

# *The Awarding of Academic Degrees*

*- An Invitation to Tomorrow -*

## General Information

### ■ The awarding of degrees by NIAD

The National Institution for Academic Degrees (NIAD) was conceived to assess and recognize the efforts and proficiency of individuals striving to better themselves through higher education and to acknowledge their academic achievements with the awarding of degrees. NIAD is also an institution which evaluates the quality and effectiveness of university education in Japan.

The role NIAD plays in the awarding of degrees can be summarized as follows\* :

- 1) To award academic degrees to individuals who have met the required qualifications as well as to assess, approve and recognize programs provided by educational institutions in which an individual would be able to earn credits or a certificate to qualify for a NIAD degree.
- 2) To conduct research into the various systems adopted for higher education and the awarding of academic degrees in Japan and in other countries.
- 3) To collect, analyze and provide information on the various learning opportunities available in higher education.

\* As stipulated in Section 3, Article 68-2 of the School Education Law (*Gakko-Kyoiku-Ho*) and Article 9-4 of the Law for the Establishment of National Schools (*Kokuritsu-Gakko-Secchi-Ho*).

### ■ A brief outline of NIAD

NIAD was established in July, 1991 in answer to a report submitted to the Prime Minister of 1986 by the National Council on Education Reform, requesting reforms in the higher education system in Japan in order that the existing institutions and systems could be diversified, allowing more individuals access to lifelong learning opportunities which would duly be recognized.

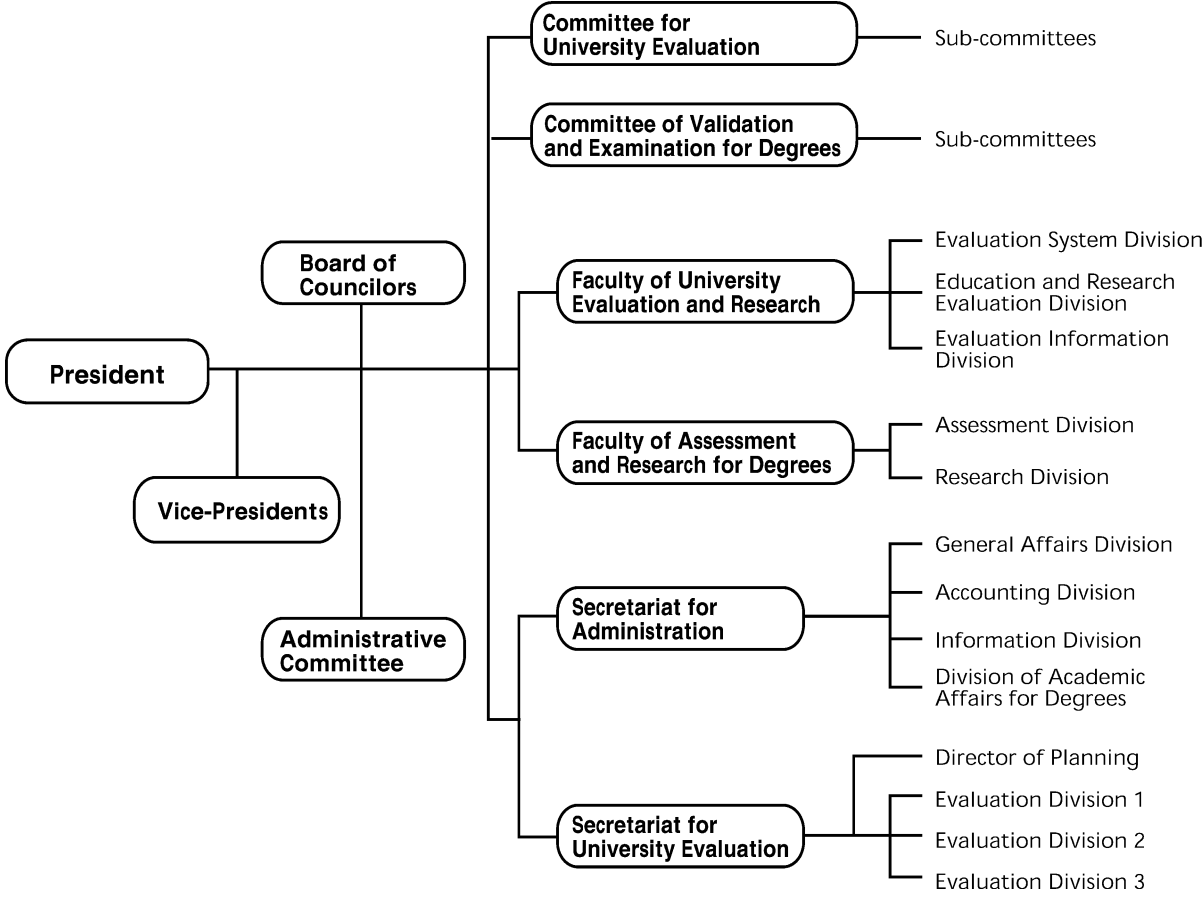
NIAD was reorganized in April, 2000 as a national organization for the evaluation of universities in addition to its original function of awarding degrees. A University Council report, "A Vision for Universities in the 21st Century and Reform Measures" (October, 1998) called for the establishment of an organization to carry out a third-party evaluation of universities in Japan and NIAD was appointed to address this need, changing its official Japanese name from *Gakui-Juyo Kiko* to *Daigaku-Hyoka Gakui-Juyo Kiko*.

