter 1

## What is an Evaluation Culture?

An answer to the question, “what is needed for universities in the future?” is in short “Evaluation Culture.” Evaluation culture means that we should appreciate the informations of evaluation on one’s own account and choose the next activities. So far universities have developed educational culture and research culture. A university is now required to add evaluation culture to them and develop themselves using these cultures as a foundation. This chapter will provide a short outline of the history of modern universities and illustrate the relationship between “evaluation” by a third-party and the “autonomy” of universities.

Column 1-1

**Evaluation Culture** is to appreciate the evaluation information on one’s own account and to select the next activities.

### Section 1

#### **Autonomy of modern universities**

When we describe the history of universities, it is generally considered that the establishment of the University of Berlin (now Humboldt University) in the early nineteenth century is the origin of the “modern university.” At the end of the eighteenth century, the University of Berlin was established based on an idea which was completely dissimilar to that of traditional universities in Germany when it was at its worst downturn. It was Wilhelm von Humboldt, the Prussian minister of education, who developed this idea. Humboldt’s philosophy had several characteristics. This section will explain three major characteristics of his philosophy: (1) Education through research, (2) “National University” - Expenses required for operating the university to be paid out of the national treasury, and (3) Autonomy of the university.

Today, it is believed that the natural function of a university professor is to carry out research, but things used to be different. The function of a university professor was to teach students and research was not necessarily a

part of his/her function. However, since the time when the University of Berlin was established, research has been added to the function of university professors in parallel with the job of teaching students. In other words, a university professor was expected to be a teacher as well as a researcher in a special field. It is believed that the method of assessing the ability and qualification of university professors according to their research results began at the University of Berlin.

University professors not only teach students but also carry out research. Therefore, Humboldt's philosophy is not adequately explained by the description, "a university is an institution in which education and research are integrated." This description only focuses on the function of a university professor as a person on the teaching side. However, Humboldt's philosophy seeks significance in the participation of professors as well as students in the research. The idea of providing education through the process of carrying out research is commonly accepted today, but it was not a common idea before Humboldt's time.

It is not good enough for a student to gain knowledge just by listening to the lectures given by academic staff. Humboldt's philosophy for education was after all for students to have an awareness of the issues and study resource materials and to carry out research and experiments and acquire new knowledge by debating the results with academic staff and other students. With regard to the difference between a university and a school, Humboldt argues that learning must be handled as something that has not yet been solved completely and that it must be studied everlastingly. The results of such education came to fruition in a visible form in the latter half of the nineteenth century. That is to say, around the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany reached the world's most advanced level in various fields of learning. The number of Nobel Prize winners of that time reflects the fact. There is no doubt that this concept was handed down to graduate school education in the United States, further influenced universities around the world and greatly contributed to the progress of society in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Next, we would like to examine the "national university" for which the expenses required to run a university are paid directly by the state. Students who enrolled in universities up to the end of the eighteenth century were

limited to sons of the very few social elites. Therefore, tuition was also very expensive. However, that is not to say that the financial foundation of a university could be supported by tuition alone. Most universities up to the end of the eighteenth century had their land and gardens provided by the state, the royal family or the church and were operated by the income created from such assets. More specifically, a university was the owner of vast lands and the salary of academic staff and maintenance expenses of the buildings were paid by the profit which the university made from its lands. This practice was not confined to universities but commonly done in those days.

In the case of the University of Berlin, it did not own such land or assets. Therefore, it inevitably had to be operated by the budget of the national treasury. In other words, it started as a university which depended on the state budget without its own financial foundation. This system meant that a financially unstable university was created. Despite having such a flaw, it was necessary in order to overcome the imperfection universities had until then. That imperfection was due to universities having their own financial foundation, which resulted in a lack of external control or inspection. It is easy to imagine how efforts to improve universities did not quite link to improvement because of their own financial resources even though the quality of education was degraded or corruption was being committed. The stagnation of universities in the late eighteenth century was the result of universities running in the direction of self-protection, being beyond the reach of outside scrutiny and lumbering self-consecration.

Let us move on to the final topic, “autonomy of universities.” As described above, while Humboldt sought financial foundation from the state budget, he also stated, “The state should not interfere with the university. To do so is harmful to academic research.” This phrase has been quoted frequently by universities to protect themselves against state control. Humboldt was referred to as the guardian angel of university autonomy, but his phrase needs to be explained in detail. In Humboldt’s recommendation, the selection of professors was not left up to the faculty council of the university, but was carried out by the governing body of the university (specifically, the government). Humboldt fathomed that it was not only the state that would violate the freedom of learning, but the university itself had the risk of violating it. He stated, “once a university is established, it has a tendency to

fixate on specific ideas and prevent those with different ideas from entering.” Therefore, with the system of the University of Berlin, the day-to-day management was left up to the self-initiative of the university with very little interference from the government instead of reserving the authority of selecting professors in the hands of the government. However, it is also a fact that the university and the state frequently encountered antagonism over the long period of history.

The autonomy of universities will be discussed again in Section 3, but we must avoid falling into exclusive self-righteousness within the fold. The autonomy of universities is not only for the staff of the university or its students. It is for meeting the expectations of stakeholders.

## Section 2

### **Image of Universities in the twenty-first Century**

The world in the twentieth century has achieved progress supported by industrialization which began from the industrial revolution of the latter half of the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century, standardized goods were produced in abundance and supplied to society at low cost. However, from the 1990’s, “individualization,” more than “standardization,” was demanded. Under such circumstances, the social environment that surrounded universities changed drastically.

While the research level of each academic field rapidly progressed and each had become advanced and radical, the interdisciplinization (to make disciplines borderless) of existing fields progressed. Two different aspects can be considered with regard to the interdisciplinization of learning in the latter half of the twentieth century. Interdiscipline has been talked about since the 1970’s. Let us explain this by taking the field of biochemistry as an example. Biology until then considered each organism as idiosyncratic and tried to clarify their properties. However, with biochemistry, all organisms have a basic commonality and biochemistry tries to clarify the common life phenomena through chemical methods. This direction of study led development towards the present “bioscience.”

However, we started to notice that even something that could be considered as academic progress from the standpoint of a specific field may

create new social problems. While genetic engineering, which is the hot topic in the field of bioscience, is contributing to the progress of humankind, it is also pointed out that it may present bioethical problems. Transdiscipline started to attract attention from the 1990's. Let us examine this by taking environmental issues as an example. It is a fact that environmental issues are multiple problems which are caused by the astonishing progress of science and cast a shadow on the future of humankind. To study environmental problems, we could consider an approach from various fields as shown in Table 1-1. The results from respective areas must be fed back to contiguous areas.

Table 1-1  
Academic fields related to environmental issues

- **Humanities** which investigates the morals of humankind
- **Social Science** which explores the mechanism of the social system
- **Natural Science** which investigates and prevents the causes and structures of environmental destruction
- **Health and Physical Education** which pursues good health
- Knowledge and skills for communicating with foreign researchers (**foreign languages**)

When we speak of the image of universities in the twenty-first century, we should not forget the problem of the popularization of universities. The modern university established under the philosophy of Humboldt was a training ground of the elite for the expert minority. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, universities were imposed with the role of popularizing elite education among the masses by opening their doors. Universities implemented such popularization. Elite training and popularization do not necessarily mesh and in some cases, clash. Universities of the twenty-first (post-modern university) are required to be individualized and excellent while widely providing higher education.

### Section 3

## **Autonomy and Evaluation Culture of Post-modern Universities**

There are three As, which a university should have in any age. These consist of: (1) Autonomy, (2) Academic freedom and (3) Accountability. Only in case a university has these three As, the knowledge that is created, passed down and developed there can contribute to the community. No special explanation should be needed about academic freedom. Here, let us briefly explain autonomy and accountability.

Modern universities have been supported by the Humboldt-style autonomy. As described above, they were supposed to train the small number of elite. That is to say, most universities of the twentieth century displayed their “loftiness” and the knowledge created by such loftiness seems to have greatly contributed to the progress of society. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, universities became popularized by the policy of university expansion. As a result, universities of the twenty-first century are required to have “openness and depth.” Here “openness” means to constantly send out messages to the society that they are making the effort to respond to the needs of society. “Depth” refers to the personality and the excellence each university should have. “Evaluation Culture” (Column 1-1) is by all means what supports this “openness and depth.” A post-modern university must contribute to the creation, evolution and progress of diverse knowledge using evaluation culture as its foundation in order to bring this “openness and depth” to the fore rather than flaunt its “loftiness.” A university is now required to have “autonomy” based on evaluation culture.

It should be emphasized here that we are not advocating universities do not need old “autonomy.” We are emphasizing that the quality of “autonomy” has changed. Autonomy that is open to society based on evaluation culture is the “autonomy” which is needed by universities in the future. We explained in Section 1 that even the original Humboldt-style autonomy was not an “arbitrary autonomy” of university but that it was an “autonomy” entrusted by the stakeholders.

Accountability means responsibility, duty and obligation. Therefore, it is not enough for university officials to merely explain the contents of their

education and research. They need to explain to society the responsibilities they have (or have fulfilled). Such excuses as: “accountability is expected for a national university as it is managed by the taxpayer’s money, but since we are a private university...” are not correct. Whether it is national or not, a university is a public institution which has the responsibility of being entrusted by society to educate and study in order to lead the world in the future. Some may think that they are already disclosing information about their activities through various media such as their website. However, that is not satisfactory. The main matters which should be explained are the condition of the quality of education and research which the university is carrying out, and its efforts for further improvement. Universities are required to send out those messages to the community in a way that can be understood by the people. While the creation of new knowledge is sought by the whole world, social expectations for universities are increasing. Society is strongly demanding universities to take up the attitude to respond to ever changing social environments, actively find issues they should face and daringly challenge those issues. That is what society of the twenty-first century pressingly needs.

## Chapter 2

# Significance of *Hyōka* (*Evaluation*)

The Japanese word “*hyōka*” is remarkably comprehensive. It embraces several English words that have different meanings, such as *accreditation* (certifying that something meets public standards), *assessment* (appraisal of property or income), *audit* (used in reference to “accounting audits,” “corporate audits,” etc.), and *evaluation* (estimation or examination of property, materials or capacity). Since all of these English words can be translated into “*hyōka*” in Japanese, each person who hears this Japanese word may interpret it somewhat differently. This is one of the primary causes of doubt or adverse reaction with regard to university evaluation. This chapter interprets the significance of university evaluation, with its historical sketch in Japan.

### Section 1

#### What is the objective of *evaluation*?

Subjects of evaluation are not limited to the education and research of a university. In our daily lives, we conduct various evaluations. “*Evaluation and improvement*” are recognized as an inseparable pair of measures that are necessary for society. Evaluation is never successful unless the person involved in evaluation clearly understands what the objective of this evaluation is.

#### Column 2-1

**Evaluation and improvement** are recognized as an inseparable pair of measures that are necessary for the society.

The first objective of evaluation is to contribute to the improvement of various activities including teaching and research. The second objective is to demonstrate social accountability. Evaluation also has an aspect of being useful to the improvement of university management in addition to the

improvement of education and research. Moreover, the trend of trying to utilize evaluation results as information for making a decision on allocating resources for the whole university or for departments or individuals might be making things more complicated.

When evaluation results are used for management or resource allocation, it may inevitably develop the attitude of trying to “hide what is inconvenient.” However, what is the most important for universities is to regain autonomy so as to be forced heteronomously by various policies through their efforts to implement sincere evaluation. If they regain it, then universities will be able to contribute to creating, passing down and developing new “knowledge.”

## **1. Evaluation for improvement**

It is no longer acceptable for universities to have a negative (or passive) attitude of saying that it was compulsory by law for all universities to implement evaluation or that they (or their departments) just happened to be subject to a third-party evaluation. That is to say, they can no longer afford to avoid the issue with a mere formal evaluation which has no substance.

The background to how demands for university evaluation increased will be analyzed in detail in Section 2. Here, we will be presenting its conclusion, but it is not that evaluation alone is being sought. Expectations toward evaluation are just as vital as expectations toward the improvement of the quality of education and research. In other words, it is definitely not something to put society at ease by obtaining an evaluation result that a university has no challenges or problems and is sufficiently contributing to the progress of society. Society is strongly demanding the attitude of sensitively responding to the ever changing social environment, actively finding problems to solve and daringly challenging those problems. Some may feel that they have been actively engaged in research and have produced sufficient results. However, what is required now is not an effort on an individual level but how an organization is taking on the challenges and in which direction. Society in the twenty-first century requires new “knowledge,” which results from efforts based on such an active attitude. Therefore, a “safe self-assessment” or a “safe third-party evaluation” in which problems for improvement are hardly noted can only give an impression of a university’s self-righteousness or

complacency to society and will never produce a favorable result for a university.

## **2. Evaluation for demonstrating social accountability**

As the objective of evaluation, social accountability is emphasized along with usefulness in improvement. A national university that depends greatly on the governmental funding is necessarily expected to demonstrate its accountability to the people, the taxpayers. Moreover, this is based on the reason that since a university is responsible for public education, it should have the accountability to explain its actual situation to the community.

Here, let us summarize the point as to what a university has to account for. Until today, this point has been vague for university members, too. Therefore, they may have thought that they had already fulfilled their accountability since they have always published their research results in journals with referees, or that they are already disclosing information on their education and research activities through various media including their website. However, that is not satisfactory. The main matters which must be explained should be the condition of the quality of education and research which the university is carrying out and its efforts for improvement.

Since any university is expected to be engaged in education and research, ultimately, the quality of education and research and the efforts and results of reforms and improvement are the most important points which should be explained. Given this perspective, we will be able to understand the viewpoint that evaluation for improvement is of primary importance.

## **3. Relationship between “evaluation for improvement” and management / resource allocation**

Evaluation not only serves for the improvement of the university management as a whole (or department as a whole) as well as the enhancement of the quality of education and research. Moreover, the issue of evaluation has often been discussed as an extension of the governmental financial matters and we cannot avoid the aspect that it may be reflected in resource allocation. So we must examine the relationship between evaluation for improvement and resource allocation for management. The relationship between them has been debated in advanced countries of university evaluation

such as in Europe and the United States, and it is a very complex problem. However, let us make the points at issue clear to forward the specific discussion on evaluation even though there may be many different opinions.

It is possible to utilize evaluation results for improving university management. Rather, management based on evaluation itself will be a basic of university management in the future. It is also needed to be firmly aware that the fundamental purpose of evaluation is to contribute to improvement of both education and research. It must be avoided that evaluation is just for management by forgetting this fundamental objective.

When linking evaluation results and resource allocation, these will serve as an adrenaline shot-like effect to stimulate an organization (or a specific division in an organization). Certainly, evaluation results might be occasionally used for resource allocation in a negative direction. However, such measures should be limited to short-term use. It is obvious that depending only on such measures may be fraught with risk of crushing the potential for its voluntary improvement, and experience tells us that in the long-term, it would have a negative effect on a university's progress. It is similar to the effect of antibiotics against illness. Even if the antibiotics work and treat the illness, if the person has become dependent on the antibiotics when his/her strength has not fully recovered, the person will be invaded by the illness again sooner or later.

Consequently, in order to place an emphasis on the objective of contributing to improvement, it is essential to spread, among all universities, the idea of self-assessment which could lead to improvement, and check whether or not a thorough and highly transparent self-assessment is being implemented in good faith. On that basis, it will be effective to link evaluation results to allocating of a part of resources. Even in such a case, it would be desirable to award a certain amount of financial resources as "incentive," and when financial circumstances permit, for the successful results such as unique and aspiring efforts and active improvements.

