Master's Program in Disability Sciences

Name of the degree to be conferred	Master of Arts in Disability Sciences
Educational purpose	As the first stage in cultivating research professionals, this program trains researchers with basic research competency who can promote scientific and practical research of disability sciences, as well as highly skilled professionals and competent special needs educators who have a scientific foundation, appropriately demonstrate their skills in practice, and have the potential to become leaders in Japan and abroad.
Vision of human resources development	From a foundation of basic and practical knowledge and skills in disability sciences, graduates will be able to use the exploration of the nature of disabilities and their characteristics to contribute to the development and application of assistive technologies.
Competencies specified in diploma policy	Evaluation perspectives
1. Knowledge application competence: Ability to contribute to society with advanced knowledge	①Can you apply knowledge gained through research and other activities in society? ②Can you identify new problems, even in other fields of expertise, based on broad knowledge?
2. Management competence: Ability to appropriately address challenges from broad standpoints	①Can you take on major tasks with systematic planning? ②Can you understand and solve problems from multiple perspectives?
3. Communication competence: Ability to accurately and clearly communicate expert knowledge	①Are you capable of efficient communication for research purposes? ②Can you discuss research or research-specific knowledge with experts from your own field and from other fields?
4. Teamwork competence: Ability to work with a team and actively contribute to the achievement of goals	①Do you have experience cooperatively and actively working on challenges as part of a team? ②Have you helped promote projects and activities other than your own research?
5. Internationality competence: Willingness to contribute to international society	①Are you aware of making contributions to international society and getting involved in international activities? ②Have you obtained the linguistic skills necessary for international information collection and action?
6. Ability to plan and execute research: The basic knowledge and skills to plan and execute research relating to disability science	①Can the student develop a research plan for an important issue based on knowledge of disability sciences? ②Can the student present, modify as needed, and execute a research plan they developed?
7. Ability to understand disability: Extensive knowledge of disability sciences and the ability to apply it	①Can the student understand and describe knowledge and techniques related to disability sciences, as well as current conditions and challenges? ②Can the student identify and work to solve research questions related to disability sciences based on expert knowledge?
8. Ethical understanding and attitude: The ability to follow ethical procedures necessary for research and practice aiming to understand disabilities and resolve associated challenges	①Has the student taken and completed a course on ethics in disability sciences? ②Can the student understand the ethical perspectives and knowledge necessary for disability sciences research and execute such research?

Dissertation evaluation criteria

・Evaluation of the master's thesis will be made comprehensively from the following perspectives, based on the peer review of the submitted thesis, the content of the final presentation, and the results of the final examination.

1. The significance and position of the research in the field of disability sciences is clearly expressed based on an understanding of research and research trends in relevant fields both in Japan and internationally.
2. The results of original research contributing to the development of the field of disability sciences are included in an amount appropriate for a master's thesis.
3. The reliability of the research findings has been adequately verified based on sufficient knowledge of research integrity.
4. The discussion of the research findings is valid, and the conclusion is based on objective evidence.
5. The research background, objective, method, results, discussion, and conclusion are organized in a format appropriate for a master's thesis in this field.

The Research Guidance Committee, consisting of 1 thesis advisor (chairman) and 2 assistant advisors (committee members), will guide the design presentation, mid-term presentation, and final presentation leading up to thesis submission. The submitted thesis will be reviewed and evaluated by a Thesis Review Committee comprising 1 primary reviewer and 2 secondary reviewers.