NIAD is not a teaching institution but an institution which assesses and recognizes the efforts and learning achievements of individuals who have not gone through the traditional education system, however, who have nonetheless, met the requirements and qualifications for an academic degree through alternative routes. In this way, NIAD contributes greatly in promoting the accessibility of higher education by providing due acknowledgement\* and

certification to those who aspire to academic excellence in their respective fields of interest.

■ Organization

NIAD’s multi-organizational structure is headed by the President who oversees the entire management of NIAD with the help of the two Vice-Presidents. The scheme below shows the core of the NIAD organization. As of April 2001, 136 staff members work full-time at our offices.



Number of Full-time Positions

President	Vice-Presidents	Faculty of University Evaluation and Research	Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees	Secretariat for Administration	Secretariat for University Evaluation	Total
1	2	17	9	48	59	136

Although NIAD is completely independent, we also work in close collaboration with national, public and private universities as well as with university associations in the exchange of information and the operation of NIAD at all levels.

The Board of Councilors is an advisory body to the President on the general policy of NIAD. It is composed of up to 20 members who have been appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology with the recommendation of the President. The members of the Board, in their capacity as individuals of learning and experience, such as the acting president of a university or a representative of a university association, meet twice annually to consult on general policy.

The Administrative Committee is composed of up to 21 members who are appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology with the recommendation of the President. Its task is to advise the President on matters of management at NIAD.

Most of the operations involved in the awarding of degrees is mainly conducted by the Faculty of the Assessment and Research for Degrees, the Secretariat for Administration, and the Committee of the Validation and Examination for Degrees.

The Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees engages in two main tasks. One is the coordination of the examination and validation work involved in selecting and acknowledging deserving works for a degree, which is carried out by the Assessment Division. The other is to carry out research on the various systems and options available for an academic degree, an assessment of the ways to measure academic achievement, and to collect and provide information on the learning opportunities available in higher education, all of which are carried out by the Research Division. The senior staff members of the Faculty also serve as the members of the Administrative Committee and the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees.

The Committee of the Validation and Examination for Degrees consists of up to 20 members who are appointed by the President with advice from the Administrative Committee. It is in charge not only of the examination work involved in the awarding of degrees, but also in the approval and recognition of the diverse programs available at various educational institutions other than universities from which an individual can earn credits or a certificate qualifying the individual for a NIAD degree. This Committee is assisted by 17 sub-committees in its validation and examination operations. The sub-committees are divided according to their disciplinary fields. Around 300 senior faculty members from various universities in addition to the senior staff members of the Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees are currently involved in the operation of these sub-committees.

### Sub-committees of the Committee for Validation and Examination for Degrees

- Literature and Theology
- Education
- Sociology
- Liberal Arts
- Social Science
- Laws and Political Science
- Economics, Commerce and Business Administration
- Science
- Medicine and Pharmaceutical Science
- Nursing, Health Science and Acupuncture & Moxibustion
- Home Economics and Nutrition
- Engineering and Design
- Agriculture
- Fishery
- Art
- Physical Education
- Mercantile Marine and Maritime Safety

The Secretariat for Administration is in charge of the administrative and fiscal operations, personnel, and public relations. The Division of Academic Affairs for Degrees within the Secretariat oversees the procedures involved in the awarding of degrees and recognition of programs, and coordinates the operations of the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees and the Faculty of the Assessment and Research for Degrees, while also providing information on academic issues concerning the mission of NIAD.

NIAD's role in evaluating the quality of university education is conducted by the Faculty of University Evaluation and Research, the Committee for University Evaluation, and the Secretariat for University Evaluation.