What is most feared is that an evaluation is implemented in accordance with financial-reductionism or efficientism of reducing management expenses grants drastically and uniformly by using only the quantitative data without being based on detailed evaluation of education and research.

## Section 2

### **Past, present and future of university evaluation**

This section describes the history of university evaluation in Japan in four phases. The first phase is the period from the major reform of education in the Showa era just after World War II to 1991's ministerial order for partial amendments of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities (called the Deregulation of University Act). The second phase is the period from the deregulation in 1991 to the Council for Higher Education Report in 1998. The third phase is the period from 1999 when the preparation for establishing organizations for university evaluation started in response to the 1998 Council Report to 2003 when the NIAD-UE's trial university evaluation was completed. The fourth phase is the period from 2004 when the certified evaluation and accreditation system was launched and national universities were incorporated. We will now explain each phase.

#### **The First Phase: From the Showa era up to the Deregulation of University Act**

The Standards for the Establishment of Universities was enacted for the purpose of both rebuilding deteriorated Japanese higher education after the World War II and assuring the quality of education in universities. Those who applied to establish a new university or faculties/departments were scrutinized under these Standards. The Standards were particularly defined class subjects, their number of credits, facilities with size of school building and number of library books, etc. There is no doubt that the Standards effectively functioned to rebuild higher education and assured the quality of universities' education and research, and therefore led to the development of universities. However, there emerged two major problems. The first problem was that since the standards functioned as advance regulations, the main investigation was limited to the time when being applied for the establishment of new universities or faculties/departments. The second problem was that these detailed regulations made it difficult for universities to promote their individualization. Due to these reasons, there existed voices for liberalization from a very early stage. However, this system continued to be implemented

for almost half a century without resolving the problem of how to harmonize “liberalization” and “quality assurance.”

The amendments of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities (the Deregulation of University Act) in 1991 was the great turning point of this system. This deregulation was intended that university’s self-assessment should play a role for assuring the quality of education and research in return for easing the advance regulations. This marked the great transition of the higher education policy, and “deregulation” and “self-assessment” were positioned as the counterparts. That is why it is called “shift from the convoy system to liberalization” or “shift from advance regulations to past established check.” In this context, the author calls the movement which began from the deregulation as the “great educational reform of the Heisei period.”

### **The Second Phase: From the deregulation in 1991 up to the Council for Higher Education Report**

Universities which are required to implement self-assessment started to carry out the process of organizing a committee or task force for self-assessment, and collecting, sorting out, and publishing data of the condition of education and research. Self-assessment papers entitled “XX University’s Condition and Challenges” have been released by many universities throughout the latter half of the 1990’s. In other words, each university had started by grasping and inspecting its own present condition. There were a small number of universities which delved into exploring their problems or engaged in improvement rather than just grasping the condition. However, most of them generally tended to have implemented the analysis and inspection of their conditions but did not reach the stage of self-assessment that could lead to improvement. Moreover, in many universities, more files of self-assessment reports from each department were released. To put it plainly, the work of each university was confined to self-inspection and not self-assessment. One of the reasons for these problems is likely to be the fact that teaching staff of universities were not familiar with self-assessment. It seems that there was a great sense of resistance towards the implementation of self-assessment by uniform standards for evaluation. However, the awareness of social necessity for self-assessment among those teaching staff was not necessarily sufficient to independently create individual

standards. Furthermore, it is also considered as one of the reasons that those staff did not sufficiently understand the purpose of the Deregulation of University Act.

In 1998, when the necessity of consciousness-raising of universities' teaching staff about evaluation was called into question due to dissatisfaction towards universities which were unable to venture into a rigorous self-assessment, the Council for Higher Education Report "A Vision of Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" was published. This report was given a subtitle, "To be Distinctive Universities in the Competitive Environment." This subtitle has a very profound meaning. In other words, it was based on the awareness that the first half of the twenty-first century would be the age of rebuilding "knowledge" on the implicit premise of the possibility of university selection due to the decline in the college-age population. On that basis, it recommends that the basic direction of university reform is to promote diversification and individualization with friendly rivalry, not to provide an equal and uniform higher education (Table 2-1). It also emphasizes the necessity of evaluation for contributing to the qualitative improvement of education and research, and third-party evaluation is positioned as the key measure for strengthening individualization. This concept was developed from the aim of the deregulation of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. More specifically, it recommends the development of self-assessment and the introduction of a third-party evaluation system for verifying the results of self-assessment, from the viewpoint of (1) Individualization of universities and consistent improvement of education and research, and (2) Accountability as a public institution. The deregulation of the Standards was a epoch-making transformation of policy, but the 1998 Council Report further radicalized its ideas and demanded the promotion of university reform based on the thorough reconsideration of the existing system. The "multiple evaluation system" has been positioned as the indispensable mechanism for carrying out the university reform effectively.

Table 2-1

Outline of the Council for Higher Education Report (published on October 26, 1998)

1. Reform for the individualization of universities
  - Cultivation of ability to pursue problems – Improvement of the quality of education and research
  - Flexible structuring of education and research system – Securing of the autonomy of universities
  - Responsible decision-making and execution – Improvement of the administrative structure
  - Establishment of a multiple evaluation system – Individualization of universities and consistent improvement of education and research -
  - Establishment of a basis for advancing higher education reforms
2. Establishment of a multiple evaluation system
  - To make it mandatory to implement self-assessment, disclose its result, and undergo a verification of its process by the third parties
  - To carry out highly transparent evaluations from an objective standpoint and establish a third-party evaluation organization which gathers and provides information on university evaluation
  - To allocate public resources appropriately based on various informations of evaluation

In response to this Report, the self-assessment stipulated by the Standards for the establishment of Universities was amended in the following year (Table 2-2). More specifically, the self-assessment stipulated as a task which universities should strive to conduct under the deregulation became compulsory. The disclosure of the results was also made compulsory. Furthermore, the item of verification of self-assessment by external persons was added to the Standards.

Table 2-2

Points of the revision of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities in 1999

- To carry out self-assessment on the condition of education and research activities and release the results (making self-assessment mandatory)
- To organize an appropriate system for carrying out the inspection and evaluation
- To make efforts to carry out verification by persons other than the staff of universities (external evaluation and third-party evaluation)

### **The Third Phase: From 1999 up to the completion of trial university evaluation by NIAD-UE**

In response to the Council for Higher Education Report “A Vision of Universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” the Preparatory Committee was launched in order to carry out preparations for establishing university evaluation organizations. This Committee vigorously discussed (1) the basic concept of evaluation organization, (2) the purpose of university evaluation and (3) the contents and methods of evaluation operations. Following is the summary of the discussion.

It is inevitable to consistently improve education and research of universities (including inter-university research institutes) by self-assessment. However, in order to make evaluation more effective in response to the expectations of society, it is required to conduct a highly credible evaluation based on professional judgment from an objective standpoint. For this reason, it is important to introduce a third-party evaluation system and give its evaluation results to universities so that such results can be used to improve the education and research activities of universities. At the same time, the evaluation also serves for gaining the understanding and support of the people about universities as public institutions, from the public by clarifying the condition and results of various activities of universities in a multilateral way and presenting them to society explicitly.

Based on these discussions, in 2000, the National Institution for Academic Degrees (NIAD) was reorganized and a new organization, the

“National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE)” was established for serving as a university evaluation organization in addition to the existing works for awarding of academic degrees. Initially, NIAD-UE embarked with a similar position as an inter-university research institute, but from April 2004, its status was changed into an incorporated administrative agency (refer to Chapter 7 with regard to the organization and its activities). Even after becoming an incorporated administrative agency, it has been carrying out its operation with the participation of university officials and other experts and has been autonomously implementing evaluation with professional viewpoints.

NIAD-UE engaged in the trial evaluation of national universities when it was first established. The detail of this evaluation will be described in Chapter 4. Behind the establishment of NIAD-UE as a third-party evaluation organization for national universities, there was the dissatisfaction towards universities being unable to implement stringent self-assessment which could lead to their improvement. On the other hand, we also have to remember the expectations toward the creation of new “knowledge” for surviving the global society of the twenty-first century.

#### **The Fourth Phase: After the start of certified evaluation and accreditation system and the incorporation of national universities**

From the end of the 1990’s to the 2000’s, a political movement to drastically change the higher education system has been intensified. The incorporation of national universities, as part of this movement, was for thoroughly changing the system of national universities which had continued since the Meiji period. In June 2001, “A Policy for the Structural Reform of Universities (national universities)” was released as “Toyama Plan” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). This name derives from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Atsuko Toyama who presented this policy at the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. From the contents of this plan, we can read the intention to boldly cut into and settle the longstanding concerns on national universities. Through this, national universities were made to not only incorporate but also reorganize and integrate. In other words, it was

announced that the fundamental rule to set one national university and one faculty of teacher training per prefecture should not be kept.

Even during the time when the trial evaluation of national universities was being implemented, the topic of quality assurance system for higher education had been discussed. Based on the Central Council for Education Reports “Building a New System for the Quality Assurance of Universities,” “A Vision for Fostering Professionals with Advanced Specialized Skills in Graduate Schools,” and “Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Law Schools” published in August 2002, the School Education Law was amended and enforced from April 1, 2003. The changes before and after the amendment of the School Education Law are summarized in Fig. 2-1.

The Certified evaluation and accreditation system was introduced by the amendment of the School Education Law on April 1, 2004. The detail of this system will be described in Chapter 5.

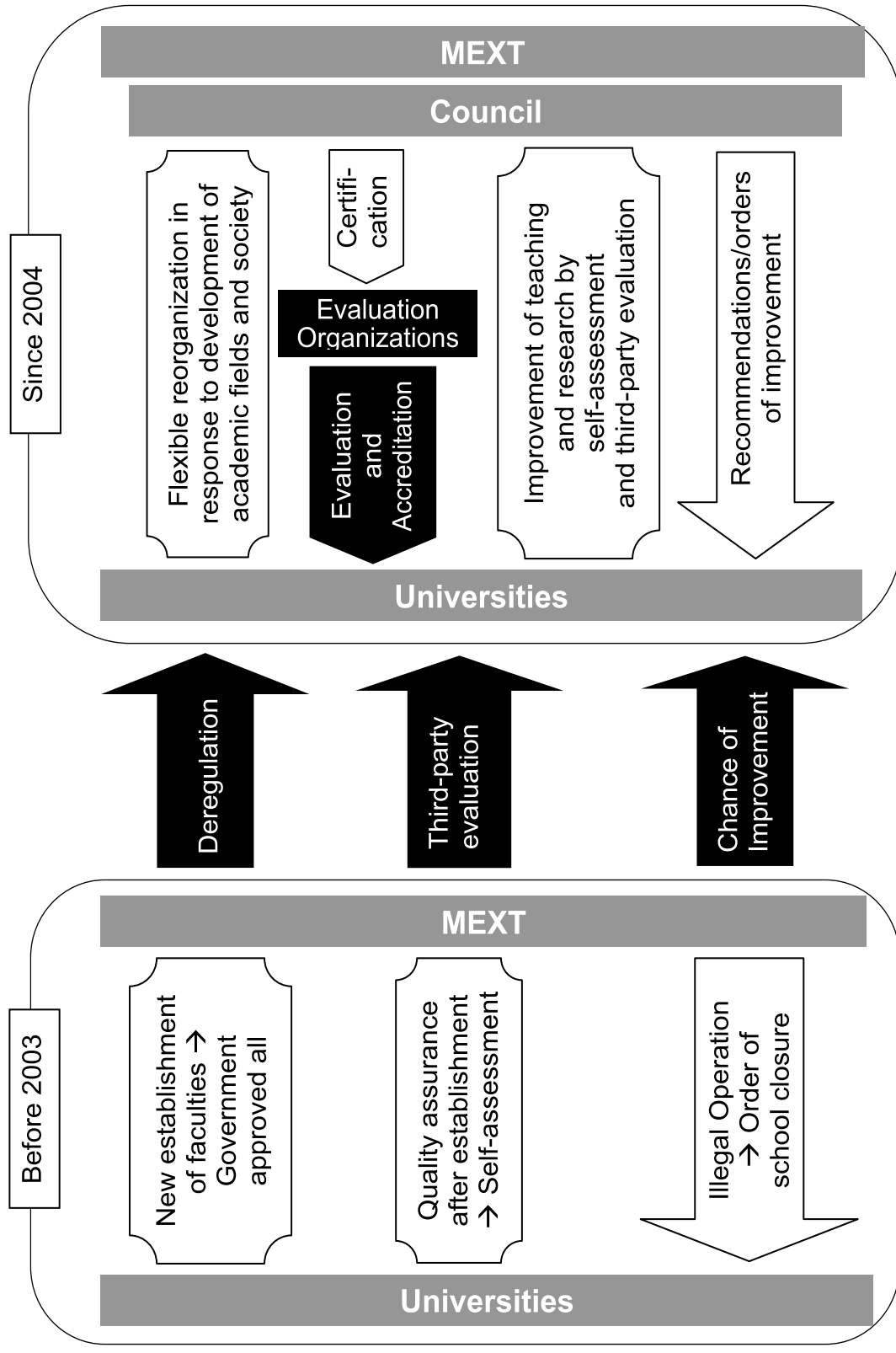
The other issue discussed during the period of trial university evaluation was the incorporation of national universities. This issue was studied by the Study Team concerning the transformation of national universities into incorporated administrative agencies and the report “A New Image of National University Corporations” was released in March 2002. The detail of the incorporation and evaluation of national universities will be described in Chapter 6.

### **Mop-up the reform: Evaluation for consciousness-raising and for universities to regain autonomy**

According to what has been described here, the grand educational reform of the Heisei period which began with the deregulation of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities has almost been completed by the incorporation of national universities and the launch of the certified evaluation and accreditation system. It will be asked how universities progress under this new system in the future. In that sense, the period between the deregulation of the Standards and the completion of NIAD-UE’s trial university evaluation was the period of approaching to establish and foster the evaluation culture, and after 2004, we entered a new era in which evaluation contributed to the development of universities through the growing of this culture.

Fig. 2-1

Major educational reforms of the Heisei period (Building of a new quality assurance system of universities)



(The self-assessment, which served for assuring the quality of existing universities, was introduced by the 1991 deregulation of the standards for the establishment of universities.)

The society of the twentieth century as a whole has grown ever-increasingly, but from the 1990's, strains caused by the growth appeared and education was no exception. Education up to that time reached a saturation point due to the changing of the social needs toward education and the decline in college-age population. University officials and those involved with higher education should realize that the "time for volume" for education has ended and has been replaced by the "time for quality." Furthermore, they also need to acknowledge that universities need to respond to the global society organically as institutions. In other words, universities are required to transform from a "community of knowledge" into a "cooperative and management body of knowledge." Self-assessment and third-party evaluation play a key role in order to promote this awareness-raising.

It is said that a university must be autonomous and universities have also quoted as such. Ironically, the process which began from the deregulation of the Standards and ended in the establishment of the evaluation system and the incorporation of national universities was nothing short of "heteronomous." That is to say, universities were heteronomously forced to be autonomous by various measures. In the first phase, self-assessment was made compulsory. In the second phase, they were required to promote self-improvement by third-party evaluation. In the third phase, they, and especially national universities, are required to take responsibility for making and implementing the corporate plan. From now on, the true value of a university will be tested according to whether or not it can establish "autonomy" by implementing autonomous evaluation.