Curriculum Policy	
In the Master's Program in Disability Sciences, students acquire basic and practical knowledge and skills in disability sciences, cultivate the ability to explore and identify the nature of disabilities and disability characteristics, and attain basic research competency. From this foundation of basic research competency, students further acquire the ability to contribute to the development and application of assistive technologies. To achieve this, students are provided with education and research guidance aiming to cultivate research skills, expert knowledge, and an ethical perspective in a core specialization, along with basic training in related fields, a broad perspective, and general knowledge and abilities that support activities in a variety of social settings.	
Curriculum organization policy	・Foundational courses are core courses that form a foundation for disability sciences and provide students with basic research skills in disability sciences leading to three career tracks. Major courses (general) provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for highly skilled professionals, including an ability to understand disabilities and disability characteristics, as well as principles, systems, and support methods for disability-related education and welfare. Major courses are designed to provide students with in-depth knowledge and skills in specific specializations from the many perspectives on individual needs arising from principles, systems, and disability characteristics according to their academic needs and interests and in light of the three career tracks. ・Through Disability Sciences Surveys and Experiments Lab I and II, students will acquire the ability to plan and execute research and ethical understanding and attitude. ・Through other foundational courses such as Disability Sciences Research Methods, students will acquire the ability to plan and execute research, as well as the ability to bridge the gap between research and practice. ・Through major courses (general), students will acquire the ability to understand disabilities and develop and execute services. ・Through Special Topics courses, a subset of major courses, students will acquire the ability to plan and execute research and the ability to understand disabilities in each specialized area of disability sciences or in areas that apply across different disabilities (e.g., principles, systems). ・Through Practicum courses, a subset of major courses, students will acquire the ability to develop and execute services, the ability to bridge the gap between research and practice, and ethical understanding and attitude in each specialized area of disability sciences, or for areas that apply across different disabilities (e.g., principles, systems).
Learning methods・Processes	・Students will acquire a total of 30 credits: 5 credits from compulsory foundational courses, 7 credits from major courses in their specialization (Special Topics I and II, Practicum I, II, and III in the student's area of specialization and generally taught by their thesis advisor), and at least 18 credits from other courses (general graduate courses, elective foundational courses, major courses [general], or Special Topics I and II/Practicum I and II in an area outside the student's specialization). ・Research guidance for the master's thesis will be provided in an organized and systematic manner through the foundational courses Disability Sciences Surveys and Experiments Lab I and II (compulsory) in the first year, the foundational courses Disability Sciences Research Methods I, II, and III (compulsory) in the first and second years, and the major course Practicum III (elective compulsory) in the student's area of specialization in the second year. ・Students aiming to become disability sciences researchers will take courses with an emphasis on learning basic research competency (in foundational courses) and specialized knowledge and skills in both specific disability and cross-disability areas (in major courses) as the first step in their training as a researcher. ・Students aiming to become educators in special needs schools or classrooms will take courses with an emphasis on learning basic research competency (in foundational courses) and acquiring knowledge and skills related to both the principles and systems of special needs education and the physiology, psychology, curriculum, and instruction of children with disabilities (in major courses [general]) as highly skilled professionals in the field of special needs education. ・Students aiming to work in rehabilitation institutions or welfare facilities for people with disabilities will take courses with an emphasis on learning basic research competency (in foundational courses) and acquiring knowledge and skills related to disability development, clinical practice, and support (in major courses [general]) as highly skilled professionals in the field of support for people with disabilities.

Evaluation of learning outcomes	・As the process of guidance for master's thesis, by going through the concept instructed by supervisor, confirming progress status of plan and implementation of research in design presentation and interim presentation in the entire degree program, instruction shall be provided aiming at completion/submission of master's thesis. The thesis shall be evaluated by the contents of presentation in each presentation, advice after presentation and response thereto. In the final presentation, an ability to disseminate contents/results of research shall be evaluated. Such evaluation shall be reflected in the classes which link to presentation of master's thesis. The five grades form A+, A, B, C, D shall be given. ①Based on understanding of research trend in and outside Japan preceding research in relevant area, the significance and positioning of the said research in disability sciences is clearly described. ②Right amount of original research outcomes that contribute to development of Disability science field is contained as master's thesis. ③Reliability of research outcomes have been sufficiently verified based on sufficient knowledge regarding research integrity. ④Consideration for the research outcomes is reasonable and their conclusions are based on objective grounds. ⑤Background, purpose, method, results and conclusions etc. of the research shall be summarized in an appropriate form as master's thesis of the said area. ・Regarding lectures, students shall be evaluated by formative assessments such as short reports/reaction papers/mini tests etc. and summative assessments such as final examinations/reports. In principle, such evaluation shall be comprehensively marked out of 100 points. ・Regarding seminars/practicums, students shall be evaluated by their activities in each class and by summative assessments of term papers on 5 scales of A+, A, B, C, D.
Admission Policy	
Desired students	We are seeking individuals who aspire to contribute to disability-related areas such as life-long education, welfare support, administration, and international cooperation and are eager to play an active role in the field of disability sciences as researchers or highly skilled professionals. We are accepting a wide range of applicants, including students who learned the basics of disability sciences at the undergraduate level, those who come from another field and seek to specialize in disability sciences, educators or working professionals, individuals with medical qualifications, and international students.
Selection policy	Three types of entrance examinations are offered: general (Oct. and Jan.-Feb.), recommendation (July), and special selections for working professionals (Oct. and Jan.-Feb.). The program can also be completed through our extended program system. ・The general entrance examination evaluates applicants based on foreign language ability (English and Japanese for international students), an academic examination of specialized knowledge of disability sciences, and an oral examination of their research plan. ・The recommendation entrance examination evaluates applicants based on foreign language ability (English), an essay examination of specialized knowledge of disability sciences and scientific and logical reasoning, and an oral examination of their research plan. ・The special selection for working professionals option evaluates applicants primarily on their expertise in disability sciences and past practice or background knowledge and skills.