

Akkreditierungsagentur
im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales
Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences



Assessment Report

**for the Application of
University of Sharjah,
College of Health Sciences
for the Accreditation of the Study Program "Health Services
Administration",
(Bachelor of Science)**

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1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) is an interdisciplinary and multi-professional organization. Its mission is to evaluate Bachelor and Master' programs in the fields of health and social sciences, as well as in related domains such as law or economics. By conducting accreditation and recommendation procedures, the AHPGS contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, the higher education institutions remain responsible for implementing the quality assurance recommendations made by the AHPGS. Since 2004, the AHPGS has been a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). In 2006, the AHPGS also joined the ENQA and became a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2009. Since 2012, the AHPGS has been a member of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). Furthermore, the AHPGS has been listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) since 2009.

In carrying out accreditation procedures, the AHPGS follows the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In the present case, the decision regarding the accreditation of the study program is carried out by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission based on the following accreditation criteria¹:

1. Program aims and learning outcomes
2. Curriculum design
3. Personnel
4. Facilities and learning resources
5. Study process and student assessment
6. Program and quality management

¹ Approved by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission

I. The University's application

The AHPGS verifies the sufficiency of the documents submitted by the University, namely the Self-Evaluation Report and its corresponding annexes. These are to fulfil the assessment spheres as well as the AHPGS standards. With these information, the AHPGS produces a summary (see Sections 2-5), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

II. Written review

The main documents are reviewed by the expert group assigned by the accreditation commission of AHPGS. This is done in order to verify the compliance of the study program with the above-mentioned criteria. Consequently, the experts comprise a short summary regarding the study programs.

III. On-site visit (peer-review)

The experts carry out an on-site visit at the University. During this visit, discussions are held with members of the University, which include University and department administration, degree program management, teachers, and students. These discussions provide the expert group with details about the study program beyond the written documents. The task of the experts during the on-site visit is to verify and evaluate the objectives of the program and its projected study results, its structure, staff, material resources, course of studies, methods of assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, students' support), as well as the program management (program administration, external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, the expert group writes the Expert Report. This report is based on the results of the visit, the written review of the study programs, and the documents submitted by the University. Finally, the report is made available to the University for the opportunity to issue a response opinion.

The Expert Report as well as the University's response opinion – together with the provided documents – is submitted to the accreditation commission of the AHPGS.

IV. The AHPGS accreditation decision

The accreditation commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available in the process of application, namely the University's self-evaluation report, its annexes, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the Expert Report, as well as the University's response opinion. These documents represent the foundation for the commission's decision regarding the recommendation for accreditation of the study program.

2 Information about the University

The University of Sharjah (UOS) was established in 1997 with the aim and vision to offer comprehensive and multi-disciplinary study programs. Currently, UOS offers 123 study programs at 14 different colleges across multiple academic disciplines. The University has two main campuses in Sharjah as well as campuses in Aldhaid and Kalba. There are currently over 18.000 students studying at UOS. Furthermore, UOS has 39.000 alumni.

Since its establishment in 1997, the University has put research at the top of its list of priorities. One part of the University's strategy is to promote research among all faculty members in all colleges, with the aim of attracting staff with research accomplishments. This stems from the University's understanding of scientific research as the basis of economic, social, humanitarian and medical developments. Many active research institutes, centers and groups have been established over the years and engage in a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary research geared to advance development in the region and beyond.

University of Sharjah has three research institutes, which namely are "Research Institute of Medical and Health Sciences", "Research Institute of Sciences and Engineering" and "Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences".

The College of Health Sciences, where the Bachelor study program Health Services Administration is located, was founded in 1998. It has become the third largest College at the University of Sharjah with nearly 2.000 students. It was established to educate highly skilled health workers in different specializations to fulfill the needs of the healthcare market in the United Arab Emirates and the region. The College currently offers seven Bachelor and four Master study programs, which are all part of the international accreditation procedure by AHPGS. The future plans of the College include the expansion of Master study programs by adding the Master programs "Medical Diagnostic Imaging", "Applied Nutrition" and "Public Health". The College is also planning to launch its first PhD program within the next three years.

The department of Health Services Administration (HSA) was established in 1999. There are currently no other (graduate) study programs at this department. However, the department is planning to start a new Master study program in Public Health in the near future.

