



NIAD-QE

National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education

The Twin Challenges: Independent lifelong learning system through credit-hour accumulation and its quality assurance

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Panel discussion:
Fostering quality of flexible
learning pathways

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Purpose of this presentation

1. Introducing the national system to promote lifelong learning by awarding bachelor's degrees based on credit-hour accumulation.
2. Sharing what happens when a nontraditional degree awarding organization and an accreditation body reside in the same house.
3. Doing a reality check on the quality assurance mode of the nontraditional degree awarding system with the session participants.

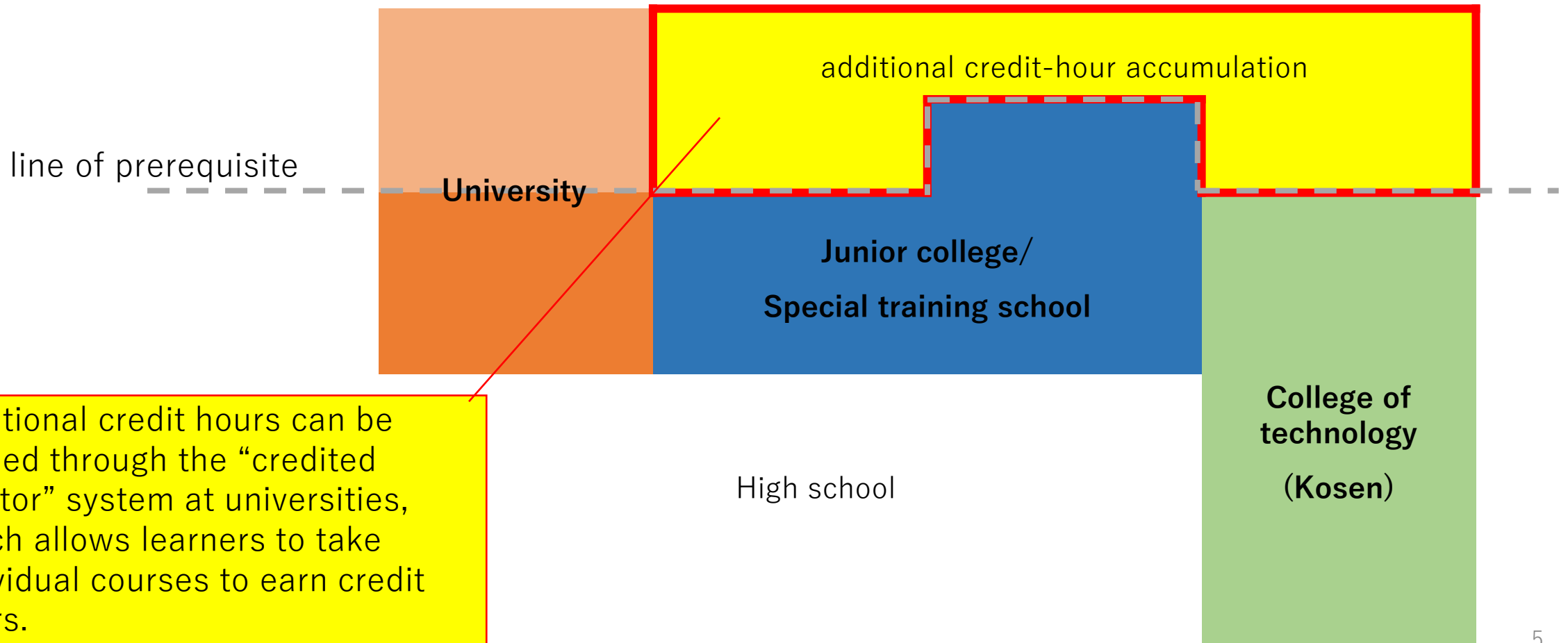
Degree awarding to independent learners

- In 1991, NIAD-QE was established as NIAD (National Institution for Academic Degrees) to enable learners who are not college students to accumulate credit hours to get bachelor's degrees.
- It has been discussed since the 1970s to calm overheated college entrance exams and motivate lifelong learning through credit hour accumulation.
- Now, in Japan, colleges/universities and NIAD-QE can confer degrees under the School Education Law.
- Degrees are awarded under the name of the president of NIAD-QE.