Though the heteronomous pressure to require universities to be autonomous may increase further, it is unlikely to ease in the future. Therefore, it is imperative for universities to succeed in becoming autonomous on their own strengths. The "autonomy" that is referred here does not mean that it exists without receiving public aid. Public aid is essential for education and research and it is common knowledge worldwide that its need has been increasing. Those involved with higher education should choose and carry out their own activities based on the information independently obtained for the activities the university is expected to carry out, rather than being forced by regulations or being drawn by subsidies.

### **Mop-up of the reform: Grand design of higher education**

As a mop-up of the series of reforms which have been implemented until now, it is necessary to formulate a grand design of higher education which supports the knowledge-based society of the twenty-first century. The administration of higher education until now has responded to each problem that arose on a case-by-case basis. In the most recent case, individual issues concerning law schools, professional graduate schools and the approval system of the establishment of universities have been examined accordingly. However, it was pointed out many times that in the process of such discussions, the complete picture of the reform was either vague or invisible. Moreover, higher education institutions are composed of five parts: graduate schools, universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology and professional training colleges. Until now, these issues on each institution were discussed independently, but it has become impossible to be discussed separately from each other. It is necessary to clearly debate what sort of a higher education system the reform implemented at each part aims or which direction is desirable, and gain the understanding of society.

It is also necessary to discuss a grand design of the evaluation system. As it is now, institutional certified evaluation, certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools, and national university corporation evaluation are regularly implemented. These evaluations have different legal grounds and purposes, but the target of evaluation, the activities of education and research, is common in these schemes. The huge burden of universities will increase if they try to respond to each evaluation, and since the peer review method is used in each evaluation, it will be a burden for university teaching staff. As things stand now, it may result in an ironic situation where education and research are negatively influenced by the exhaustion after the huge amount of works of evaluation. It is also necessary to review the evaluation systems being carried out individually and organize them.

## Chapter 3

# History of Higher Education Institutions in Japan

In April 1947, a year and eight months after the end of World War II (the Pacific War), the imperial ordinance, the University Ordinance, which regulated universities until then was abolished and the School Education Law was enacted. This chapter will summarize the history of higher education institutions in Japan from the birth of new universities to the present day.

### Section 1

#### **On the eve of the birth of new universities**

The outline of higher education institutions in Japan just before World War II is as follows:

There were 49 universities, comprising seven imperial universities, 11 national colleges, three municipal/prefectural universities and 28 private universities. The total number of students studying in these universities was approximately 92,000, among which 38,000 were students of imperial universities and 42,000 were students of private universities.

There were 363 national, municipal/prefectural, and private professional training colleges, for engineering, commerce, agriculture, sericulture, livestock, farming and mining, which provided advanced professional education. Among these, the number of both private colleges and their students accounted for 60 percent of the total (204 colleges and 150,000 students among 230,000). Moreover, there were many high schools and preparatory schools in university providing preparatory education for advancing imperial universities or other universities. Among them, there were a total of 101 schools including “numbered high schools” from the First High School (in Tokyo) to the Eighth High School (in Nagoya) and around 20 high schools named after their local place-name established around 1920 throughout Japan. The total number of students studying in these schools was approximately 80,000 (38,000 in high schools, 39,000 in preparatory schools),

and over 80 percent of high school students attended national schools and nearly 90 percent of preparatory school students attended private schools.

Besides these, there were 140 teacher's training schools including national teacher's high schools and women's teacher's high schools which primarily served for training teachers of junior high schools, girls' high schools and teacher's schools, teacher's schools shifted to the governmental control during the War which served for training teachers of elementary schools and primary and lower secondary schools, youth's teacher's schools which served for training teachers of youth schools for children who did not advance to junior high schools or girls' high schools, teacher training centers. The total number of students who attended these schools was approximately 82,000.

The total number of universities and schools mentioned above was 653 and the number of students was 476,000 (72,000 of which were female). What they had in common was merely the fact that they were basically institutions for enrolling graduates from secondary education institutions (junior high school, girls' high school and business school) and their teaching level, contents, historical lineage and social character varied widely.

## Section 2

### **Process of the birth of the new universities**

After World War II, the existing educational system was thoroughly reformed based on the key principle of cultivating the public with a sound ability to judge in a democratic society, under the strong influence of the United States. A single-track school system of 6-3-3-4 was introduced under the School Education Law in 1947. As a result, a wide variety of higher education institutions with different scales and roles such as universities, high schools, teacher's schools and professional training colleges under the old system were unified and reorganized as "new universities." However, a consensus throughout universities was not necessarily formed as to their roles of whether to provide liberal education or professional education in undergraduate program. Graduate schools were also premature as organizations. As a result, even in the same "university," the style of

education, research and organizational operation differed considerably. Some universities had a difference among their faculties or departments.

What must be focused on with regard to the establishment of four-year universities under the new educational system is that at the end of March 1948, 12 municipal/prefectural and private universities were approved as a new university prior to the approval of the establishment of national universities:

Prefectural: Kobe University of Commerce

Private: Japan Women's University, Tokyo Women's Christian University, Tsuda College, Kokugakuin University, Sophia University, University of the Sacred Heart Tokyo, Doshisha University, Ritsumeikan University, Kansai University, Kwansai Gakuin University and Kobe College.

Private universities such as Waseda University and Keio University established prior to the War under the old University Ordinance were not included in this category. New universities were established on a full scale from May 1949 when the Law on the Establishment of National Schools was enacted. Therefore, these twelve universities were established more than a year before the enactment of this Law and the School Education Law. It is commonly believed that the authority of the Allied Powers was behind this movement. Among the 12 universities, 11 were private universities of which six were Christian schools and five were women's professional training schools. We can imagine that the policies of the Central Information and Education Section (CIE) of the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers which placed an emphasis on private universities, in particular, Christian universities and women's colleges, had a strong impact.

After 1948, various national higher education institutions under the old system including imperial universities, national colleges, high schools, professional training colleges and teacher training schools were reorganized as new universities. The Allied Powers and the Japanese authorities rushed to implement the reorganization under the "Eleven Principles for Establishing a National University." The key points of the principles are as follows:

- 1) To merge the national colleges in the same area into one national university per prefecture, except Hokkaido, Tokyo, Aichi, Osaka, Kyoto and Fukuoka where imperial universities were located
- 2) To establish a faculty for providing liberal education or teacher training in each prefecture

- 3) To establish two national women's universities, one in the east and the other in the west of Japan
- 4) As a general rule, national universities are to be started from freshman enrollment
- 5) Teaching staff of national universities are to be selected from those recommended by the schools through the Committee for the Establishment of Universities

Thus, on July 31, 1948, following 12 private universities mentioned before, a total of 219 schools including 69 national universities, 24 municipal/prefectural universities and 123 schools with undecided governing body applied for the status of a university to the Committee.

### Section 3

## **Growth and problems of new universities**

By 1953, the switch from the old system to the new system was completed and new universities were launched under the new system. The whole of Japan filled with the momentum of recovery by the “special procurement boom” created by the Korean War started in 1950 and the dismantling of the occupation regime by the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in the following year, and it brought a period of stable growth to the new universities. People said that you would find a university wherever a boxed-lunch is sold at a train station and it was around this time that universities in regional cities were mocked as “boxed-lunch universities.”

### **1. Time of quantitative expansion**

In such circumstances, Japanese higher education had achieved a quantitative expansion at a very high speed that was previously unheard in any other country. The number of universities and students increased from 178 schools and 127,000 students in 1949 to 228 schools and around 523,000 students by 1955. The numbers again rapidly increased to 382 schools and 1,407,000 students by 1970 after the period of the high economic growth in the 1960's. Two-year and three-year junior colleges which started up as a “provisional” system in 1950 (made permanent in 1964) also increased in

numbers from 149 schools and around 15,000 students when they were first created to 479 schools and 263,000 students by 1970. The advancement rate for higher education institutions including universities also drastically rose from 10.1 percent in 1955 to 23.6 percent in 1970 and 38.6 percent by 1976.

Private universities led the expansion of higher education, made most of their revenue through payments from students including tuition fee. For comparison, the percentage of students attending private universities and junior colleges in 1955 was 62.4 percent, and in 1970, the percentage rose to 76.9 percent and the percentage has not changed much, although it has slightly decreased, up to this day. In other words, because much of the quantitative expansion of higher education was left up to the private universities, Japanese higher education ultimately became a system which depends on household expenditure rather than public financial expenditure compared to other advanced countries.

Private universities are, as a whole, characterized by the fragile framework of graduate schools. For example, around 60 percent of their students belong to the faculty of humanities or social science, many of the schools are concentrated in urban areas, a number of the universities do not have a graduate school, and even though they have a graduate school, they only offer master's courses or, in a few cases, offering doctoral courses, or most of graduate programs do not meet their students quota.

Meanwhile, the characteristics of national universities are: a fourth of their students belong to the faculty of humanities or social science, almost half of the students belong to the faculty of science, engineering, agriculture, medicine or dentistry, many of their students are postgraduate students, the ratio of undergraduate student to graduate student is ten to three (about a hundred to four for private universities), about 60 percent of the whole graduate student population attended the universities, they are built throughout the country in a well-balanced way and most of their operational costs are managed by government subsidies. In other words, national universities have played the central role of academic research and researcher training in Japan, as well as the role of supporting the basis of education, culture and industry in region by being placed throughout Japan in a well-balanced way, and providing students with opportunities for advancement without being influenced by economic conditions.

## **2. Expansion of universities and qualitative changes**

Between the 1960's and 1970's, the major political problem was how to maintain and improve the quality of generalized higher education. In 1971, the Central Council for Education summarized the framework of reform for the whole school education system. This report advocated the systematic classification of higher education institutions and also recommended the securing of quality by implementing fiscal measures after the government plans and manages the scale of higher education. This recommendation was realized in the form of the "higher education plan" formulated by the government after 1975 and the establishment of the subsidy system for private schools established in the same year.

Meanwhile, with regard to the systematic classification of higher education institutions, a new type of higher education institution was established. First, by strong request from the industrial sector, a five-year college of technology system was created in 1962, mainly aimed at nurturing technical experts in the field of industry and mercantile marine (now includes business and design as well). As of 2005, there were 63 colleges and 59,000 students throughout Japan. In 1975, "professional training colleges" was established for providing professional and vocational education, at a higher education level, in professional fields such as healthcare, childcare, information processing, foreign languages, apparel, secretarial and cooking, offering a two-year course and over 1,800 hours of lessons. The number of students attending these schools was initially only around 100,000, but it has now increased to nearly 700,000. Moreover, from the late 1970's, distinctive national universities were successively established including universities which are only composed of graduate schools (1990-1997), graduate schools based on research centers such as an inter-university research institute (1988), universities of science and technology mainly accept graduates of colleges of technology (1980) and teacher's universities mainly composed of graduate schools for re-education of active teachers (1978-1981).

## **3. Deregulation and university reform**

The National Council on Educational Reform (1984-1987), set up for directly reporting to the prime minister, established the "Council for Higher

Education” and recommended the introduction of flexibility of the existing system such as the deregulation of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities to enable each university to conduct inventive activities by utilizing their own philosophy and character, and the emphasis on the “disclosure of evaluation and information of universities” as a means for securing the quality of higher education, for the purpose of politically advancing the individualization, diversification and sophistication of higher education.

Following the recommendation by the National Council on Educational Reform, the “Council for Higher Education” was set up in the Ministry of Education in 1987. It discussed “sophistication of education and research,” “individualization of higher education” and “invigoration of administration” based on the direction of university reform recommended by the National Council. As a result, it recommended from the viewpoint of “sophistication of education and research:” the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of graduate schools which had been criticized the weakness of their function, the introduction of graduate schools’ distance learning system, professional graduate school system, and one-year master’s program; from the viewpoint of “individualization of higher education:” the deregulation of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities (flexibility of the curriculum design) to convert the mechanism of securing the quality of higher education, the introduction of faculty development and limiting the number of subjects, the implementation of classes by qualified teaching staff with sufficient ability and stringent assessment of students, the use of information-communication technology; from the viewpoint of “invigoration of administration:” the implementation of self-assessment and external evaluation, the introduction of selective tenure system for increasing the mobility of teachers and activating higher education, the clarification of organizational structure, and the reflection of opinions from outside. These recommendations were repeatedly institutionalized and played a key role in promoting the reform of each university. In particular, the low-key efforts to improve the quality of education, including the implementation of self-assessment, creation of syllabus, student evaluation of teaching and faculty development, for improving the quality of university education which had not been necessarily

focused in universities before were steadily developed. Please refer to Chapter 2 for more details.

After the release of the Council for Higher Education Report “A Vision of Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” the basic university systems were fundamentally revised including the national university system, the school corporation system, the approval of the establishment (of universities), and the graduate school system, based on the high expectations toward education and research of universities. As a result, the structural reform of the basis of the higher education system began all at once from 2004. In other words, the system of each national, municipal/prefectural, and private university was revised for promoting the reform of university administration, including the incorporation of national universities, turning teachers into non-civil servants, the establishment of municipal/prefectural university corporation system, the revision of the Private School Law for improving the school corporation system. For example, we could say that the incorporation of national universities was intended to abolish or ease the personnel and accounting regulation, carry out third-party evaluation thoroughly, and strengthen their accountability based on the established management structure with external experts which enables a president-centered decision-making, which became independent from the governmental operation which had operated for 130 years, and internalized the four reform cycles recommended in the 1998 Council for Higher Education Report in the management of national universities. Please refer to Chapter 6 concerning the incorporation of national universities.

## Chapter 4

# Outcome and Problems of Trial University Evaluation

It is described in Chapter 2 that topics of the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of University Evaluation Organization (1999) set up in response to the Council for Higher Education Report “A Vision of Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” and the process of the establishment of NIAD-UE. This chapter will summarize the status, outcome and problems of trial university evaluation which NIAD-UE implemented from 2000 based on the discussions by the Committee.

### Section 1

#### Outline

In order to establish a “multifactorial evaluation system” mentioned in the Council for Higher Education Report, NIAD-UE implemented trial evaluation focusing on specific fields and specific institutions from 2000 to 2002 as a step for developing an evaluation framework. The topic of trial evaluation was also discussed at the Parliament. This evaluation initially targeted at national universities. Some municipal/prefectural universities also participated from 2002.

Full-scale university evaluation was scheduled to be implemented from 2003 based on the trial evaluation. However, as described in Chapter 2, in response to the revision of the School Education Law and the enactment of the National University Corporation Law, it was decided that the full-scale evaluation would not be implemented from 2003 in order to move in step with the new university evaluation system introduced in 2004. On that basis, the basic concept and know-how of the trial evaluation implemented between 2000 and 2003 were examined.

#### **1. Objectives, basic framework and characteristics**

The objectives of the trial evaluation, as shown in Table 4-1, embody the purport of the Council Report. The first objective was to contribute to the

improvement of various activities including education and research of respective universities, and the second objective was to demonstrate social accountability.

Table 4-1

Objectives of trial evaluation

- To evaluate various activities of universities (including inter-university research institutes) such as education, research and social contribution from various angles, and make use of the evaluation results to improve their activities by giving feedback of the results to universities
- To support and encourage universities so that they can gain the understanding and support of the wider public about universities as public institutions by clarifying the condition of their activities from various viewpoints and presenting them to society explicitly

What the Council for Higher Education Report sought in this evaluation is to promote the individualization of each university through implementing third-party evaluation. The main characteristics of the trial evaluation to achieve this are summarized as follows.