3 Overview

3.1 Procedure-related documents

The University of Sharjah delegated the accreditation of its Bachelor study programs "Health Services Administration", "Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics", "Nursing", "Medical Diagnostic Imaging", "Physiotherapy", "Environmental Health Sciences", "Medical Laboratory Sciences" as well as the Master study programs "Physiotherapy", "Medical Laboratory Sciences", "Adult Critical Care Nursing" and "Environmental Health Sciences".

The Self-Evaluation Report for accreditation (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) of the above-mentioned study programs (hereinafter the Self-Evaluation Report) of the University of Sharjah (hereinafter the University) was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS) in electronic format on April, 28, 2022. The decision regarding the accreditation of a study program is carried out by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS. The contract between the University of Sharjah and the AHPGS was signed on January, 26, 2022.

On September, 15, 2022 the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) concerning the study programs accreditation to the University. On September, 29, 2022 the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter AOQ) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

The application documentation submitted by the University of Sharjah follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the application request for the accreditation of the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" the following additional documents can be found in the application package (the documents submitted by the University are numbered in the following order for easier referencing):

Specific documents for the study program "Health Services Administration"

Annex	Description
1	Course Syllabi
2	Clinical Training Manual
3	CV for Instructors
4	Teaching Matrix
5	Study Plan
6	Advisory Board Meeting 2018
7	Advisory Board Meeting 2020

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to all study program submitted for external evaluation:

Annex	Description
A	Cooperation Agreement Mediclinic
B	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & FUH
C	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & Hospital
D	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & Aster
E	Disability Services and Facilities
F	Diversity Equity and Inclusion
G	Institutional Effectiveness Manual 2021 - 2022

The application, the open questions (OQ) and the answer to the open questions (AOQ) as well as the additional documents build the basis for the present summary. The layout bears no significance, as it solely reflects the agreed standard within the University.

3.2 Structural data of the study program

University	University of Sharjah
Faculty/Department	College of Health Sciences Department of Health Services Administration
Cooperation partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emirates Health Services (formerly Ministry of Health and Prevention) - Zulekha Hospital

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Al Jalila Children's Specialty Hospital - Aster Health Group - Al Mousa College
Title of the study program	"Health Services Administration"
Degree awarded	Bachelor of Sciences in Health Services Administration
Form of studies	Full-time, on-campus/hybrid
Organisational structure	Monday to Thursday from 08:00 am to 05:00 pm
Language of Studies	English (except Arabic language courses and Islamic studies)
Period of education	8 Semesters
Credit Hours (CH) according to the internal Credit Hour System	134 CH (equals 227 ECTS Credit Points)
Hours/CP	1 Theory Credit hour = 1 Hour 1 Lab/Practical Hours = 3 Hour
Workload	Total: 4,565 hours Theory hours: 1,365 hours Practical hours: 1,035 hours Individual work: 1,405 hours Practice: 760 hours
CP for the graduation project	2 CH
Launch of the study program	1999
Time of admission	fall semester
Number of available places on the program	~ 70 places
Number of enrolled students by now	326
Particular enrollment conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secondary education or equivalent - not have been expelled from an institution

	- medically, physically and mentally fit
Tuition fees	51,538 AED per year (13.500 Euro)

Chart 1: Structural data of the study program

4 Expert Report

The on-site visit was carried out on January 23-25, 2023, according to the previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the head office of AHPGS accompanied the Expert Group.

The Expert Group met on January 22, 2023 for preliminary talks prior to the on-site visit. They discussed the submitted application documents and the results of the written evaluation as well as questions that had been raised prior. Furthermore, they prepared the plan of the on-site visit at the University.

During the on-site visit, experts held discussions with the University management, representatives of the College of Health Sciences, the Chair, Vice Chair and the teaching staff of the program "Health Services Administration" as well as with students currently studying in the program and alumni. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar classrooms, library, and computer classes. Moreover, experts had the opportunity to examine the equipment and the capacity of the laboratories.

During the on-site visit, the University submitted the following additional documents at the request of the Experts:

- Workload overview for all study programs of the College of Health Sciences

The Expert Report is structured in compliance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The Study Program will be described and analyzed in a comprehensive manner below. The documents submitted by the University, the Experts' feedback to the documents, the observations made during the on-site visit, the results of discussions with the representatives of the University, College of Health Sciences

and the Department of Health Services Administration serve as the foundation for the statements made in the expert report.