#### ■ Budget (Special Account for National Educational Institutions)

A budget of ¥625,846,000 for the fiscal year of 2001 (April 2001 - March 2002) has been appropriated, excluding personnel expenses for the full-time staff members. In addition, various projects undertaken by the NIAD faculties are supported in part by other funds.

## *The Awarding of Degrees*

A NIAD degree can be obtained under two different schemes. One is based on a combination of the successful completion of a junior college program or education which can be deemed equivalent in level, and the accumulation of sufficient credits upon the completion of such a given program or education (Section 3-1, Article 68-2 of the School Education Law and Section 1, Article 6 of the Rules for Degrees). The other is based on the successful completion of a NIAD-approved program provided by an educational institution which has been established by law, yet operates under the jurisdiction of ministries other than the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Section 3-2, Article 68-2 of the School Education Law and Section 2, Article 6 of the Rules for Degrees).

A Bachelor's degree can be obtained under any of these two schemes, whereas Master's and Doctoral degrees are awarded only for individuals who have successfully completed a NIAD-approved program.

### **I Scheme for degrees based on the accumulation of credits**

#### **■ Disciplinary fields**

Bachelor's degrees are awarded to individuals who have met the specified requirements and demonstrated academic achievement in their chosen disciplinary field. These disciplines are as follows.

Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Agriculture, Art, Business Administration, Commerce, Design, Economics, Education, Engineering, Fisheries, Health Science, Home Economics, Law, Liberal Arts, Literature, Mercantile Marine Science, Nutrition, Nursing Science, Pharmaceutical Science, Physical Education, Political Science, Science, Social Sciences, Sociology, Theology.

#### **■ Procedures for obtaining a degree (Scheme 1)**

##### *Preliminary qualifications to apply*

Applicants should meet any one of five preliminary qualifications, as follows:

- a) Successful completion of an associate-degree program at a junior college or college of technology.
- b) A minimum of two years schooling at a university with the acquisition of more than 62 credits.
- c) Successful completion of a post-secondary program at a special training college which complies with the School Education Law (82-10) and whose graduates are

Scheme I NIAD degrees based on the accumulation of credits

*Preliminary Qualification*

(One is required)

- a) Successful completion of an associate-degree program at a junior college or college of technology.
- b) A minimum of 2-years schooling at a university with the acquisition of more than 62 credits as a matriculated student.
- c) Successful completion of a post-secondary program at a special training college which complies with the School Education Law (82-10) and whose graduates are eligible for transfer into a university.
- d) Successful completion of a program at a former national training institute for instructors of industrial engineering or nursing.
- e) Completion of 14 years or more of formal education in a foreign country/countries and the acquisition of an associate degree, qualifying the individual for transfer into an institute approved to grant degrees, whereupon, it can be recognized by NIAD to be equivalent to a) above.



*Requirements for application*

(Each is required)

- a) Passage of a certain period of time.
- b) Acquisition of a specific amount of credits.
- c) Completion of a report or essay, a work of art or a musical performance.



*Examination*

(Both are required)

- a) Inspection and confirmation of the credits acquired.
- b) Assessment of learning achievement based on the work submitted as well as on the results of a written examination and/or interview.



*A Bachelor's degree*

- eligible for transfer into a university.
- d) Successful completion of a program at a former national training institute for instructors of industrial engineering or an institute for instructors of nursing.
  - e) Completion of 14 years or more of formal education in a foreign country (or countries) and the acquisition of an associate degree, qualifying the individual for transfer into an institute approved to grant degrees, whereupon, it can be recognized by NIAD to be equivalent to a) above.

### *Requirements for application*

Three requirements must be fulfilled to apply for a NIAD degree, as follows :

- a) Passage of a certain period of time after completion of a preliminary qualification.\*
- b) Acquisition of a specific amount of credits\* granted in undergraduate or graduate programs of universities in Japan\*\* or in NIAD-recognized advanced programs offered by junior colleges or colleges of technology. (Applicants must acquire credits and select courses in their chosen disciplinary field which follow the criteria of the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees.)
- c) Completion of a report or essay\*\*\*, a work of art or a musical performance.

### *Examination*

An application is examined at two levels :

- a) Inspection and confirmation of the credits acquired.
- b) Assessment of learning achievement based on the work submitted as well as on the results of a written examination and/or interview.

The evaluation procedures are carried out by the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees with the assistance of the sub-committees in accordance with their accreditation and evaluation criteria.