Multiple evaluations using several methods: In order to evaluate the varied activities carried out by universities in a multifaceted way, three separate evaluations on the condition of various activities such as education and research were implemented:

- 1) Evaluation on all-campus issues (all-campus thematic evaluation)
- 2) Evaluation on the condition of educational activities in faculties and academic units of graduate schools of universities (evaluation of education at subject level)
- 3) Evaluation on the condition of research activities in faculties, academic units of graduate schools, attached research centers of universities and inter-university research institutes (evaluation of research at subject level)

Several evaluation items were set up so that the conditions of education and research activities of universities could be grasped comprehensively in

implementing these evaluations. Each item indicated their conditions in an easy to understand manner.

Evaluation that corresponds to the objectives and goals: So that each university and inter-university research institute can fully display their personality and characteristics, NIAD-UE implemented the evaluation in line with the objectives set out by universities concerning their education and research activities (general intentions for implementing education and research activities) and goals (specific challenges for achieving the intentions indicated in the “objectives”) rather than the evaluation based on the unified standard.

Evaluation by experts in relevant fields based on university’s self-assessment (peer evaluation): In order to support and encourage the proactive efforts of universities toward the individualization and qualitative improvement of education and research activities and to secure the transparency and fairness of the evaluation, each university implemented self-assessment based on the evaluation framework presented by NIAD-UE. NIAD-UE implemented the evaluation by experts in relevant fields based on the results of this self-assessment.

Indication of good practices and improvements: In order to contribute to the extension of the personality of each university and the qualitative improvement of education and research activities, good practices and improvements concerning various activities were pointed out.

Statement of objection: In order to secure the transparency of the evaluation process and the accuracy of the results, the draft evaluation results were notified to the targeted universities before finalizing them, and they had an opportunity to state their objections. In case that the objection was presented, those evaluation results were finalized after re-examination. The objections and details of the response were added in the evaluation report together with the evaluation results.

Publication of evaluation results to society: Evaluation results were notified to each university and its authority so that they could use to improve their education and research activities, and the details including the condition and outcome of education and research activities of each university were presented not only to the universities but also to the public in order to demonstrate social accountability.

## 2. Method

The following documents were prepared for implementing the trial evaluation. These documents were compiled by seeking public comments from relevant organizations including national universities. They were distributed to each national university and then briefing sessions were held. They were also posted on the NIAD-UE's website: <http://www.niad.ac.jp>

- 1) General Principles of University Evaluation: Description on the basic framework of evaluation and the contents and methods of evaluation by each year.
- 2) Guideline for Self-Assessment: Guideline for subject universities to implement self-assessment in line with the General Principles. It was created according to the categories of evaluation and individual themes and academic fields.
- 3) Evaluation Manual: Guideline for external evaluators for implementing the actual process. It was created according to the categories of evaluation and individual themes and academic fields.

As for the method of the evaluation, self-assessment reports submitted by subject institutions were first analyzed. The information and data independently examined and collected by NIAD-UE were drawn upon. Based on the results of document analysis, draft evaluation results in the document analysis stage were summarized and sent to the subject institutions. On that occasion, unclear points and missing information and data in the self-assessment report were also pointed out. An interview or a site visit was carried out after receiving a response from the subject institutions. An interview was held for the all-campus thematic evaluation and the evaluation of research at subject level (except for engineering field) and a site visit was carried out for the evaluation of education at subject level.

NIAD-UE requested subject institutions to implement self-assessment in line with each evaluation item created according to each evaluation category. The character and diversity of various activities including education and research in universities were taken into consideration in creating these items. In other words, an evaluation was basically carried out on the outcome (which indicates the achievement) of various activities, but these items included the

input (organization and input of human and material resources) and the process (development of the curriculum, educational environment and service).

### **3. Implementation system**

The University Evaluation Committee was set up to implement the evaluation, which was composed of staff of national, municipal/prefectural and private universities and experts such as journalists and economists. The Expert Committees were set up under the Committee, which were composed of experts from each theme and academic field and the members of the Evaluation Committee. Moreover, due to the need for multifaceted evaluation on education and research activities, the diversity of discipline in each field and the large number of subject institutions (organizations), experts for relevant themes and fields were appointed as evaluators.

More than 3,000 people were recommended as members of both Committees and evaluators by relevant organizations including national, municipal/prefectural and private universities, academic societies and business groups. From those recommended, the Selection Committee, set up in the NIAD-UE's Administrative Committee, selected in consideration of the balance of the type of university (national, municipal/prefectural or private), field of expertise, regional characteristics and gender difference, after discussion at the Administrative Committee.

In order to make evaluation more effective, it is necessary to carry out reliable evaluation based on professional judgment from an objective standpoint. For this reason, NIAD-UE provided training sessions on the objectives, contents and method of university evaluation to enable external evaluators (including members of the Expert Committees) to ensure the fair, appropriate and smooth implementation based on their common understanding. The contents of the training sessions have improved over the years and have been considered to be effective (refer to Section 2.)

The Evaluation Teams were organized to conduct the evaluation specifically, which were composed of the members of the Expert Committees. The members of these Teams analyzed self-assessment report of subject institution and held interview and conducted site visit. As for the evaluation of research at subject level, the Subcommittees were set up in each field in

addition to the Evaluation Teams, which were composed of the members of the Expert Committees, in order to evaluate individual research activities in each field. These Subcommittees judged the standard of each research which served as the basis of evaluating the “contents and standards of research” and “social, economic and cultural effect of research” among the evaluation items of this evaluation.

#### **4. Condition of the implementation of trial evaluation**

The all-campus thematic evaluation, evaluation of education at subject level, and evaluation of research at subject level initiated in 2000 and 2001 were targeted at national universities. Some municipal/prefectural universities were also included in 2002. Each evaluation included universities and inter-university research institutes on the request of their establishers, and 122 institutions received the trial evaluation in three years and a total of 550 institutions were evaluated.

#### **5. Process**

The first job for the University Evaluation Committee was to formulate the “General Principles of University Evaluation” which set out the basic policies of university evaluation. Based on the Principles, each Expert Committee examined the implementation policy, contents and method of evaluation. As a result, “Guidelines for Self-Assessment” for universities which contains key aspects to carry out self-assessment, “Evaluation Manual” and “Guidebook for Evaluation” for external evaluators to carry out the evaluation based on self-assessment reports were created. These materials were finalized by the University Evaluation Committee. Each institution subjected to evaluation was acquainted with the contents and method of the evaluation through a briefing session. Furthermore, NIAD-UE created a system for receiving questions, and arranged to respond to questions on a full-time basis. The answers to the questions were given to the questioners and posted on the NIAD-UE’s website in the form of Q&A, so that they could be shared widely.

The subject institutions carried out a self-assessment referring to the Guideline for Self-Assessment and submitted a self-assessment report. The Evaluation Teams or the Subcommittees set up under the Expert Committees

analyzed these reports and sent the results and queries which had been unclear in their reports at the document analysis before conducting a site visit or interview. After receiving the response to the queries from them, a site visit or interview was implemented. The draft evaluation results compiled through this process were examined by the Expert Committees and the University Evaluation Committee, and notified to the subject institutions prior to the finalization. The subject institutions were given an opportunity to state their objections concerning the notified evaluation results if necessary. The Committee finalized the results after reviewing the objection. These evaluation results were provided to the subject institutions and their establishers in the form of an evaluation report and published widely to society. It was an immense work which took about a year and a half from the production of the General Principles to the publication of the evaluation results.

## Section 2

### **Verification of trial university evaluation**

NIAD-UE had adopted “open and evolving evaluation” when starting the project of university evaluation. Therefore, the verification of trial evaluation was a very important work and indispensable work for improving its evaluation activities. This section will summarize the method, contents and results of the verification. Furthermore, the outcome and problems of trial evaluations will also be described.

#### **1. Method of verification**

As the process of verification, the results and outcome created by the implementation of trial evaluation were analyzed, including its framework and process and the condition of utilizing the evaluation by subject institutions and society, based on the views obtained from questionnaires and interviews conducted on subject institutions, relevant organizations and those in charge of the evaluation. The details of the questionnaires and interviews which served as the basic information for verification are as follows.

#### Seeking comments and questionnaire surveys implemented

In the period of the three trials which started in 2000, questionnaire surveys (13 times) mainly by free description were implemented with the cooperation of the subject institutions, relevant organizations and those in charge of the evaluation. NIAD-UE made use of the results of the surveys to improve the existing evaluation system. All comments obtained from these surveys were again quantitatively summarized for the verification of 2003.

The referral of comments in the process of trial evaluation was mainly by free description, and in some cases the comments were not available. Therefore, NIAD-UE carried out a questionnaire survey called the “Questionnaire on the Method and Effect of Trial Evaluation” in July 2003, including items concerning the use of evaluation results and its effect after the completion of the evaluation on subject institutions. As a result of requesting a total of 550 sets of questionnaires for 122 targeted institutions, a total of 539 sets of responses from 120 institutions were submitted (98.0 percent collection rate). This collection rate is astounding for questionnaires conducted on universities and showed that there was high interest in university evaluation.

#### Interviews for subject institutions

A questionnaire survey is effective for grasping the condition at a certain point of the subject institutions, but there are some inadequacies when dynamically perceiving the process of the evaluation. In order to compensate for that aspect, NIAD-UE carried out interviews for several subject institutions. Ten institutions were selected as an interviewee among those who submitted unique responses in the 2003 Questionnaire, taking into consideration their format of establishment, scale, regional characteristics and experience of trial evaluation: Otaru University of Commerce, Hirosaki University, Yokohama National University, Joetsu University of Education, Shinshu University, Wakayama University, Ehime University, University of the Ryukyus, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, and Fukuoka Women’s University. They were primarily interviewed the following three items: “System of implementing self-assessment and the actual work,” “Improvement of education and research activities through trial evaluation and activities toward individuality,” and “Utilization and effect of evaluation results in the community .”

## 2. Contents and results

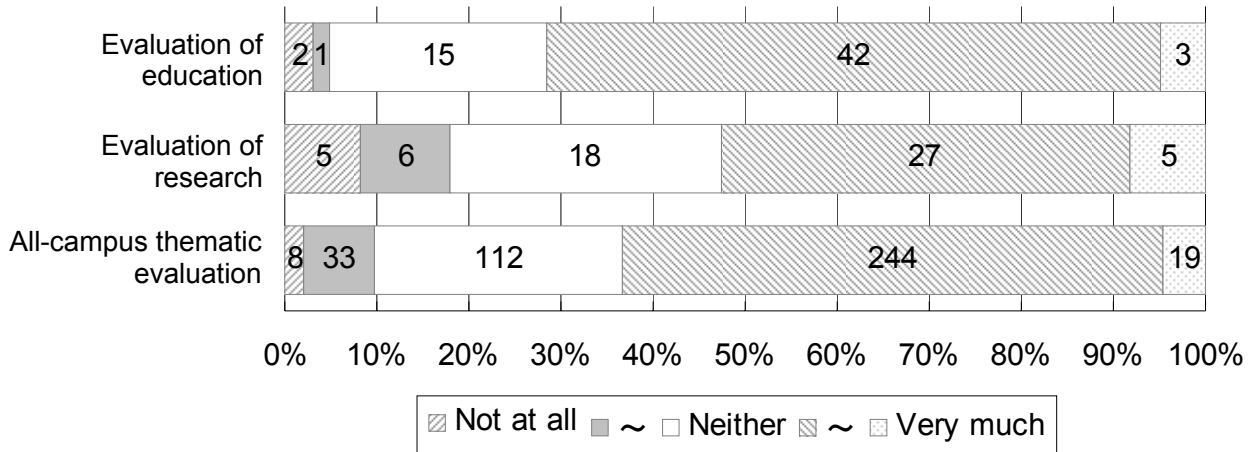
The verification was based on the viewpoint as to whether or not institutions fulfill the two objectives (See Table 4-1). Therefore, it was necessary to first verify if the quality of various activities including education and research was improved and then to verify if social accountability was demonstrated.

### Have they contributed to improving the quality?

In order to achieve the improvement of the quality of education and research, the specific goals of the trial evaluation were: “evaluation for promoting proactive improvement” and “evaluation which cultivates individuality.” As such, the questionnaire for the subject institutions asked “have the evaluation promoted the improvement of education and research activities in your university?” and “have they furthered individuality?” As a result, concerning the promotion of improvement, positive responses were obtained on the evaluation of education at subject level, the all-campus thematic evaluation and the evaluation of research at subject level at over 70 percent, 60 percent and 50 percent, respectively (less than 10 to 20 percent negative responses) (Fig. 4-1). Meanwhile, concerning the furthering of individuality, 40 percent responded positively (over 10 percent responded negatively).

The questionnaire asked respondents to describe their specific examples of their improvements and indicate the extent of the usefulness of NIAD-UE’s evaluation in five stages (5 = Very useful – 3 = Neither – 1 = Not useful in any way). As a result, a total of 1,024 responses were obtained from 109 institutions (89 percent) out of 122 subject institutions. Among them, 825 (81 percent) of the responses chose 4 (useful to a certain degree) as the degree of usefulness (Table 4-2).

Fig. 4-1  
 Responses of subject institutions to the question: Have the evaluation contributed to improvement?



These results show that NIAD-UE’s trial evaluation has partially contributed to improving the education and research activities of universities. It should be considered as a contribution by the evaluation as a whole including universities’ self-assessment as well as a contribution of third-party evaluation by NIAD-UE. In fact, more than 80 percent of the questionnaires for the subject institutions responded that they were able to understand the problems of university-level (or department-level) by their self-assessment, and from this response, we can see that self-assessment played a significant role in the whole evaluation process. However, since more than half of the subject institutions responded that they were able to obtain results from NIAD-UE’s evaluation which were useful for improvement compared to their self-assessment, it could also be said that the systematic method of trial evaluation and the evaluation by a third-party had sufficient significance.

Table 4-2

Number of improvement examples and degree of usefulness of the evaluations

Example of improvement	1	2	3	4	5	No comment	Total	Number of respondents (total)
	Not useful at all	~	Neither	~	Very useful			
All-campus thematic evaluation								
Implementation system or system for improvement	6	13	66	235	100	7	427	425
Method and contents of implementation	2	11	35	158	71	9	286	
Evaluation of education at subject level								
Implementation system of education or system for improvement	1	1	11	44	16	2	75	65
Contents and method of education or method of learning support	1		10	47	19	1	78	
Evaluation of research at subject level								
Implementation system for research, support system or system for improvement	1	2	5	45	21	4	78	62
Measurements and functions for research activities			8	36	11		55	
Research contents		1	2	16	6		25	
Total	11	28	137	581	244	23	1,024	552

### Have they demonstrated social accountability?

In order to achieve the second objective of the trial evaluation, “social accountability,” this evaluation itself should be “evaluation which enable society to grasp the conditions of university.” The questionnaires asked subject institutions if the understanding of “society” increased by the evaluation results from NIAD-UE. The average of the responses were substantially low compared to the other responses at 2.5-2.8 and around 30 to 40 percent were negative responses.

The evaluation results were provided to the subject institutions and their establishers, and also presented widely to the public by releasing them to the mass media, publishing them as printed copies and posting them on the website. However, some mass media ignored the framework of “evaluation that correspond to the objectives and goals” and ranked universities from the results alone, and there were some cases which reported the results by emphasizing just the universities with low standard results. Some comment that such reports may create misunderstandings about universities’ activities.

