

Institution: Kanagawa University Program Number: J23

Posterior Assessment by the 21st Century COE Program Committee

Overall Assessment

The initial objectives have been successfully accomplished.

Comments

The program made the most of the accumulated knowledge of the Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture in developing academic research and practical methods regarding the utilization of nonwritten cultural materials and making databases of such materials for use throughout the world. The initial objectives were successfully accomplished. It is notable that the entire university provided a strong support in various ways.

In terms of human resource development, the institute made considerable progress even though a framework to train researchers in the field had not been fully established. Not only Ph.D. students but also a wide range of young scholars were invited to join the program in an attempt to promote research on a global scale and nurture young researchers who will be able to achieve international success. Such efforts brought about an increase in the number of students who earn doctoral degrees in relevant fields at related universities. Their undertakings produced a successful outcome.

Their research activities have also produced measurable results. They devised an innovative way of analyzing nonwritten cultural materials – pictopedia and physical techniques in particular – and compiled elaborate databases of those materials. The outcome is significant in that the intellectual foundations of researchers in the field have been broadened globally.

Even though the program has come to an end, the university made it clear that it would still offer a strengthened, comprehensive support to institutes involved, for the purpose of putting together research results since selection to the 21st Century COE Program and opening a nonwritten cultural material research center with the potential to become an international hub in the field. The university is expected to make steady progress in devising a variety of methods for systematizing such materials and nurturing archivists, thereby establishing a position as an international research base.