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\* The required period of time and amount of credits are as follows :

- i) For an applicant who has completed a 2-year program of a junior college or college of technology, a post-secondary program of a special training college, or 14 years or more of formal education in a foreign country (or countries): a minimum of 2 years and a minimum of 62 credits.
- ii) For an applicant who has completed a 3-year program of a junior college, a program of a former national institute for the training of instructors of industrial engineering or nursing, a post-secondary program of a special training college, or 15 years or more of formal education in a foreign country (or countries): a minimum of 1 year and a minimum of 31 credits.
- iii) For an applicant who has studied for 2 years or more at a university and acquired 62 credits or more: a minimum of 4 years including the period at the university and a minimum of 124 credits including those acquired at the university.

\*\* Applicants may acquire university credits either as a matriculated student or as a non-matriculated credit-based student (*Kamokuto-Rishusei*). Many universities now have such systems in which an individual is able to take courses on a credit basis as a non-matriculated student, although this individual is not eligible for a degree at this university. As of October 2000, this system is offered by 583 universities for undergraduate studies and at 318 universities for graduate school studies.

\*\*\* The report or essay must be written in Japanese.



## ■ Annual schedule

NIAD accepts applications twice a year, i.e., in April and October. Degrees are awarded to successful applicants in half a year, after the evaluation and examination.

## ■ Number of successful applications

As of April 2001, 8028 applicants have been awarded an academic degree by NIAD. For more details, refer to Appendix.

## ■ Application Manual

NIAD publishes an application manual, “Alternative Routes to a Bachelor’s Degree” (*Atarashii Gakushi eno Michi*), which is revised annually. For more information, applicants should refer to the latest version of this manual, copies of which are available at NIAD.

## ■ Recognition of an advanced program at a junior college or a college of technology offering credits for a NIAD degree

An advanced program at a junior college or a college of technology, whose academic level is recognized by NIAD as equivalent to that of a Bachelor’s degree program at a university, may offer credits required for a NIAD degree. Applications by such colleges for recognition by NIAD are thoroughly examined by the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees and the relevant sub-committee based on an assessment of the validity and effectiveness of the curriculum offered, the qualifications of the faculty, the educational facilities available, and other important areas of evaluation.

On-going recognized programs are reviewed by NIAD every five years. Based on recommendations from the Committee, the President may withdraw recognition whenever a program is deemed inappropriate or ineffective.

These programs offer a wide range of subjects and provide a variety of courses. As of July 2001, 164 programs in 105 junior colleges and 90 programs in 38 colleges of technology are operative. Refer to Table 1 for details of the programs.

Table 1 Number of on-going advanced programs recognized by NIAD at junior colleges and colleges of technology as of July 2001

	Junior College		College of Technology
	National/ Provincial	Private	
Literature/Theology		20	
Education		29	
Sociology		7	
Liberal Arts		8	
Economics, Commerce/Business Administration	1	4	
Nursing	18	7	
Health Science/Acupuncture and Moxibustion		4	
Home Economics/Nutrition	3	32	
Engineering/Design	3	3	90
Agriculture	1	1	
Art		22	
Physical Education		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>90</b>

## II Scheme of degrees awarded upon the successful completion of a NIAD-approved program

### ■ Degrees Available

Applications for a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree may be submitted by any individual who has successfully completed a NIAD-approved program provided by an educational institution under the jurisdiction of ministries other than the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. As of July 2001, NIAD has approved and recognized nine Bachelor's, five Master's and three Doctoral programs. A list of these programs, academic institutions, and degrees are shown in Table 2.

### ■ Qualifications

Applicants should successfully complete any one of the NIAD approved programs available.

### ■ Examination

All applications will be evaluated by the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees with the assistance of the relevant sub-committee. The successful completion of a NIAD-approved program is usually regarded as sufficient in obtaining a Bachelor's degree. Applications for more advanced degrees are assessed at two levels. One is the inspection and confirmation of the successful completion of a NIAD-approved program, and the other is an assessment of the final thesis or dissertation submitted, along with an interview carried out by members of the sub-committees.

## ■ Annual schedule

The Bachelor's degree is normally awarded to a successful applicant in March every year. NIAD accepts applications for a Master's or Doctorate degree in April or October, and the degrees are awarded a half year later.

## ■ Number of successful applications

As of April 2001, NIAD has awarded 8887 Bachelor's, 860 Master's and 152 Doctorate degrees to successful and deserving individuals. For more details, refer to Appendix.