It should be considered that the contents of the evaluation report may be difficult, for high school students, their families, the industrial sector and the general public. It should contain enough information, set out explicitly, about whichever university staff are interested in. Many of those in charge of the evaluation have also voiced that the contents and format of the report should be described simply so that it can be widely read by society. There are many aspects which should be studied including the contents of the evaluation report, the method of description and publication.

## Section 3

### **Outcome of trial university evaluation and future prospects**

It goes without saying that the possibilities including the yes-tendency (tendency for respondents to respond in a positive direction) must be taken into consideration with regard to the results of the questionnaires on the trial evaluation. But it is deemed that good responses have basically been obtained on its implementation method and outcome. It is necessary to verify an impact, on the long-term basis, about the development of education and research. It is considered by the results of the verification that one of the objects “to

contribute to the improvement of universities' education and research," was largely achieved.

However, with regard to the other objective, "demonstrating accountability," many problems concerning the method of evaluation and the way of publishing of its results were pointed out. In particular, regarding the explanation to society about the condition of universities' activities and social understanding, the level of understanding of society and how to utilize the information should be improved.

It is firmly believed that it was very effective for a university, called as a "community of knowledge" until now, to implement self-assessment as a whole organization and accept the evaluation by a third-party so that a university could morph into a "cooperative and management body of knowledge." Discussions were repeated spending a tremendous amount of time and energy from the start of the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of University Evaluation Organization to the implementation and completion of the trial evaluation. It will be impossible to introduce all the discussions, however, let us present one unforgettable discussion here. One of the mechanisms for achieving the principles of the Council for Higher Education Report "Strive to individualize each university by implementing third-party evaluation" is to "evaluate in the light of the objectives and goals of each university." In the beginning, some voiced that there may be universities that would try to get good points by setting their objectives and goals low, or our university did not have objectives or goals. However, there was no former case during the period of trial evaluation and since it was the purpose of the evaluation to contribute to improvement, taking such actions would have had consequences. In response to the latter view, it was expressed that it is unthinkable for an organization to carry out its activities without objectives or goals, and it is only that its constituents were not necessarily aware of the objectives or goals. It is mentioned above that there were less of such views from year to year during the trial period. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the greatest outcome of the trial evaluation was that whole organizations developed a direction of making efforts toward their objectives and goals.

New evaluation systems including certified evaluation and accreditation system and national university corporation evaluation were started in 2004. It

is important to engage in these evaluation schemes while keeping in mind the various problems defined in the verification of the trial evaluation. New evaluation schemes, such as institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools, and evaluation of national universities' education and research, have aspects that their evaluation methods may need to be designed respectively due to the different circumstances or laws between that are required by the trial evaluation and these new schemes. Therefore, it will be necessary to implement new evaluation appropriately and effectively based on the verification results of the trial evaluation.

## Chapter 5

# Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

While the trial university evaluation was being implemented, the School Education Law was amended in 2002, and the certified evaluation and accreditation system set out in this Law was enforced from April 1 2004. This chapter will describe the outline of this system and NIAD-UE's certified evaluation and accreditation.

All national, municipal/prefectural and private universities (including junior colleges) and colleges of technology are obliged to be evaluated by an evaluation organization certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (called a certified evaluation and accreditation organization) at least once in seven years, concerning the overall condition of education, research, management and facilities, in order to contribute to the improvement of their levels of education and research (Table 5-1.)

Table 5-1

Outline of certified evaluation and accreditation system under the School Education Law

- A university is to inspect and assess the condition of education, research, organization, management and facilities itself in order to contribute to the enhancement of education and research. The result of self-assessment must be made public
- A university is to be evaluated by a certified evaluation and accreditation organization at least once in seven years, about the overall condition of education and research, in addition to the self-assessment (called a certified evaluation and accreditation)
- A university with professional graduate school also undertakes a school level of certified evaluation and accreditation at least once in five years, in the light of their objectives, about the condition of education and research including curriculum and academic staff
- Certified evaluation and accreditation is to be carried out, at the request of a university, in accordance with the standards for evaluation and

The emphasis of this revised Law was that the government certifies an evaluation organization, and all universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology were obliged to receive a third-party evaluation by certified organization (refer to Fig. 2-1). This meant that private universities, which had been traditionally only obliged to carry out self-assessment, were also obliged to receive it regularly. The certified evaluation and accreditation includes: institutional certified evaluation and accreditation which evaluates the condition of the whole institution; and certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools. Professional graduate schools are obliged to be evaluated at least once in five years.

## Section 1

### **How a certified evaluation and accreditation organization is set up**

An evaluation organization which implements certified evaluation and accreditation must be certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology after the screening by the Central Council for Education. This certification is given to an evaluation organization which meets certain requisites including its standards, method and framework for assessing fair and accurate evaluation. As of February 2007, the organizations shown in Table 5-2 were certified. Each university, junior college, college of technology and law school selects an evaluation organization by referring to the evaluation standards of each organization. There are several evaluation organizations which evaluate universities, junior colleges and law schools, but NIAD-UE is the only evaluation organization at present which evaluates colleges of technology.

Table 5-2  
 Certified evaluation and accreditation organizations  
 (as of February 2007)

Types	Names of organization
<b>Institutional certified evaluation and accreditation</b>	
Universities	NIAD-UE Japan University Accreditation Association Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation
Junior colleges	NIAD-UE Japan University Accreditation Association Japan Association for College Accreditation
Colleges of technology	NIAD-UE
<b>Certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools</b>	
Law schools	NIAD-UE Japan University Accreditation Association Japan Law Foundation

In this way, the standards, method and framework of evaluation differ from each organization. The following is a description of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation and certified evaluation and accreditation of law schools (certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools) implemented by NIAD-UE.

## Section 2

### **Institutional certified evaluation and accreditation**

There are three types of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation: university, junior college and college of technology. However, there are many points they have in common. In this section, unless mentioned otherwise, any mention of universities should be interpreted to include junior colleges and colleges of technology.

The documents published by NIAD-UE to implement the actual process are as follows.

- 1) General Principles of Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities: The outline that covers the fundamental policy and method.
- 2) Standards for Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation: These are used for judging the quality of subject institutions in the evaluation and accreditation process.
- 3) Guidelines for Self-Assessment: A document for subject universities for carrying out self-assessment.
- 4) Evaluation Manual: Guidebook for external evaluators.
- 5) Guidelines for Site Visit: A document of instructions which covers specifics from preparation to the tasks to be undertaken during the visit.

## 1. Objectives

In order to maintain and improve the levels of universities' education and research in Japan and to contribute to their individuality and diversification, the objectives are defined in the following column.

### Column 5-1

#### Objectives of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation

- To assure the quality of education and research activities of universities by regularly evaluating universities based on standards for evaluation and accreditation set by NIAD-UE (Accreditation)
- To make use of evaluation and accreditation results to improve education and research activities of each university by giving feedback on the results to each university (Evaluation)
- To assist universities so that they can gain the understanding and support from the wider public that they are operated as a public organization, by clarifying the condition of their education and research activities and demonstrating it to society explicitly (Accountability)

At present, third-party evaluation of universities is emphasized globally. According to the third-party evaluation system of other countries, there is a difference in the ratio for “Accreditation” and “Evaluation” depending on the respective educational system. In the context of Japan, both are given the same importance.

## **2. Policy and characteristics**

The policy and characteristics of NIAD-UE’s institutional certified evaluation and accreditation are summarized as follows:

Evaluation and accreditation based on standards for evaluation and accreditation: The evaluation and accreditation process is focused on whether or not the overall condition of each university’s education and research activities meet NIAD-UE’s standards. However, the characteristics of NIAD-UE’s certified evaluation and accreditation which should be emphasized are to identify “good practices” and “improvements” of each university’s activities. The intention is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of their activities by pointing out their improvements as well as ensuring their qualities.

Evaluation and accreditation centered on educational activities: The twenty-first century is referred to as the “knowledge-based society,” and it is emphasized to nurture and secure human resources who lead to science and technology and academic activities. Unless these can be done, it is even said that the nation’s foundation might be eroded. As such, in the present day when education is taken quite seriously, NIAD-UE takes into account the global trends of evaluation and implements it on the overall condition of universities’ activities by focusing on their educational activities. The “global trends of evaluation” referred to here does not merely mean “because we have many international students” or “there is a need to provide the information of university globally.” It implies the devotion and expectation to carry out evaluation that is acceptable across the world as a third-party evaluation organization. As such, NIAD-UE has carried out a study on the conditions of other countries in establishing the standards for evaluation and accreditation and methods.

Evaluation and accreditation which contributes to the development of each university’s individuality: The standards for evaluation and accreditation

serve as the basis of the certified evaluation and accreditation process. However, it is based on each university's objective of education and research activities so that they can fully show their individuality and characteristics in its process. "Objectives" referred to here mean university's mission, basic policy on implementing education and research activities, and the attainments that they are aiming to achieve. The purpose of this evaluation and accreditation based on their objectives is to encourage their individualization and it must be emphasized that its mechanism is to avoid carrying out a horizontal or off-the-shelf scheme .

Evaluation and accreditation based on self-assessment: The purpose of certified evaluation and accreditation is to support and promote universities' proactive efforts toward their individualization and the improvement of the quality of education and research activities. Therefore, it is important for universities to assess themselves, as a first step, based on NIAD-UE's "Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation" and "Guidelines for Self-Assessment", in order to ensure effective, transparent, and fair evaluation. NIAD-UE analyzes and evaluates the results of universities' self-assessments. In order to carry out self-assessment effectively and efficiently, NIAD-UE puts effort into training programs for university staff who are in charge of self-assessment. This training covers the introduction of the framework and method of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, and the process of creating a self-assessment report. The training programs are designed to further deepen understanding of them.

Evaluation and accreditation focusing on peer review: Few of the contents of universities' education and research activities are indicated quantitatively, and most are indicated qualitatively. Moreover, the outcome of education and research cannot be indicated by quantitative data alone. In other words, it is essential to emphasize the "quality" in the evaluation and accreditation process. Furthermore, education might be taken a lot of time to appear its outcome. Therefore, this process is based on the outcome (outcome which indicate achievements) of various activities, but it is becoming necessary to evaluate the input (organization and input of human and material resources) and the process (development of academic programs, learning environment and services provided). Therefore, in order to evaluate universities' education and research activities appropriately, a peer review

process by academic staff of universities and experts with professional insight is focused.

Highly transparent and fair evaluation and accreditation: Several points can be made from the viewpoint of “transparency of evaluation.” NIAD-UE publishes the “Evaluation Manual” for external evaluators to carry out its process, and it also serves as a reference for self-assessment. Moreover, queries received from universities are responded to and published on the website as “Q&A” so that information can be shared. The most important point in this context may be the system “statement of objection.” This system is to give an opportunity for the university to state their objections against the draft results of evaluation and accreditation, prior to finalizing the report. The results are finalized after a re-examining process. The contents of their objections are published together with the evaluation and accreditation reports. Moreover, when being stated objections against the negative judgment that a university has not met the standards, a Committee for examining objections is set up under the Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, and the Committee makes final decision after discussing at the Examination Panel.

Open and evolving evaluation and accreditation: NIAD-UE makes efforts to build a highly transparent and open scheme by developing the receiving system of objections and publishing evaluation and accreditation reports widely in society as described above. Although NIAD-UE has the experience of carrying out trial university evaluations, there are still a lot of matters in which it is still inexperienced. In order to develop an open and evolving system, NIAD-UE is continually making efforts to improve its system based on the experience and views from universities which have experienced the evaluation and accreditation.

### **3. Contents of standards for evaluation and accreditation**

The standards for evaluation and accreditation of universities are composed of 11 items in order to evaluate the overall condition of universities’ activities focusing on their educational activities (Table 5-3). Many of the standards are divided into several sections. Under each standard, “Viewpoints” are listed to refer to analyze their conditions. Depending on the objectives of respective universities, there may be some cases which cannot

fully carry out self-assessment by existing viewpoints alone. In such cases, institutions may create their own viewpoints.

Since one of the objectives of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation is “to assure the quality” of universities’ education and research activities, each standard covers the contents which NIAD-UE considers necessary for universities to fulfill. Based on the results of their self-assessment, NIAD-UE judges whether or not they meet each standard and shows the reasons. Institutional certified evaluation and accreditation is carried out on a university as a whole, but their faculties or academic units of graduate schools may be analyzed and sorted out when needed. In such a case, it is necessary to analyze the condition of the whole university based on the analysis of each faculty and unit. The judgment as to whether or not they meet the standards is comprehensively carried out by each standard with the results of the analysis of each viewpoint and original viewpoint set by the subject university rather than carrying it out by individual viewpoint or content.

Table 5-3

List of standards for evaluation and accreditation of universities

- Objectives of a university
- Organization for teaching and research  
(implementing structure)
- Academic and education supporting staff
- Student admission
- Academic programs
- Outcome of education
- Student support
- Facilities and equipment
- System for improving the quality of education
- Finance
- Management

If the subject university meets all of the standards, it is recognized as having met NIAD-UE’s standards for evaluation and accreditation of

universities at institutional level, and this result is made public. However, if there is even one standard which is not met, the university is deemed to have failed to meet the standards and it is also made public. In such a case, there is an extra process called “follow-up evaluation and accreditation.” That is to say, the university can receive this arrangement, limited to the standard which has not been met, within two years of the implementation. If the standard is judged to be met, it is recognized as having met the standards at institutional level and this result is made public along with the prior result.

Not all of the objectives of certified evaluation and accreditation are fulfilled by just judging whether or not each standard are met. In the evaluation and accreditation report, it will be noted if they are identified to have made good practices or if they are recognized as having the need to improve. In order to “contribute to the improvement,” which is the second objective of certified evaluation and accreditation, it is important to identify “good practices” and “improvements.” NIAD-UE emphasizes these aspects and they are one of the characteristics.

NIAD-UE’s certified evaluation and accreditation examines the overall condition of universities’ activities with focus on their educational activities in full-time programs. However, their research activities are one of the major activities together with their educational activities. Furthermore, a university, as a member of society, is required to provide intellectual resources to society across the aspects of education and research by interacting with the community and the industrial sector. Actually, such activities are being actively conducted.

Therefore, NIAD-UE has created optional evaluation items besides the standards for evaluation and accreditation in order to contribute to the improvement of such activities and fulfill accountability. The aim is to evaluate the “condition of research activities” and “the condition of education offered to those other than full-time students” which are difficult to grasp fully from aspects linking to educational activities alone. However, research activities closely linked to education are evaluated within the standards. The evaluation of optional items is implemented by the request of the university. In this process, it does not lead to a judgment whether or not the standards are being met, but it examines how far the performance of universities are meeting their objectives set on their own. Those attainments of objectives are

judged as “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair” and “Insufficient,” based on the analysis of their performance in the light of each viewpoint. Furthermore, the reason of the judgment, good practices, and improvements are also pointed out.

#### **4. Implementing system**

The Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities is set up for organizing the evaluation and accreditation process, which is composed of the officials of national, municipal/prefectural and private universities, and experts such as journalists and economists. The Subcommittees for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation are also formed under the Committee to implement the actual process. The fields of education of subject universities and their conditions vary. Therefore, experts of each field are allocated to the Subcommittees as external evaluators in response to the types of subject universities’ faculties and academic units of graduate schools. External evaluators are nominated widely from relevant organizations including each association of national, municipal/prefectural and private universities and economic organizations. From among those nominated, the evaluators are elected by the Administrative Committee of NIAD-UE. In 2005-06, about 3,500 people were nominated by various relevant organizations, and the evaluators were elected by taking into consideration the field composition, regional characteristics and gender difference.