Who applies, who assesses ?

- People who at least completed a short-cycle HE (*e.g.*, junior college) in Japanese and any other HE system and earned additional credit hours in the Japanese HE system to satisfy the requirements set by NIAD-QE can apply. Assessments are done based on the evaluation of learning outcomes: credit hours, thesis, and individual examination.
- Some 350 university professors throughout the state have been appointed to serve as committee/subcommittee members who assess applicants' learning outcomes.
- It provides a large virtual university system.

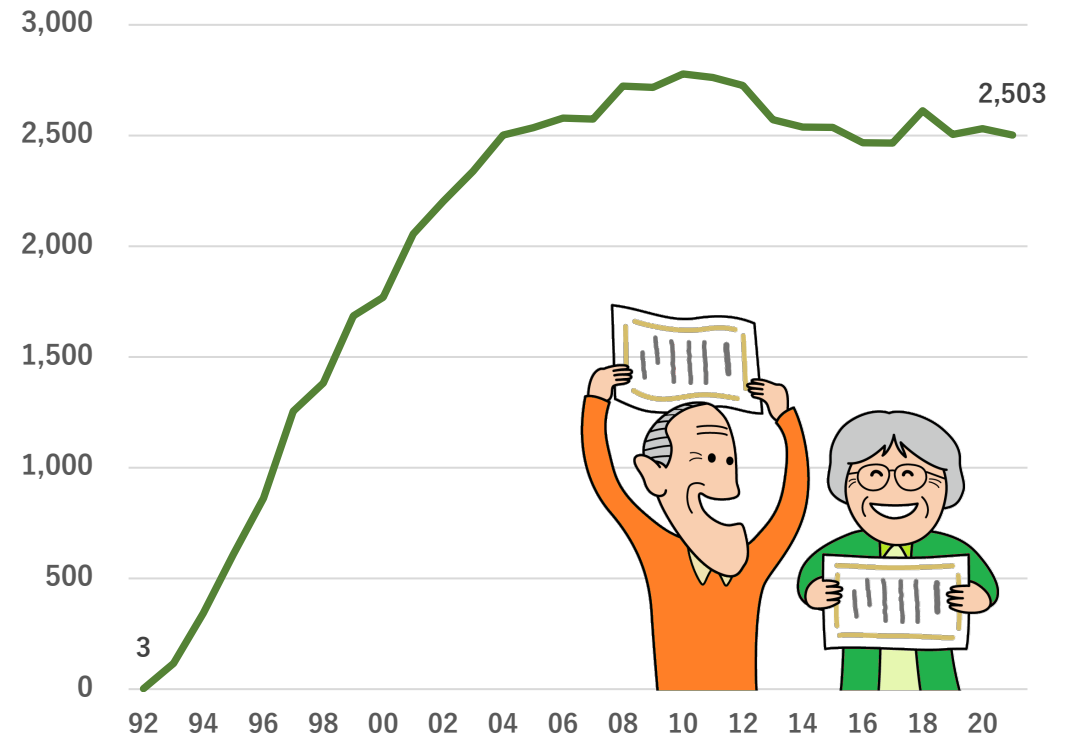
Prerequisite and credit-hour accumulation