4.1 Program aims and their implementation

Summary

The fast-growing health care industry provides several career opportunities in Health Services Administration in the Gulf and the region. Thus, the Bachelor study program “Health Services Administration” was implemented in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Sharjah. The program aims at being recognized at national and international levels; to educate and train graduates for them to work in health care facilities, such as public and private hospitals or for organizations that do business with health care facilities, such as research and development firms, pharmaceutical or insurance companies, and computer software firms. The graduates are prepared to deal with all aspects of the industry including human resources, accounting, marketing, planning, information systems and facility management. The following motivations are given by the University about the creation of this program (SER 1.3.1):

- The need for a program with a broader and more strategic vision of health addressing multiple sectors,
- The local and regional growth in the healthcare sectors,
- The UAE needs to prepare health care managers and leaders,
- Need for a strong engagement between academia and health services institutions.

According to the University, the goal of the “Health Services Administration” program is to provide specialized high quality, challenging education and training that prepares the students as critical thinkers and independent life-long learners. The graduated students should be equipped with necessary skills to the growing body of knowledge in health services research. The program familiarizes students with the latest advances in their field of work in order to continuously seek out opportunities to advance their competencies in these areas. The graduated students should finally be prepared for the effective integration into their future roles as health service managers/leaders through access to adequate preparatory training sites in a variety of settings and situations.

The program objectives and learning outcomes are based on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Emirates that provides the following five learning

skills: 'Knowledge'; 'Skill'; 'Autonomy and Responsibility'; 'Role in Context' and 'Self-development'. The graduated students should be able to apply the gained knowledge to perform the skills required for an entry-level position or graduate study. They also learn to use critical thinking skills and appropriate strategies to gain insights, make informed decisions and arrive at new solutions to complex care processes. The graduated students should be able to adopt the emerging roles and responsibilities of managers/supervisors and to lead and manage innovative multidisciplinary efforts for improving the effectiveness of the health care delivery system.

According to the University, graduates from the Health Services Administration program may work in health care facilities, such as public and private hospitals or for organizations that do business with health care facilities. Out of total 223 graduates, most of the graduated students are working in the health care sector, wherein they hold positions in planning and development of healthcare, human resource management, health care informatics, quality and patient safety, medical records, etc. (SER 1.4.2)

Judgement

The experts inquire about the development of the SPIRIT strategic plan, which is scheduled for 2019-2024. The experts are impressed by the strategic documents of the University, which are also available on the website. The University reports that in terms of internationalization many collaborations could be implemented. The College of Health Sciences, where the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" is located, is currently planning cooperations with several hospitals in Germany and wants to send students e.g. to Germany for elective modules in the summer. Currently, it is not possible to award credits for these elective modules outside of the UAE, but the University plans to implement regulations for transferring credits outside of the UAE. The experts appreciate this. Nevertheless, they recommend that the exchange between teachers and students should be further supported. The students also confirm their interest in mobility options.

In terms of research volume at the College of Health Sciences, it is reported that as of today, 67 research groups have been implemented at various colleges, which also are involving graduate students who should at least publish one Q1 or Q2 paper. With an average of eight publications per person, the University has one of

the highest publication rates in the region. The University also reports plans to intensify cooperation with industry in terms of research activities in order to serve the country. Not only has the University grown by 43% in the last three years, but UAE students now make up about one-third of the student body. University of Sharjah is now also the first time the health sciences training partner of the Ministry of Defense and is building a good connection with the local community, for example, through a center for healthy aging. The experts positively acknowledge that. The University also states that the implementation of a Master study program of "Public Health" is planned. In the experts' point of view, the implementation of such a program provides an opportunity to better promote and target potential industry and research partners also for the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" and therefore, welcome this plan.

As the University states, the program name "Health Services Administration" is currently undergoing a review at the authorities to be changed into 'Healthcare Management' which the experts strongly appreciate, as in their opinion this should attract more students to the program. Furthermore, in the experts' opinion, additional marketing efforts need to be focused and increased to attract a higher number of high potential students. Additional networking efforts to ensure a higher visibility of the program amongst potential industry partners and as a networking opportunity should be explored. To ensure the graduates attractiveness to potential employers, direct conversations and roundtables with stakeholders could also be helpful.