When the number of subject universities increases, the number of Subcommittees also increases. It becomes difficult for the Committee to discuss or coordinate across the Subcommittees. To deal with such a situation, a Coordinating Committee is set up under the Committee when needed.

External evaluators are required to implement the highly reliable process based on professional judgment from an objective standpoint. As such, NIAD-UE provides the evaluators with training programs, about the objectives, contents and method of certified evaluation and accreditation, to ensure their common understanding and the fair, appropriate and smooth implementation. NIAD-UE has experienced the trial evaluation since 2000 and has created a training program based on the accumulation of this experience. Furthermore, it is constantly making efforts to analyze the

outcome and challenges, and reflect the results in the process. In this way, it has a system to enable fully trained evaluators to conduct evaluation.

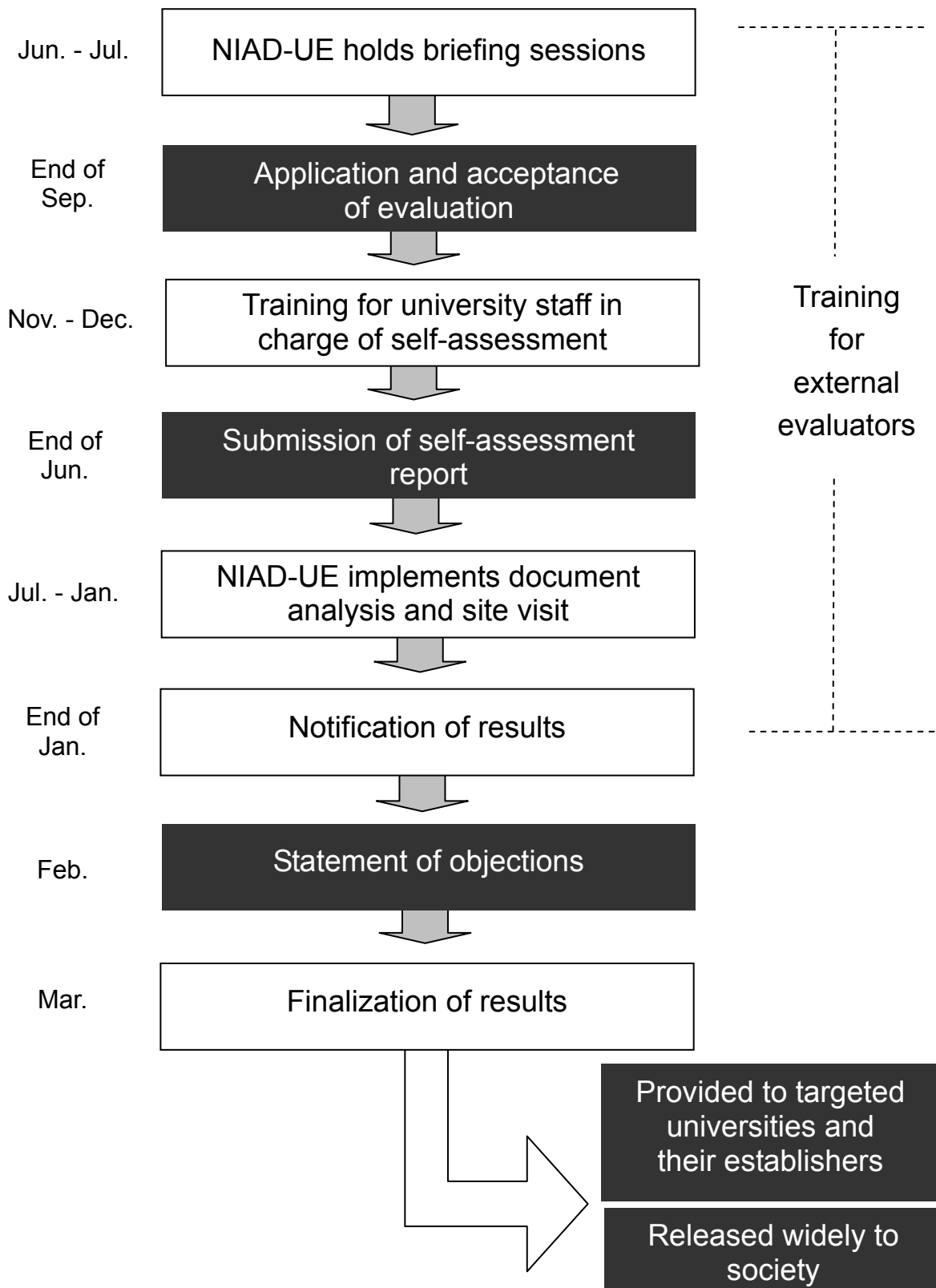
## **5. Method and schedule**

Certified evaluation and accreditation is implemented by the process of document analysis and site visit. Document analysis is the process to examine, based on the “Guidelines for Self-Assessment,” the self-assessment report which each university creates, and analyze collected information and data. The results of document analysis are notified to the subject universities about a month before site visit. The results include aspects which require clarification in the self-assessment report and missing information or data. The responses to these queries are sent from the subject universities about a week before the visit. After analyzing these responses, the members of the Subcommittees implement a site visit. Site visit is the process to verify matters which could not be confirmed during the document analysis stage based on the “Guidelines for Site Visit.”

The results of document analysis and site visit are summarized by the Subcommittees and the Committee creates a draft evaluation and accreditation report. This report is sent to the subject university. If the university has views against this draft report, it states objections within a month. The report is finalized by the Committee and is provided to the subject university and its establisher. It is also released to the wider public. This process is summarized in Fig. 5-1.

Fig. 5-1

Process and schedule of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation



## Section 3

### **Certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools**

The functions of human resource training in graduate schools are roughly categorized into the training of researchers and the training of practitioners with advanced professional skills. The Japanese graduate school system changed drastically after World War II, which introduced master's degree and the concept of a graduate program. In the beginning, master's programs had the role of training researchers and were positioned as the preliminary step of doctoral programs. The role of master's programs subsequently diversified and it started to have the role of training human resources with leadership skills in each field. However, the need for graduate schools which offer professional education aiming to nurturing human resources with professional skills, like that of professional schools in the United States, was not necessarily substantial in Japanese society. There were some graduate schools which responded to the social needs and the progress of science and technology, as seen in master's programs of engineering and pharmaceuticals, and placed more weight on the training of practitioners such as engineers through training for researchers, but in general, graduate schools in Japan progressed mainly by playing the role of training researchers.

However, with the progress of science and technology from the 1980's, the rapid technological innovations, the change, diversification, complexity, sophistication and globalization of socioeconomy, the expectations toward the training for professionals in graduate schools has increased. This social need includes not only the training of students which leads to specific jobs or professional qualifications but also the provision of opportunities for further education and re-education for people who are already in the workforce. In order to respond to such a need, the professional graduate school system was established in 1999 in the fields of business administration, finance and public health. To further such efforts, the Council for Higher Education report "Training of advanced professionals in graduate schools" was released in August 2002, which recommended the improvement of the system for developing flexible and practical education which meets the characteristics of

each professional field. In the report, the establishment of “professional graduate schools” as graduate schools which offer professional degree programs was also recommended. At the same time, the report “Standards for the Establishment of Law Schools” was also released in August 2002 and recommended the establishment of professional graduate schools which specialize in the training of legal professionals. These recommendations were legislated by the revision of the School Education Law in 2003. Professional graduate schools are also obliged to regularly undergo third-party evaluation (including certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools), and therefore it is now an urgent task to establish an evaluation and accreditation organization.

### **1. Certified evaluation and accreditation of law schools**

The training of legal professionals in Japan was traditionally carried out by selection based only on “points” through bar examinations. However, the need to improve the legal professional training system as a “process” which organically links legal education, bar examination and legal training has been highly publicized. As the qualifications required for legal professionals sought in the new legal professional training system, the Recommendations of the Justice System Reform Council (June 2001) advocates “observational skills toward society and interhuman relations, sense of human rights, knowledge of advanced legal fields and foreign laws, global view and language skills, in addition to the basic qualities such as rich humanity and sensitivity, broad accomplishments and expertise, flexible thinking, persuasion and negotiation skills.”

The establishment of law schools is intended to play a key role to meet such needs of society. Moreover, accreditation, one of schemes of third-party evaluation, for ensuring the quality of existing schools’ education and research, is a very important system, which surely enriches both the quality and quantity of training of legal professionals. Therefore, the mechanism of third-party evaluation of law schools should contribute to maintaining and improving the standards of this new legal professional training system as the core entity.

Based on the awareness of this important role of third-party evaluation of law schools, NIAD-UE set up a working group in February 2003, and studied the standards and method of certified evaluation and accreditation of law

schools. The results were summarized in the “Outline and standards for evaluation and accreditation of law schools (draft),” which was made public and it widely sought opinions from law school officials and legal professionals. Based on those opinions, the Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Law Schools was set up in April 2004, and the “Outline and Standards for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Law Schools” was finalized following the repeated discussions.

The objectives of certified evaluation and accreditation of law schools are as shown in Table 5-4. The difference between institutional certified evaluation and accreditation and certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools other than law schools is that the element of “accreditation” is emphasized. This fact is also clearly stated in the Law on Coordination of Graduate Law School Education and the National Bar Examination. Each law school is obliged to receive this evaluation and accreditation at least once in five years. This is only natural considering that law schools were established following the process mentioned above.

Table 5-4

Objectives of certified evaluation and accreditation of law schools

- To evaluate law schools regularly and accredit as to whether or not its condition of education and research meets the standards for evaluation and accreditation, in order to secure the quality of law schools’ activities
- To make use of evaluation and accreditation results to improve the activities of each law school by giving feedback on the results to them
- To clarify the condition of law schools’ activities and demonstrate it to society, in order to support and encourage them to gain the understanding and support of their activities from wider public

## **2. Certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools other than law schools**

Professional graduate schools have been established in various fields other than law. These schools are also obliged to receive certified evaluation

and accreditation at least once in five years. However, there is no evaluation organization which conducts this evaluation and accreditation of professional graduate schools other than law schools. The School Education Law provides the handling of this case that “this shall not apply where measures set by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology are being taken because there is no evaluation organization which can carry out the certified evaluation and accreditation of the specific field where the professional graduate school provides academic programs or there is other special reason.” The “measures set by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology” mean that professional graduate schools have to be evaluated by an evaluation and accreditation organization with an appropriate and internationally acceptable scheme, specified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, or regularly carry out verification of their self-assessment by people who do not work for the schools, and publish the results and report them to the Minister.

In this way, the handling for certified evaluation and accreditation of fields which do not have an evaluation organization is provided. However, based on the background of the establishment of NIAD-UE, it may not be possible for NIAD-UE to deal with all of the fields, but it is considered that quite a few of fields must be received certified evaluation and accreditation. With that in mind, NIAD-UE launched the “Working Group for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Professional Graduate Schools” in January 2006, and began reviewing the creation of the model of standards. In creating the model, NIAD-UE has in its view to submit an application to become an evaluation and accreditation organization for professional graduate schools besides law schools. However, it does not intend to cover all of the fields on its own. NIAD-UE has decided to create and release a model of the standards for evaluation and accreditation, assuming that it will serve a useful purpose when various relevant organizations consider becoming an evaluation and accreditation organization.

## Chapter 6

# Evaluation of Education and Research of National Universities

National universities and inter-university research institutes were incorporated on April 1, 2004 based on the National University Corporation Law, each becoming national university corporations and inter-university research institute corporations (hereunder referred to as national university corporation or corporation unless otherwise mentioned). A national university corporation has responsibilities not only as a higher education and research institution but as an institution funded mainly by the government. Incorporation must be perceived as a perfect opportunity for national universities and inter-university research institutes to promote restructuring for regaining their autonomy and develop diversity. Many national universities abroad have already been incorporated, so this reform has finally solved Japan's peculiarity. However, not all staff of national universities or inter-university research institutes seem to be pleased about this. Two main reasons can be considered. The first reason is that the incorporation was implemented in a very short period of time without enough consciousness-raising of related staff. The second is that incorporation was discussed as an extension of solving the government's financial problems by cutting civil servants, so there is a persistent unease and victim mentality that universities were driven to incorporation. However, it is also a fact that the problem of tightening budgets and reducing civil servants would have happened regardless of it. What is important is the consciousness-raising of the staff. It is this consciousness-raising which is always left behind and the most difficult even when structural reforms goes ahead boldly. Steady efforts of the organization as a whole are required in order for this to succeed. This chapter will describe the outline of the incorporation of national universities and their evaluations.

## Section 1

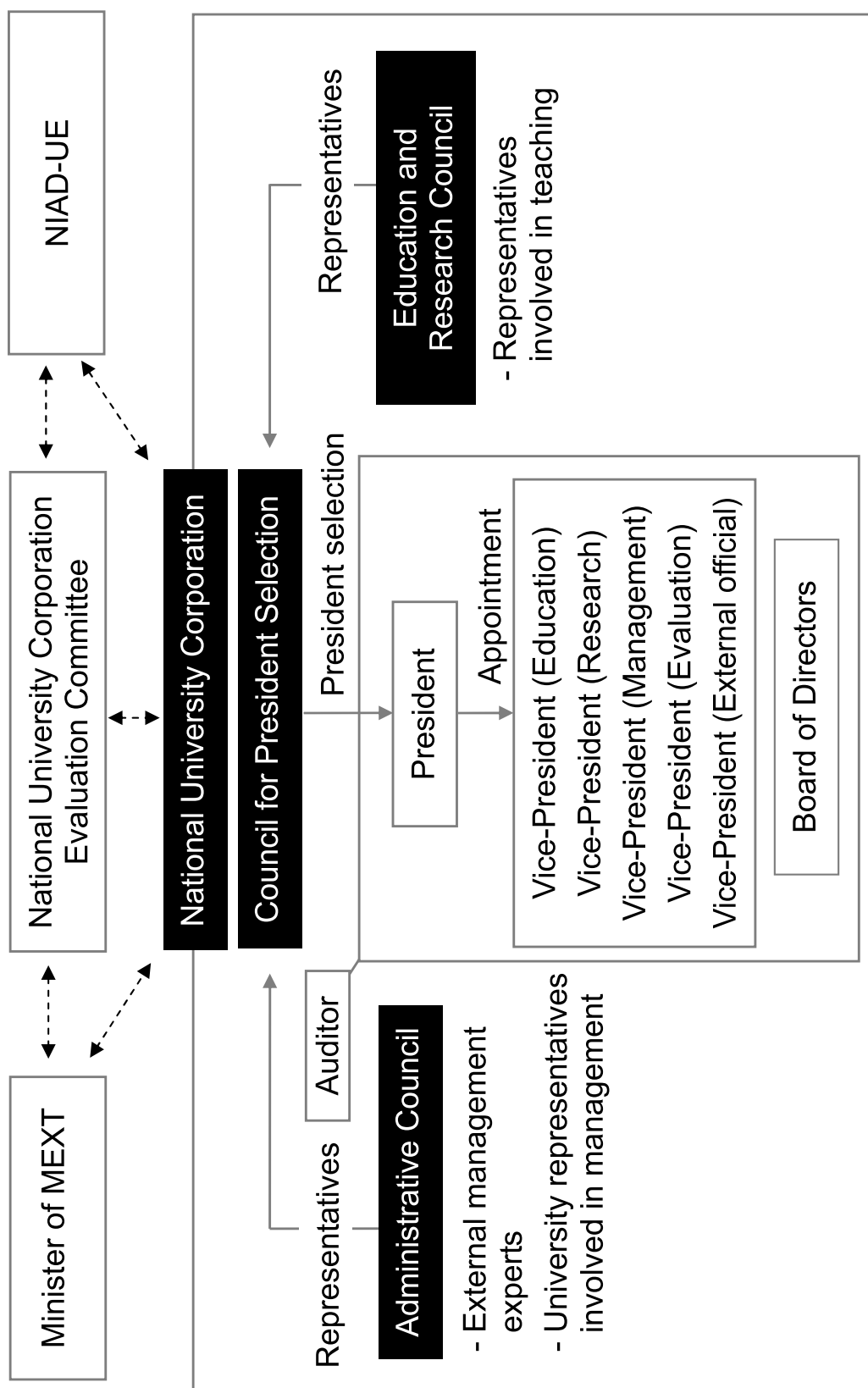
### **The Mechanism of national university corporations**

The incorporation of national universities is an organizational restructuring which objectives are for each national university to operate within its own responsibility under the spirit of autonomy, and to strive to enhance its education and research to respond to the needs of the society. Although a university corporation is the university itself, it would be easy to understand a national university corporation by considering it as two separate organizations: the former controlling the management and the latter teaching and learning (i.e. education and research). (Fig. 6-1)

The organization called a university corporation mainly carries out affairs concerning management. It has a board of directors, a board of governors, an administrative council, a council for president selection, and an education and research council, as set out in the National University Corporation Law. The university corporation operates under the leadership of the president. Funds which the government accepts as necessary are provided at the government's responsibility. Therefore, the corporation is obliged to formulate mid-term goals and plans every six years and submit them to the government. This plan is regularly evaluated by the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee of MEXT. The evaluated results are reflected in the allocation of management and expense grants.