Major fields and annual recipients

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

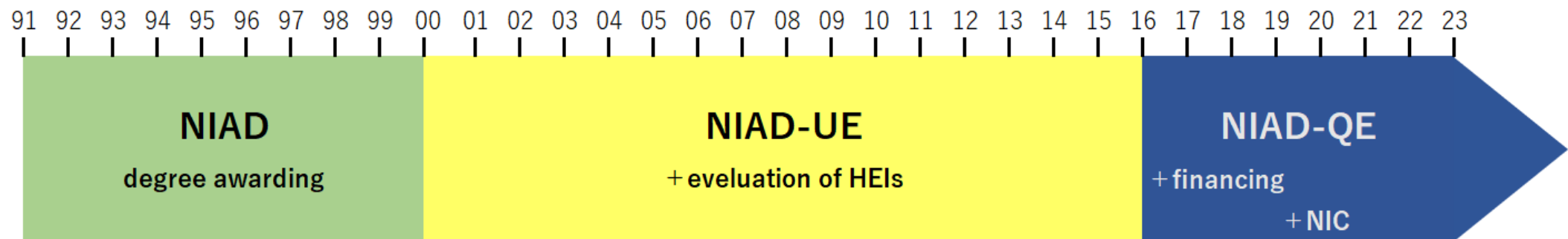
27 major fields/60 concentrations.



3 recipients in 1992
2,503 recipients in 2021

Late-coming twin: evaluation of HEIs

- In 2004, it became mandatory for all universities to undergo cyclic evaluation by an evaluator certified by MEXT (the Ministry of Education).
- It was tough to establish a new governmental organization in a time of fiscal austerity.
- Before that, NIAD was reorganized to NIAD-UE to be appointed as a certified evaluator of HEIs.



Certified Evaluators

- Institutional Accreditors of 4-year institutions
 - JUAA: Japan University Accreditation Association
 - ➔ • NIAD-QE: National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education
 - JIHEE: Japan Institute for Higher Education Evaluation
 - JACA: Japan Association for College Accreditation
 - JAQUE: Japan Association for Quality of University Evaluation
- 9 other accreditors solely for program accreditation

Adverse functions in a crowded household



Degree awarding:

Trusting credit hours
from universities.

Relying on professors
from universities.

HEI accreditation:

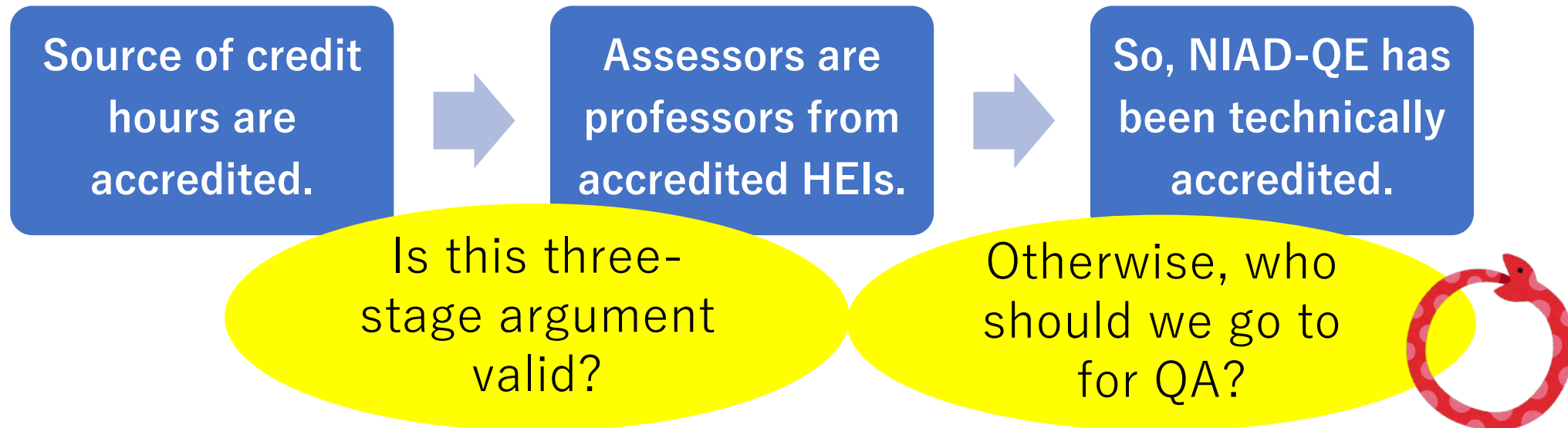
Asking about the
quality of credit hours
and academic staff's
activities.