## ■ Approval of academic programs

NIAD approves a program when its academic standard is judged to be equivalent to the same level at a university and this assessment is carried out by the relevant sub-committees under the supervision of the Committee for the Validation and Examination for Degrees.

Table 2 NIAD-Approved Programs

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<b>Bachelor's level :</b>	
Japan Coast Guard Academy	Bachelor (Maritime Safety)
Meteorological College	Bachelor (Science)
National Defense Academy	Bachelor (Science)
	Bachelor (Engineering)
	Bachelor (Social Sciences)
National Defense Medical College	Doctor (Medicine)
National Fisheries University	Bachelor (Fisheries)
Polytechnic University	Bachelor (Engineering)
National College of Nursing	Bachelor (Nursing)
<b>Master's level :</b>	
National Defense Academy	Master (Science)
	Master (Engineering)
	Master (Social Sciences)
National Fisheries University	Master (Fisheries)
Polytechnic University	Master (Engineering)
<b>Doctoral level :</b>	
National Defense Medical College	Doctor (Medical Science)
National Defence Academy	Doctor (Science)
	Doctor (Engineering)

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## Research

### ■ General policy

The Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees conducts extensive research into the various systems available in obtaining an academic degree, especially into non-traditional and external degree programs. Research into the methods or systems of assessment as well as the collection and dissemination of all information relative to the many opportunities available in higher education are carried out. A significant number of NIAD's research projects are comparative studies of higher education systems between Japan and other countries.

The majority of the staff members have teaching and/or administrative experience at a university as a senior academic staff member over a long period of time. Most in the Research Division are experts in educational administration, sociology or comparative education, and such backgrounds are of great advantage and value in the research projects. In many cases, the research projects are undertaken in collaboration with visiting academics as well as other specialists in education.

The results of the NIAD research projects, undertaken either individually or in collaboration with other experts, are published in the NIAD journal, "Research in Academic Degrees" (*Gakui-Kenkyu*), which is published several times a year. Copies of this journal are available at the NIAD Office.

### ■ On-going research projects

Our research projects deal with four basic areas :

- a) Structured higher learning based on credit accumulation systems.
- b) An assessment of higher education provided by institutions other than universities.
- c) The mechanism and organization of systems, domestic and abroad, in obtaining external degrees.
- d) The philosophy and general history of academic degrees.

Topics which have been developed by our faculty include :

- i) Annual follow-up surveys of NIAD degree recipients
- ii) Research on the acquisition of credits and transfer systems in Euro-American countries
- iii) Research on the use of information communication technology for distance higher learning.

These projects are partly funded by special research grants from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, several non-profit organizations and/or individual donors.

Besides these official projects, all staff members are individually engaged in research pertaining to higher education in their academic specialty.

## *Information Services*

The Secretariat provides information on the various learning opportunities in higher education in collaboration with the Faculty of Assessment and Research. These services include the collection, research, analysis and dissemination of information, as follows :

- a) Information on the system by which a non-matriculated credit-based student (*Kamokuto-Rishusei*) can take accredited courses at a university.
- b) Information on NIAD-recognized programs.
- c) The curricula at universities.
- d) The disciplinary fields in which degrees are awarded at universities in Japan.

For more information in these areas, the following NIAD publications are available, copies of which are provided at the NIAD office and through the NIAD homepage :

- 1) “List of NIAD-recognized advanced programs at junior colleges and colleges of technology” (*Gakui-Juyo Kiko Nintei Tanki-Daigaku/Koto-Senmon-Gakko Senko-ka Ichiran*), January 2001
- 2) “List of universities providing non-matriculated credit-based studies” (*Kamokuto-Rishusei Seido no Kaisetsu Daigaku Ichiran*) 2001–2002, March 2001.

## *NIAD publications*

NIAD publishes various booklets, which are available at the NIAD office, containing useful information outlining its activities and operations, as follows :

- 1) “An outline of the National Institution for Academic Degrees” (*Daigaku-Hyoka Gakui-Juyo Kiko Gaiyo*), 2001–2002, May 2001 ;
- 2) “NIAD Newsletters” (*Daigaku-Hyoka Gakui-Juyo Kiko News*), 24 volumes as of August 2001
- 3) “How individuals who have graduated a junior college, college of technology or a post secondary program of a special training college can obtain a Bachelor’s Degree : The awarding of degrees by NIAD” (*Tandai-Sotsugyo, Kosen-Sotsugyo, Senmongakko-Syuryo kara Gakushi o Mezasu Kata e : Daigaku-Hyoka Gakui-Juyo Kiko no Gakui-Juyo Shisutemu*), April 2001
- 4) “*The Work of NIAD*” 2001–2002, May 2001