Under the operation of this corporation, it is a demand for the university to nurture human resources responding to the needs of the society and produce research results that contribute to the creation and devolution of new "knowledge" through carrying out reformation towards the enhancement and individualization of education and research. Although there are certain constraints due to governmental funds, when compared with a traditional national university, the university's discretion has widened substantially. That is to say, bold strategies is being sought on how to utilize resources such as management and expense grants to enhance and invigorate the university.

Fig. 6-1  
 Mechanism of national university corporation



If national universities are to aim for individualization under a competitive environment, there is no choice of developing two-of-a-like strategies. The position of each institution i.e., the condition of its location, is the state as a comprehensive university, a single-department university, a professional graduate school or an inter-university research institute, differs and there are also variations in scale and assets. Each corporation needs to formulate strategies while giving respect to the traditions and history each has developed. This is also true for departments that compose each corporation, and the individual staff.

As such, universities are required to be competitive and be engaged in friendly rivalry, but it must not be forgotten that a university is not a for-profit business enterprise. Management strategies must be for the improvement of facilities and learning environment by being fully aware that a university is a place for creating knowledge and a place for education and research and the training of human resources.

## Section 2

### **Establishment and evaluation of mid-term goals and plans**

National university corporations are required to set clear goals and plans, improve the quality of education and research by third-party evaluations and extend its individuality. Each corporation must submit a draft of its mid-term goals (six-year) to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and formulate mid-term plans. Annual plans based on these drafts are also submitted. The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology finalizes and publishes the mid-term goals of each corporation respecting the proposal of the corporation, and approves and publishes the mid-term plans. The mid-term plans are to include such issues as shown in Column 6-1. The National University Corporation Evaluation Committee may comment on the mid-term goals and plans to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. This Committee is established separately from the Committee for Evaluation of Incorporated Administrative Agencies set out in the Act on General Rules for Incorporated Administrative Agency (1999) in consideration of the characteristics of education and research carried out in universities.

## Column 6-1

### Issues/subjects covered in the mid-term goals

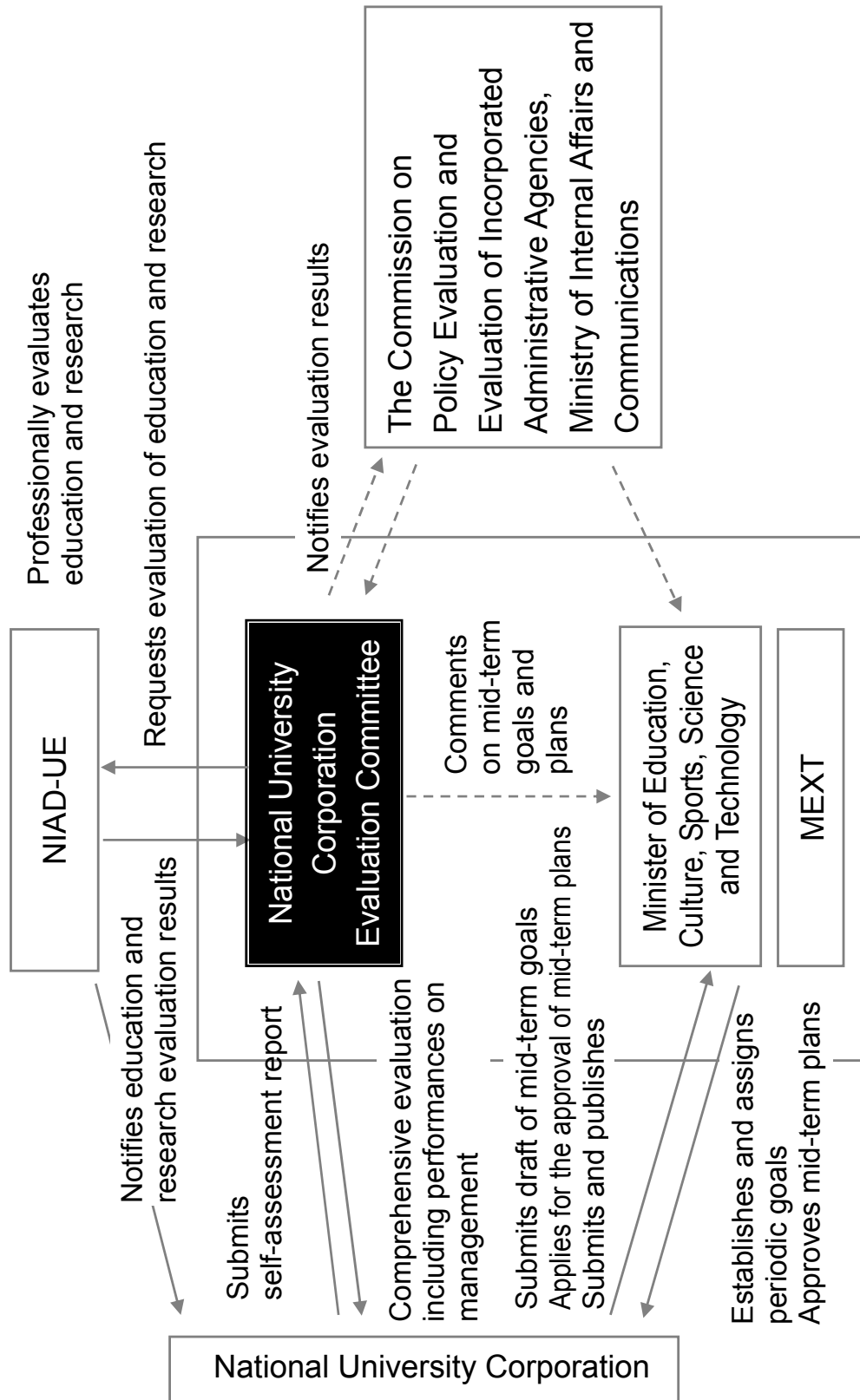
- The enhancement of the quality of education and research
- The improvement and efficiency of management
- The improvement of finances
- The provision of information on self-assessment and conditions of education, research, and operation (self-assessment and dissemination of information)
- Other important matters on management

MEXT first presented sample descriptive contents to national universities in establishing the initial mid-term goals and plans after their incorporation. Each national university corporation created a draft with reference to this sample, and the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology finalized those drafts as mid-term goals. These mid-term goals had several problems from the standpoint of evaluators. The most critical point observed is that occasionally the descriptions are too abstract and the specific goals are ill-defined. This does not necessarily refer to numerical goals alone. For instance, there was a case in which there was no description about the research standard for which the university aimed. Concerning that “goals for the improvement of the quality of education and research” is the first article to be described in the mid-term goals, they must include analysis of current conditions and standards of education and research, and what conditions and standards are expected at the completion of the six-year term.

The evaluations are carried out by the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee. Among the institutions’ performances during the mid-term period, the evaluation of the conditions on education and research is carried out by NIAD-UE from a professional viewpoint by request from this committee. The Committee comprehensively evaluates the whole institutional operational performance including the management, while respecting NIAD-UE’s evaluation reports (Fig. 6-2). It also evaluates annual operational performances, but NIAD-UE does not engage in these as an organization.

Fig. 6-2

Mechanism of national university corporation evaluation



The results of the comprehensive evaluations are notified to each corporation and are published. Each corporation is required to make use of them to improve and enhance their various activities and reflect them in the next mid-term goals and plans. However, although it is stated in the report by the Research and Examination Council of MEXT that the evaluation results are reflected in the allocation of the management and expense grants, at present it is not clear what methods are used for this. Evaluation results are also notified to the Commission on Policy Evaluation and Evaluation of Incorporated Administrative Agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), and if necessary, comments are made to the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee. The MIC is also has the authority to make recommendations on the improvement or elimination of major tasks and projects to MEXT based on the evaluation results.

Here is the summary of the differences between national university corporation evaluation and institutional certified evaluation and accreditation (Table 6-1). The primary objective of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation is the assurance of the quality of various activities implemented in universities based on the School Education Law. Meanwhile, the primary objective of national university corporation evaluation is to evaluate the attainment of objectives in the corporation's mid-term goals based on the National University Corporation Law. It is essential to ensure the quality of these evaluations by implementing them both appropriately based on each purport and objectives. Therefore, both evaluations are systematically distinct and under the present situation, either evaluation report cannot be used as an alternative for the other evaluation.

Table 6-1

Comparison of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation and national university corporation evaluation

- In institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, the conditions of education and research activities are evaluated according to the evaluation standards set out by certified evaluation and accreditation organizations

- National university corporation evaluation evaluates the performance in mid-term goals of education and research activities
- Both evaluations contribute to the development of the individuality of universities and qualitative improvement of education and research. They demonstrate a university's accountability to the society as a public institution

Nonetheless, both evaluation focuses on the education and research in national university corporations. National university corporations are obliged to undergo both evaluations periodically. While the two evaluations have different objectives, they also have similarities; to “contribute to the improvement” and “demonstrate accountability.” Therefore, national university corporations and NIAD-UE must equally be elaborative in planning for the evaluations. For instance, in order to avoid the evaluation activity being interrupted by overly concentrating work on a specific period, it will be necessary to pay attention to the evaluation schedule. Smooth promotion of education and research activities and a more effective utilization of evaluation results can be ensured by moderately distributing the workload and avoiding the overlap of evaluations. This is also desirable for NIAD-UE from the viewpoint of securing the quality of the evaluations.

### Section 3

#### **Evaluation of education and research during the period of mid-term goals**

Since education and research are the essential operations of national university corporations, education and research evaluations implemented by NIAD-UE in the evaluation system of national university corporations have a very important role. Therefore, NIAD-UE established the Committee for National University Education and Research Evaluation in September 2004 in order to carry out their studies on evaluation relating to the conditions of education and research of national university corporations. This committee deliberates on the policies, methods and challenges for implementing the evaluations while collaborating with the National University Corporation

Evaluation Committee. The following paragraphs will introduce the outline of current discussions by the Committee.

## **1. The fundamental policy of education and research evaluation**

Performance-based evaluation of mid-term goals should contribute to a continuous qualitative improvement of national university corporations with consideration to the characteristics of education and research and the autonomy of university operations. At the same time, accountability must be demonstrated with the evaluation results to the society in a clear and simple way. In particular, in the evaluations at the completion of the very first mid-term goals, views as to what of the incorporation provided the universities- the improvements and enhancement in quality- are also important. The fundamental policy to achieve this is as follows.

### Evaluation based on the attainment of objectives of mid-term goals

NIAD-UE implements education and research evaluations based on examination and analysis on the attainment of objectives of mid-term goals in education and research of national university corporations. Since mid-term goals in education and research are set as goals related to the improvement of the quality of education and research (Column 6-1), for NIAD-UE to grasp the attainment of objectives of mid-term goals, how the quality of education and research has improved during the mid-term period as well as how the issues described in the mid-term goals and plans are also important. The society requires information on the quality of education and research of respective national universities and the level of improvement made during the period of the mid-term goals.

### Evaluation of education and research levels

It is likely that the contents NIAD-UE is requested to evaluate from a professional standpoint are not just the evaluation of the attainment of objectives of the mid-term goals. The society's interest must be in evaluation on the levels of education and research carried out in national university corporations. In order for Japan to survive the knowledge-based society of the twenty-first century, NIAD-UE is expected to provide the society with

information on the levels of education and research in national university corporations and what strategies are being taken to improve them.

#### Evaluation for quality enhancement and individuality development based on the characteristics of education and research

Education and research are organically linked. The outcomes of education and research are mostly qualitative data and only some parts can be quantitatively or numerically indicated. Evaluation of education and research cannot be carried out without focusing on the qualitative contents. Moreover, education and research often requires a period of time until the outcomes can be visibly presented. Considering these characteristics, evaluation to support and encourage the proactive actions of national university corporations toward quality enhancement and development of individuality must be implemented from the standpoint of promoting education and research from a mid-term to long-term perspective. From the viewpoint of advancing and invigorating education and research, it is also important to appropriately evaluate constructive efforts, particularly those that are being developed in an aim to become a unique or a world-class university.

#### Evaluation for securing transparency and fairness demonstrating accountability

In order to appropriately evaluate the conditions of education and research of national university corporations and to lead it to the development of education and research, evaluations are carried out by making use of the experiences NIAD-UE has accumulated as a professional evaluation body, with the participation of experts and professionals from relevant fields. Full attention is given to the transparency and fairness through the process of creating evaluation policies, building the evaluation system and implementing the evaluations. In doing so, it is crucial to deepen communication with national university corporations on the evaluation objectives and methods when carrying them out.

Accountability to the society should be demonstrated by providing them information on the conditions of education and research of national university corporations so that their understanding towards them can be deepened. The evaluation results should be trustworthy by the society as well as from

universities. Therefore, it is important to constantly review and improve evaluation methods for a better evaluation system. When such a perspective is adopted, evaluation can be called a collaborative task of national university corporations and NIAD-UE. However, this is not a cozy relationship but one maintaining tightness.

## **2. Subjects of education and research evaluation**

Among the issues stated in the mid-term goals, national university corporations and inter-university research institutes are evaluated based on the examination and analysis of their attainment of objectives on the “goals for the enhancement of the quality of education and research.”

Considering the reason why NIAD-UE is selected to undertake evaluations of education and research from a professional standpoint, it is believed that what the society is expecting of NIAD-UE is not just the evaluation of the attainment of objectives of mid-term goals. Education and research is the core of national university corporations, and information on the standards of their education and research is sought to contribute to the continual and qualitative enhancement of each university and demonstrate accountability to the society. In order to respond to this demand, NIAD-UE evaluates the extent of quality enhancement and the standards of education and research that have been achieved during the period of the mid-term goals, through focusing on the activities and outcomes as well as examining and analyzing the attainment of objectives.