From the experts' point of view, the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" focuses on specific qualification objectives. These objectives cover professional and interdisciplinary aspects and particularly refer to the domain of academic competences, competences necessary for a qualified employment, skills of social commitment and personal development. However, the experts learned that currently, it can take up to two years for non-nationals to find a position. Therefore, the mentoring and support system for national and non-national students throughout their studies, especially in regards to potential job opportunities should to be reviewed and optimized to ensure swift transitions without knowledge loss.

Decision

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

4.2 Structure of the study program

Summary

The program comprises 43 modules, out of which eight modules are university requirements, seven modules are college requirements, and 26 courses are program requirements. Furthermore, there are three elective modules on the university level and two elective modules on the program-level. The university and college requirements are common to all departments at the College of Health Sciences.

There are between four and six modules in total provided for each semester. All modules have to be completed within one semester. The Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" offers between 15 and 18 credit hours (CH) per semester. According to the University bylaws and regulations, the study load per student per semester ranges between a minimum of 12 credit hours, a maximum of 18 credit hours and an absolute maximum of 21 credit hours.

The list of modules offered:

Nr.	Title	Sem.	CH
0201102	Arabic Languages	1	3
0202121	English for Medical Sciences	1	3
0500150	Biology	1	4
0500161	Introduction to Health Sciences	1	2
1430107	General Chemistry for Health Sciences	1	4
			16
0104100	Islamic Culture	2	3
0500160	Human Anatomy and Physiology	2	4
1411100	Introduction to Information Technology	2	3
1430111	General Physics for Health Sciences	2	4
	University Elective (1)	2	3
			17
0504252	Biostatistics	3	3

0301210	Accounting (1)	3	3
0504250	Introduction to Health Services Administration	3	3
0504251	Computer Applications for Healthcare Managers	3	3
	Department Elective (1)	3	3
	University Elective (2)	3	3
			18
0302111	Business Communication	4	3
0504260	Leadership and Management in Health Professions	4	2
0504261	Health Economics	4	3
0504262	Management in Primary Healthcare	4	3
0504263	Introduction to MIS for HSA	4	3
	University Elective (3)	4	3
			17
0302231	Financial Management	5	3
0504350	Healthcare Terminology and Classifications	5	3
0504351	Hospital Management	5	3
0504352	Healthcare Delivery Systems	5	3
0504353	Materials Management	5	3
0506352	Occupational Health and Safety	5	3
			18
0302315	Introduction to Management Science	6	3
0504362	Epidemiology and Population Health	6	3
0504360	Health Information system	6	3
0504361	HR Management in Health Organization	6	3
	Department Elective (2)	6	3
0302200	Fundamental of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	6	3
			18
0500450	Introduction to Research	7	3

0504450	Planning in Health Services	7	3
0504451	Quality Management in Healthcare	7	3
0504452	Seminars in Health Services Administrations	7	3
0504453	Orientation to Health Service Organization	7	3
			15
0503462	Ethical and Legal Issues in Health Professions	8	3
0504460	Practicum in Health Services Administration	8	7
0504461	Marketing in Health	8	3
0504462	Research Project	8	2
			15
	Total:		134

Tabelle 2: Modulübersicht

The module description/course syllabi cover the following aspects: class timing, venue, faculty, course description, prerequisite, credit hours, course learning outcomes, teaching strategies, course activities and assignments, team-based learning sessions, course work policy, class attendance policy, evaluation method, grading, recommended text, other recommended references. Furthermore, a table of academic weeks and assignments due dates is offered (Annex 01).

The following modules are invariably shared among all College of Health Sciences programs:

- General Microbiology,
- Ethical and Legal Issues in Health Professions,
- Epidemiology and Population,
- Human Anatomy and Physiology Organic Chemistry,
- Biochemistry

Modules in the first year are common between the departments at the College of Health Sciences. The first year comprises essentials of health sciences including chemistry, biology, physics, human anatomy and physiology as well as Arabic, Islamic culture, English for medical sciences and IT. The goal of the first common

year is to provide students with basic communication, critical thinking and problems solving skills, to foster the students' ethical values in research and presentation of materials as well as to enhance the students' ability to work independently or in teams.

In the second year of the "Health Services Administration" program, students are oriented towards the basic knowledge through the Introduction to HSA. They also begin to study more specific courses about Computer Applications, Business Communication, Leadership/Management and Economics.

During the third and fourth year, students enhance their management skills through more specific courses including Hospital Management, Materials Management, Financial Management and HR Management. Furthermore, they get familiar with Healthcare Terminology and Classifications, Healthcare Delivery Systems, Occupational Health and Safety, Epidemiology/Population Health and Ethical and Legal Issues in Health Professions.