# Appendix

## Number of Degrees Awarded by NIAD as of May 2001

### ■ Degrees based on credit accumulation

Application Time	October 1992	April 1993	October 1993	April 1994	October 1994	April 1995	October 1995	April 1996	October 1996	April 1997	October 1997	April 1998	October 1998	April 1999	October 1999	April 2000	October 2000	Total
Literature			1		5	9	10	7	29	11	30	19	26	15	27	10	25	224
Education			1	1	1	6	9	11	10	13	34	34	81	19	105	18	116	459
Theology								1		3		1			2	1		8
Sociology				1		2	3	6	2	5	7	1	4	2	1	3	2	39
Liberal Arts		1		1				2		2	3	8	6	17	2	23	2	77
Social Science													1		1			2
Law	2				1	3		2		1	5	1	5	1	2	2	1	26
Political Science							1	2					1		1	2	1	8
Economics			1			2	1	1		4	2	3		3	3	2	2	24
Commerce	1				6	1	3		4		2		3	4	3	6	1	34
Business Administration			1		1		2	1	7	1	6	3	2		6		7	37
Science			1	3	1	1	4	2	3	3	2	3	1	4	8	2	4	42
Nursing		13	8	20	19	50	34	48	56	74	57	82	74	80	75	100	91	878
Health Science			4	13	26	40	55	73	94	108	186	130	124	152	172	152	152	1481
Acupuncture and Moxibustion									1	1	2	1	1	8	8	4	3	29
Nutrition					4	3	4		35	5	74	4	102	7	157	7	165	567
Engineering			46	3	123	5	192	10	271	12	354	12	397	25	488	13	589	2540
Design							1		2		23	1	23		22	1	33	106
Agriculture								1							17	2	13	33
Home Economics						2		5	5	4	7	4	3	3	3	2	1	39
Art			1	38	9	105	8	157	6	164	6	199	15	194	18	216	6	1358
Physical Education									1		3	1	6	1	2	3		17
Total	3	15	101	51	292	132	478	176	686	254	1001	321	1062	344	1342	338	1432	8028

### ■ Degrees based on successful completion of NIAD-approved programs

#### a) Bachelor's level

Academic Year	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Total
Social Sciences	45	41	52	49	70	79	81	93	67	66	643
Science	11	41	45	42	41	46	40	42	45	38	391
Medicine	68	70	64	64	61	61	66	67	68	53	642
Engineering	522	491	483	506	550	567	526	518	497	460	5120
Fisheries	154	185	161	187	175	152	169	180	158	160	1681
Maritime Safety	39	45	41	40	37	40	45	42	42	39	410
Total	839	873	846	888	934	945	927	942	877	816	8887

#### b) Master's level

Academic Year	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Total
Social Sciences								21	19	40
Science	3	2	3	6	4	3	3	8	10	42
Engineering	78	73	83	84	96	86	79	78	75	732
Fisheries					8	10	8	13	7	46
Total	81	75	86	90	108	99	90	120	111	860

#### c) Doctoral level

Academic Year	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Total
Medical Science	10	13	13	14	14	15	16	17	20	20	152

## Addresses and Phone Numbers

Positions	Addresses and Phone Numbers
Secretariat for Administration, General Affairs Division Faculty of University Evaluation and Research Secretariat for University Evaluation, Director of Planning Secretariat for University Evaluation, Division 1 Secretariat for University Evaluation, Division 2 Secretariat for University Evaluation, Division 3	National Center of Sciences Bldg., 2-1-2, Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8438, Japan Telephone : +81 3 4212 8203 (General Affairs Division) +81 3 4212 8163 (Evaluation Division 1)
Secretariat for Administration, Accounting Division	4259 Nagatsuta-cho, Midori-ku, Yokohama 226-0026, Japan Telephone : +81 45 922 6442
Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees Faculty of University Evaluation and Research Evaluation Information Division Secretariat for Administration, Information Division Secretariat for Administration, Division of Academic Affairs for Degrees	3-29-1 Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0012, Japan Telephone : +81 3 3942 9946 (Information Division) +81 3 3942 9687 (Division of Academic Affairs for Degrees) +81 3 3942 2355 (Inquiries for academic degree applications only)

Only representative numbers are shown here. A direct dial-in system is adopted for calls to the National Center of Sciences Building and the Faculty of Assessment and Research for Degrees.

Homepage Address    <http://www.niad.ac.jp>