## **3. Method and implementation system of education and research evaluation**

Based on the fundamental policy of evaluation described above, evaluation results must be usable effectively and appropriately for both the national universities and the society. Moreover, efficient methods should be sought so that the evaluation itself does not become an excessive burden on national university corporations, and considerations should be made so that evaluations do not become “evaluation for the sake of evaluation.”

### Evaluations based on self-assessment

Evaluation is for supporting and encouraging self-directive actions of national university corporations toward the enhancement and individualization of the quality of education and research. In order for an evaluation to be effective while securing transparency and fairness, stringent self-assessment of national university corporations becomes the starting point.

NIAD-UE analyzes the information and data of self-assessment, and implements evaluations on the attainment of objectives of the mid-term goals and standards of education and research. The evaluations are carried out as a combination of a document analysis of self-assessment reports by national university corporations and a site visit. Site visits are implemented to understand in greater depth the particulars which could not be verified by through interviews of staff, student and graduates, or the document analysis. In the verification of the trial university evaluations, this site visit was very well received by both the universities and external evaluators. Therefore, the method used in the trial evaluations has been taken on.

### Evaluation units and timing

Since mid-term goals and plans are set up individually for every corporation, the unit for conducting education and research evaluation necessarily becomes each national university corporation. However, depending on the composition of the national university corporation or the content of the mid-term goals and plans, there may be some cases which the evaluation must take in to account the characteristics of respective faculties/academic units of graduate schools. Moreover, sometimes appropriate evaluations may become difficult in focusing just on the aggregates or average scores of the whole corporation. For this reason, the attainment of objectives of education and research of the whole corporation should be evaluated by first examining the conditions of each faculty/academic unit.

### Presenting the evaluation results

The major premise of how to present the evaluation results is to explain them in an easily understandable way to both the national university corporations and the society. So, in principle, the evaluation results are

presented in levels by each mid-term goal. Furthermore, those results are summarized separately as “goals for education” and “goals for research,” and then presented in levels with descriptions of the grounds and reasons which induced them. In the process, if there are progressive arrangements that have not yet produced outcomes but are likely to, that fact is specified.

Moreover, the overall attainment of objectives of the mid-term goals of education and research, such as best practices and good practices, and areas which require desirable or essential improvement, are described, by taking the characteristics of each corporation into consideration, to contribute to the improvement of education and research standards. The current conditions of education and research are released to the society.

Matters which are not specifically described in the mid-term goals and plans but are deemed commonly essential for evaluating as “basic issues” are to be presented to national university corporations in advance.

#### Statement of objection and the provision and publication of finalized evaluation results

In order to secure the transparency, fairness and accuracy of the evaluations, the contents of the evaluation results are notified to respective national university corporations and are published after statements of objection are presented. Objections can be made if a national university corporation believes that there are factual errors in or misunderstanding of the self-assessment report, information and data which may affect the draft evaluation results. Objections are deliberated by the examination panel set up under the Committee for National University Education and Research Evaluation after hearing the views of the Subcommittee which undertook the evaluation, and the Committee would judge on the treatment.

The finalized evaluation results are submitted to the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee and respective national university corporations so that they can be reflected in the next mid-term goals and plans. The contents of statements of objection and the response of the Committee are also made public together with the finalized evaluation results for demonstrating accountability.

### Implementation system of evaluations

Considering the characteristics of education and research activities in national university corporations, evaluations mainly carried out by professionals (peers) of relevant fields are required as in the case of trial university evaluations and institutional certified evaluation and accreditation. However, for a wider society to understand the achievements of national university corporations, the Committee for National University Education and Research Evaluation is set up with the participation of many experts in the field of education and research of national universities from several sectors. In selecting the evaluators for the Committee and the following Subcommittees, it is crucial that there is no bias in the selection of organization, field of expertise and regional characteristics of the evaluators.

Since the number of institutions subject to evaluation reaches one hundred, it is vital to carry out the evaluations effectively and efficiently. For this reason, the Subcommittees set up under the Committee are assigned for each national university corporation. Since the scale and framework including faculties and academic units of graduate schools of national universities are diverse, the composition of the Subcommittees should be decided by taking those into consideration. Moreover, in judging the standards of research performance, examination and analysis should be carried out by each academic field and area. Therefore, expert subcommittees are set up for each academic field and area other than the panels assigned to respective national university corporations.

## Chapter 7

# The Organization and Activities of NIAD-UE

Since its establishment as a degree conferral organization in July 1991, NIAD-UE was reorganized in 2000 and became an incorporated administrative agency in 2004. NIAD-UE has been undertaking operations relating to evaluation of universities and the awarding of degrees (Table 7-1).

Table 7-1

Works of NIAD-UE

- In order to contribute to the improvement of education and research standards of universities, carry out evaluations on the conditions of their education and research activities, and provide the results to their establishers and to the public
- Award academic degrees (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral) in accordance with the School Education Law
- Examine the process of evaluation on education and research activities of universities and the outcomes of student learning in order to award academic degrees
- Gather, organize and provide information relating to evaluations on the conditions of education and research activities and various learning opportunities in universities
- Based on the request by the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee of MEXT, undertake evaluations on the educational research activities of national universities and inter-university research institutes and submit the results to the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee, subject national universities and inter-university research institutes and make them public

In an age when university evaluation is an internationally important theme, NIAD-UE recognizes that it bears heavy responsibility as the cadre of evaluation organizations in Japan. In January 2005, NIAD-UE was certified as an evaluation and accreditation organization to undertake the evaluation and accreditation of universities, junior colleges and law schools among professional graduate schools, and in July 2005, as an evaluation and accreditation organization for the evaluation and accreditation of colleges of technology by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Since then, it has been implementing certified evaluation and accreditation of universities and colleges by request. NIAD-UE has an important role in the higher education system and it is vital for it to implement evaluations with transparency as the leader of the certified evaluation and accreditation system which is still in its infancy. It intends to seek ways of evaluations which would enable universities to enhance their education and research standards.

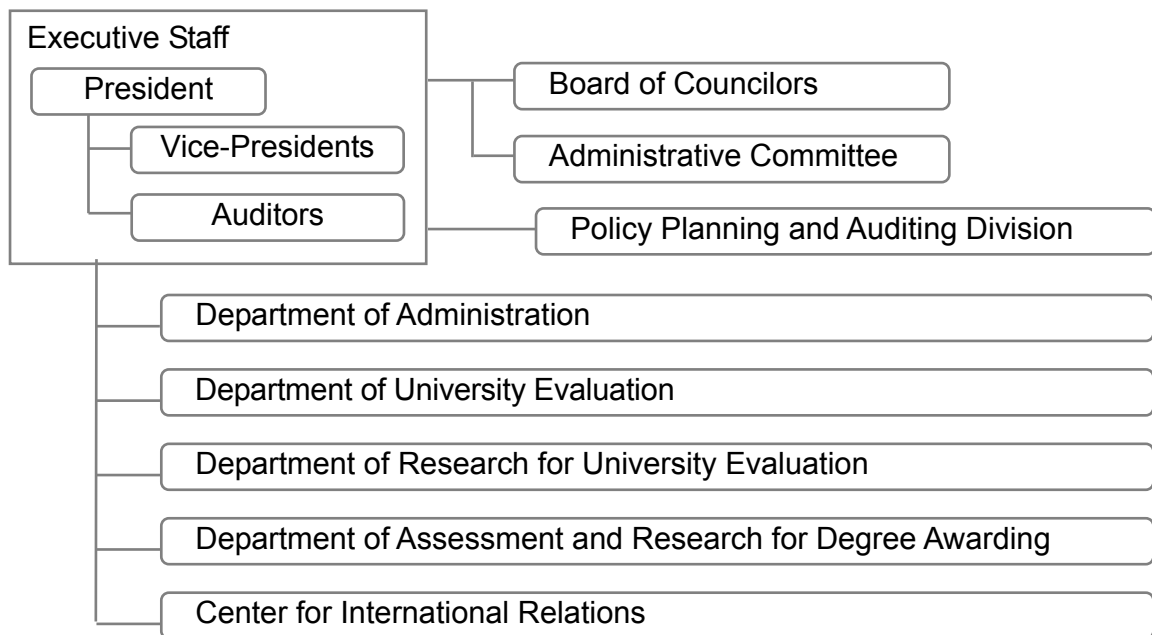
Furthermore, NIAD-UE strives to develop evaluation methods that are less burdensome to universities, that enable them to demonstrate accountability, by utilizing the experience of trial university evaluations it has implemented in the past. These are implemented by request from the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee of MEXT. NIAD-UE hopes to contribute to the further improvement of higher education levels in Japan by undertaking evaluations while examining the feedback from experts with the cooperation of university officials.

The need of assuring quality internationally is becoming essential for higher education in Japan to develop. Therefore, NIAD-UE believes that gaining international credibility for the evaluations it carries out is the great mission imposed on it.

## Section 1 Organization

The outline of the organization and operation of NIAD-UE is summarized in Fig. 7-1.

Fig. 7-1  
Organizational chart of NIAD-UE



### Committees

- Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities
- Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Junior Colleges
- Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Colleges of Technology
- Committee for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Law Schools
- Committee for National University Education and Research Evaluation
- Committee for Validation and Examination for Degrees

The Board of Councilors is composed of people with expertise in universities and management necessary for the adequate operation of the work of NIAD-UE, and deliberates on important operational issues in response to consultation from the president. The Administrative Committee is composed of professors of NIAD-UE, university principals, academics and other experts, and is responsible for important issues relating to the implementation of the operations of NIAD-UE which the president deems necessary. In this way, it can be said that NIAD-UE is an “open organization.” The academics of the Research Department are selected by the Academic Staff Selection Committee (composed of NIAD-UE professors and external members of the governing board) set up under the Administrative Committee, which makes the final decision.

Respective committees for institutional certified evaluation and accreditation are set up as the responsible parent body to implement institutional certified evaluation and accreditation of universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology. These committees are composed of experts such as journalists and economists, as well as officials of institutions (presidents, principals or teachers). For certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools, the Committees for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation of Law Schools has been established. The framework for certified evaluation and accreditation of professional graduate schools other than law schools are currently under discussion by the Review Committee.

NIAD-UE also undertakes evaluations of education and research of national university corporations and inter-university research institutes from a professional standpoint at the request of the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee set up in MEXT. The implementation of evaluations is expected to begin in 2008 and the Committee for National University Education and Research Evaluation is deliberating on the specific evaluation policies and methods. These will be finalized after hearing the opinions of parties together with how the evaluation results will be published.

## Section 2

### **Outline of NIAD-UE's evaluation works**

NIAD-UE undertakes appropriate evaluations on the conditions of education and research activities of higher education institutions by developing an effective evaluation method with the participation of experts in higher education or with academic backgrounds. Through this, NIAD-UE believes that it is fulfilling a leading role in the development of third-party evaluation for Japanese higher education. NIAD-UE's evaluation works are composed of four pillars: 1) specific evaluations such as certified evaluation and accreditation, 2) investigative study, 3) information provision, and 4) international cooperation. Detailed descriptions on specific evaluations will not be mentioned here as they have already been given in this paper.

Investigative study is for supporting the quality enhancement of education and research activities and activities demonstrating accountability to the society. Therefore, the following three project studies are being implemented. In addition, from 2006, a fourth project study was commenced.

- 1) Investigative study on the structure analysis of university information and its application in evaluation: Study on the utilization of information technology through the integration with evaluation methods such as peer review, to create an efficient supporting system for fair and transparent evaluation.
- 2) Investigative study on enterprise management techniques for the utilization in actual evaluation process: As well as seeking techniques of university management for the enhancement of education and research activities, with these concepts in mind, an investigative study on the contents and methods of evaluation is carried out to design and propose a more effective university evaluation system.
- 3) Investigative study on performance indicators of the activities of universities: Study on the quantitative and qualitative measures which indicate the characteristics of the various activities carried out by universities. The selection of measures, its usage and definition problems, and the way of using them effectively are considered and their usefulness and limits in university evaluation are made clear.

- 4) Investigative study on utilizing the evaluation results for quality enhancement: The fundamental objective of evaluation is to make full use of the results of self-assessment and third-party evaluation to the enhancement of various activities. However, it cannot be denied that they are not contributing in specific means at present. This project proposes effective systems or schemes for enhancement through analyzing case studies.

In order to contribute to quality enhancement and individualization of education and research activities, a wide variety of information is gathered, organized and provided in the information provision project. Whenever the opportunity, the initiative is taken to hold briefing sessions, symposia and seminars, issuing publications and enriching information on the website (<http://www.niad.ac.jp>). In addition, queries to NIAD-UE are disclosed as much as possible on the website in the Q&A section. NIAD-UE is currently concentrating on the project of creating a university information database. NIAD-UE will regularly update and provide information on the education and research activities of universities. This is so that the information can be utilized, for example, by the universities themselves as a material to enhance and individualize the quality of their education and research or to reduce the workload of self-assessment in third-party evaluation.

Quality assurance across borders and international collaboration is sought in the higher education system. In response to such global trends and to aim for the enhancement of education and research and international competitiveness, NIAD-UE takes the initiative in personnel exchanges with overseas evaluation and accreditation organizations and is actively holding and participating in international conferences and symposia to strengthen the cooperation with other countries and organizations. The collaborative program on higher education between Japan and the UK started in 2002 and it was agreed in 2005 to extend it for another two years. Collaborative relationships with Nordic countries and the European Union nations are deepening and collaborative activities with Asian nations are also starting to see success.

# Postscript

University evaluation of NIAD-UE is a project which began in 2000 and it can be said that it is still in its infancy. Sometimes the evaluation itself tends to become the objective of universities, and therefore the evaluation results are not necessarily made use of for the enhancement of quality. For the results to be effectively used, the “management” should function in self-assessment as well as in the evaluations by NIAD-UE.

It has been pointed out many times in this paper that there are two primary objectives to evaluation. The first is for contributing to the improvement of education and research and management, and the enhancement of quality, and the second is for demonstrating accountability as a public organization. The key issue which should be explained is the current conditions of various activities and practices toward enhancement. Concerning this, the Council for Higher Education reported that each university should stand in their character through effective third-party evaluations. On the other hand, it is inevitable that the evaluation results are reflected in the allocation of national grants. It is difficult to discuss this issue further at present, as the details are not clear at present how this is to be done. However, in order for universities to regain autonomy that they should have and to strive for individualization to carry out drastic reforms resolutely, it is very important for each staff to be conscious that an evaluation is the chance of a lifetime. Furthermore, it is assumed that the time left for using this chance is not necessarily long.

Finally, the following column is for revalidation.

Column Postscript

**Evaluation is a means and not an objective.**

**The objective is the progress development of universities!!**

University officials are now in the state of an evaluation fatigue and this indicates that evaluation itself is seen as the objective. Since it is the first attempt to be evaluated in the history of universities, tremendous efforts and time are being devoted. However, university officials should bear in their

uppermost mind that evaluation is a means for improving the quality of Japanese higher education in the twenty-first century and that it should never be the objective. There is no doubt that the system of the society developing through evaluations will continue in the future. Therefore, from a long point of view, an environment should be established for evaluators to engage comfortably in their activities.