The Department of HSA adheres to the rules and regulations of the clinical sites with regards to clinical training. At the beginning of each semester, the training staff sends students' names to the health authorities to approve the students' training. After getting the approvals, the course coordinator meets the students and discusses the internship sites and course objectives. The department shares initial documents with the clinical training sites before training including syllabus, University Code of Ethics & Conduct, dress code policy, etc. Regular visits are organized to discuss issues and exchange feedback. Usually, the students conduct a little research project on any managerial problems in the hospitals. These are later used by the hospital authorities to take corrective actions. (SER 1.2.6.3)

Each student needs to work within a team to complete a certain research project. The aims of this project are to pursue students' interests and provide them with the opportunity to learn something new, to improve their problem-solving skills and to work closely with a mentor (faculty member). During the third year, the students learn the theoretical aspects of the research methods such as research design, implementation, budgeting, etc. An example of some recent student research projects can be found in SER 1.2.7.

The traditional form of teaching in the University of Sharjah often involves lectures being given to large groups of students, accompanied by tutorials and workshops and some independent study. Other modes of delivery can also be very effective such as case studies, group projects and problem-based learning. The classrooms are equipped with a multimedia station including a computer connected to Internet and a video projector for presentations and demonstrations of software applications. All faculty should try to lecture less, make learning environments more interactive, integrate technology into the learning experience and to use collaborative learning strategies. The department also follows the teaching philosophy of the university by applying a wide range of modern teaching methods including team-based learning, interactive lectures, role play, etc. (SER 1.2.4)

A multimedia room and smart classrooms are available for use by students and faculty through reservation. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the University established online and hybrid learning appropriate technologies. The department relied on the available technology such as Blackboard ultra, MS Teams, Zoom and other interactive tools (Poll everywhere, Kahoot and Snagit). (SER 1.2.5)

The students have an opportunity to go abroad by transferring or conducting further studies as it is accepted internationally. UOS may admit a student transferring from other universities that require full time attendance and are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Judgement

The Bachelor study program "Health Service Administration " have a course-based structure and a course-related examination system. Descriptions of the modules are embedded within the course syllabus. The course syllabus contains information on the course code, the credit hours, pre-requisite(s), the semester and year, the instructors name as well as his or her phone number, office location, mail address and office hours, and the lecture times. Furthermore, the course description, the learning outcomes, the alignment of course student learning outcomes to program student learning outcomes and the weekly distribution of course topics/contents are presented. Regarding the assessments, the assessment tools, the course outcome assessment plan, the teaching and learning resources and the attendance policy are described. Finally, a note on plagiarism and cheating is placed at the

end. The experts value the detailed syllabus, which enables students to prepare adequately for the individual lectures as well as the scheduled examinations.

The combination and succession of the courses of the study program are consistent with the specified qualification objectives (described earlier). It is assured that students receive the support and guidance they need for the organization and accomplishment of assignments and the learning process in general. During the round of talks, the experts inquire about interdisciplinary taught modules, as the programs at the College of Health Sciences offer good opportunities for this in their estimations. The University reports that in the area of elective modules, students are sometimes taught together and partly complete the practical courses together using a mobile clinic. On the Master's level, interprofessional research education projects are implemented. Nevertheless, the experts see room for improvement related to interdisciplinary teaching and learning at the College of Health Sciences. The University agrees. The experts recommend that the curricula of the various study programs be reviewed in this regard. Furthermore, the experts learned that the privatization of the healthcare industry in the UAE is a threat to the employability of the graduates. From the experts' point of view, this could be overcome by offering new courses and certifications that provide the students the necessary skills to effectively manage cost-saving practices, such as Lean Management, Six Sigma certifications etc.

The experts further inquire about the graduation project process. The teachers report that the graduation project is written in group work. A maximum of four students work together and present their scientific work in the form of a poster at the end. The experts recommend that the University considers examining the students individually in the form of a thesis to make it more internationally comparable. The experts also recommend that the University translates its internal credit hour system into the European Credit Transfer System and attach it as an appendix to the diploma to ensure international compatibility.