Financing

NIC

Challenge #1: rationalization of QA

- In 2004, it became mandatory for all universities to undergo cyclic evaluation.
- As an evaluator, NIAD-QE evaluates HEIs.
- As a degree-granting institution, NIAD-QE hasn't been evaluated in this scheme.



Challenge #2: publicity activities

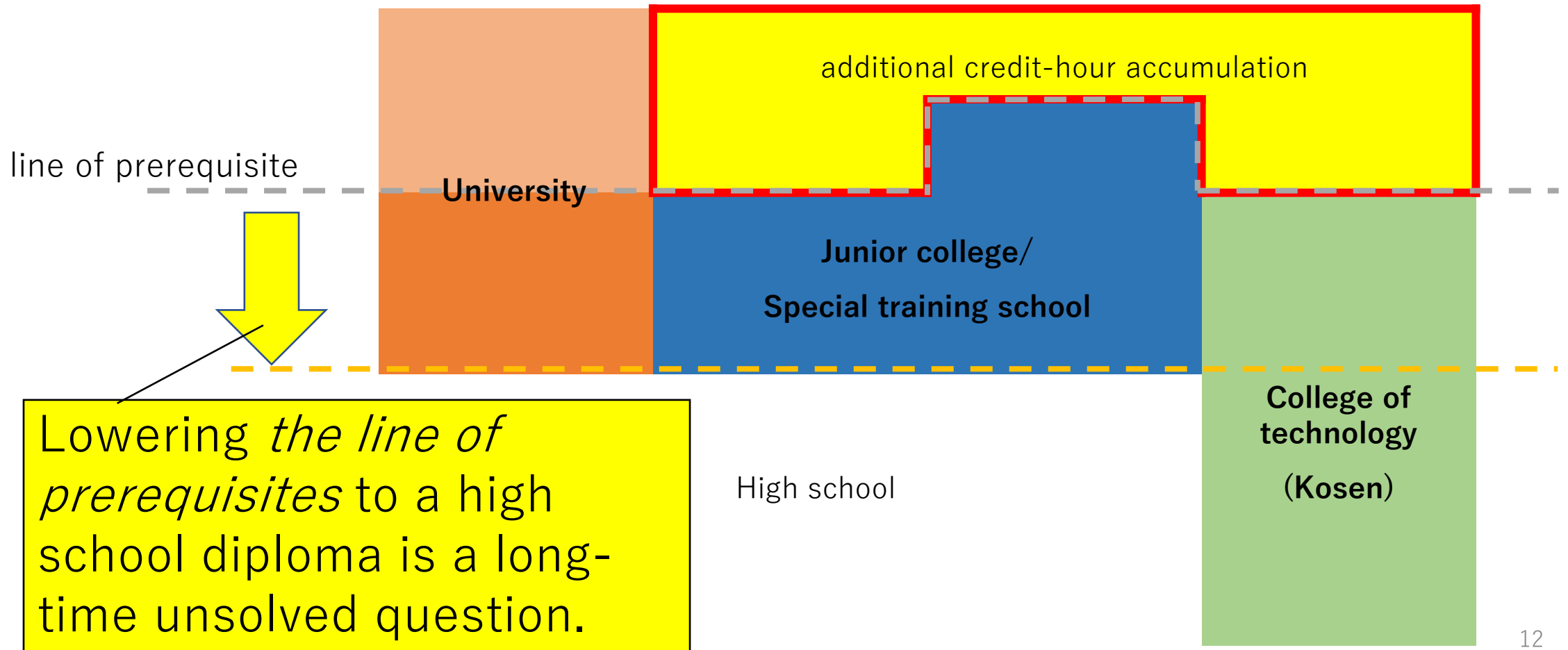
- When a degree recipient tried to apply for a graduate school...

“... usually, accreditation bodies do not confer degrees.”

An admission officer at a prestigious US university

- An authentic but unusual system should promote its publicity.

For further promotion of lifelong learning





Your inputs are most welcome!

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