Practical training is a curricular requirement. The training coordinator in the department is responsible for securing local, regional and international internship opportunities. The training coordinator is responsible for managing students' internships in terms of placement and agreement with training agencies. He or she also follows up the technical issues. Students need to complete one semester in

their final year in a hospital setting. The department sends the students to a hospital for them to put into practice what they have learnt. This practice continues until the last semester. Every year the students are placed in different hospitals (Dubai Hospital, Al Qassimi Hospital, Emirate Specialist Hospital, etc). The students gain experience by rotating in different administrative and management departments. They don't go for any clinical training. The clinical training manual can be found in Annex 02. The experts recommend to intensify the practical experience for students, providing an early and lasting connection between employer, student and University. The experts appreciate that supervisors from both the University and the clinic are assigned to oversee students during their clinical placements. The students confirm the support and good supervision during the internships.

The experts acknowledge the very detailed course files with its contents and aims, which allows a high level of transparency. In the experts' opinion, the structure of the curriculum seems to make the workload manageable- Nevertheless, the curriculum appears very detailed, consisting of many isolated courses and, therefore, a lot of examinations. Thus, the experts recommend revising the module manual and suggest combining some modules to reduce the number of examinations. Thus, the experts recommend revising the module manual and suggest combining some modules to reduce the number of examinations.

Decision

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

4.3 Admission and Feasibility

Summary

To be admitted to the "Health Services Administration" program, the following basic requirements must be fulfilled:

- completion of secondary education or an equivalent level with the required average no earlier than 3 years prior to joining the University
- the applicant should not have been expelled from the University or any other institution for academic/disciplinary reasons
- the applicant should be medically, physically and mentally fit

- applicants should indicate their order of preference for majors on the application form
- applicants are accepted in different majors according to the student's preference and her/his grade average and depending on the capacity of each college

The full admission requirements and any conditions for provisional admission for the undergraduate programs are available in the University Catalog and are published on the University website. (SER 1.5)

Upon admission to University of Sharjah and prior to course registration, all admitted students must demonstrate a level of English proficiency consistent with the requirements of the College of Health Sciences. Students can choose one of the following exams for proof of proficiency:

- Paper-based TOEFL (minimum score 500)
- International TOEFL (minimum score 61)
- IELTS (minimum score 5.0)
- EmSAT (minimum score of 1225)
- PTE (minimum score of 42)

If the required score of English language skills is not met, students are assigned to the "Intensive English Language Program" (IEP). The program offers 20-25 hours per week of intensive English practice.

The program applies the University's internal credit hour system. Thus, students' performance is evaluated based on the results of a Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). GPA is calculated by dividing the sum of the grade points (with 4 being the best achievable grade and 0 being the worst) received in all courses registered during one semester by the total credit hours of the same courses. CGPA is calculated by dividing the total credits received from all courses a student has completed since joining the program by the sum of the credit hours of these courses. According to the University regulations YX, students with a GPA score of at least 2.00 are considered to have successfully completed the respective course. To successfully complete the whole program, students have to pass all obligatory examinations with the minimum grade of 2.00 CGPA score.

Judgement

The admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are properly documented and made publicly available. As the first year of study comprises medical foundations as well as basic communication, critical thinking and problems solving skills, the experts determine the admission procedure and requirements to be appropriate, as they correspond to the standards of the study programs.

The experts draw attention to the relatively high number of exams to be passed during the study program. The University states that the system of midterm and final exams is determined by the government. In order to prepare students for the level of difficulty and volume of exams, the type as well as the time of the different examinations is defined and communicated to the students transparently through the course syllabus at the beginning of each course. The experts confirm that the University takes good measures to guarantee the feasibility of the study programs despite the high workload. The organization of the education process ensures the successful implementation of the study programs. The experts appreciate the fact that students with disabilities or chronic illness are offered compensatory measures when writing exams, such as extra time or writing the exam in another room.

On site, it became obvious that the teaching staff follows an “open-door-policy”. In the first week of each year, students undergo an orientation which familiarizes them with available support services and where the colleges and departments are introduced.

As another support mechanism, an academic advisor is responsible for a small number of students from the beginning of each semester. Students are supported through advisors, course coordinators or personal tutors with their registration process, selecting a study program, financial and personal issues and their performance during the semester. If the students have problems besides academic issue, a social support unit is installed at the University. The experts find the support services at the University to be exemplary and conducive to the health and success of the student body.

Decision

From the experts’ point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

4.4 Examination system and transparency

Summary

In order to assure the transparency of the examination system, the course syllabi must include detailed information about the number and dates of exams to be given during the semester. If only one exam is planned, it should be given between the seventh and the ninth week of a regular semester or during the fourth week of a summer term. If two exams are planned, the exams should be given on the sixth and twelfth weeks of a regular semester or on the third and fifth week of a summer term. The instructor is responsible for preparing clearly written and properly weighted exam questions in line with the course content, language of instruction, learning outcomes and allotted exam time stipulated in the syllabus.

From the lecture-only courses, 45%-55% of the total course are assigned to the examination while the other 45-55% should be allotted for the other course activities including exams. Any grading scenario that does not meet this policy should be approved by the College Council early in the semester.

However, the passing grade for students in the Bachelor should be "D" = 60/100 of total course grades.

If a student fails to attend a final examination without a valid excuse, the student shall receive an "F" grade for the course. In case of exigent circumstances, the student may submit a petition to the Dean of the concerned college. The dean will then inform the registration department to record an incomplete grade 'I' to the course. The student can take a make-up exam to replace the 'I' before the end of the add/drop period of the following semester. (SER 1.2.3)

The grading scheme is as follows:

%	Letters	Grade Point
90-100	A	4
85-89	B+	3.5
80-84	B	3
75-79	C+	2.5
70-74	C	2
65-69	D+	1.5
60-64	D	1
Below 60	F	0

The disability resource center sends departments and academic advisors' recommendations and also advises students with disability. These recommendations include duration of exams, translation services and extension of the due dates and times during exams, peer mentoring, use of adaptive technology, use of hearing aids and translation services as needed.

All information relevant to the programs offered at the department of Environmental Health Sciences are transparently published on the website of University of Sharjah.

Judgement

The University uses a continuous assessment process to ensure the quality of education for its students. The study programs have a course-related examination system. Its implementation, including the grading system, course load regulations, repetition of courses and exams is regulated and transparent for the students. The experts positively emphasize that the University has already established a well-functioning system of electronic examinations before the pandemic. From the experts' point of view, the examination serves to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved. These examinations are focused on students' knowledge and competences. Nevertheless, in the experts' opinion, the study program includes a very high number of exams which causes a high workload not only for students but also for the teaching staff. The transparent information of examination methods and of the examination schedule at the beginning of each term makes the high number of assessments during and at the end of each semester manageable. An examination can be repeated once. Students who cannot attend the test due to health issues or other unforeseen circumstances are allowed to take the test on another agreed day. If the examination is failed twice, students must redo the course in the following semester. Thus, the experts conclude that the examinations, although numerous, serve to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved or not and are focused on students' knowledge. The requirements to students' performance in examinations are regulated and published in the course syllabus. The frequency of examinations, as well as their organizations, is appropriate.

The University guarantees that students with disabilities or chronic illnesses receive compensation regarding time limits and formal requirements of the study process, as well as all final and course-related performance records.

Information concerning the study program, process of education, admission requirements and the compensation regulations for students with disabilities are documented and published on the website.

Decision

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

4.5 Teaching staff and material equipment

Summary

Currently, the "Health Services Administration" department has six faculty members (three associate professors, two assistant professors and one full professor). The department does not have a lecturer position or adjunct professors. All the study program requirements are taught by faculty members. Regarding the department requirements, 100% of the courses are taught by a faculty member (assistant professor, associate professor or full professor). (SER 2.1.1)

The full teaching load hours of all regular academic staff members per week is 10 hours for professors, 12 hours for associate professors and for assistant professors, 15 hours for lecturers and 15 hours for instructors.

In the academic year 2021/2022, there were 73 students in the program. Considering the number of the teaching staff, the faculty-to-student ratio is 1:15.

The recruitment procedures and regulations are stated in the Faculty Handbook, Chapter III. According to the University, the Department of Health Services Administration is following a clear and transparent procedure to appoint faculty members based on the rules and regulations of the university. The University has called for Faculty recruitment in response to the needs of the department with the launch of MPH program, the recommendations of the latest accreditation cycle, as well as in response to filling the vacancy of leaving Faculty. The recruitment process is under way. Challenges mostly revolved around finding experienced a

highly achieved candidates aligned with the specializations needed in the program. Such challenges were mostly resolved by re-announcements as well as expanding announcement in international platforms. (SER 2.1.2)

To be appointed a professor, a person must:

- Have spent at least ten years (or 15 years from someone outside the university) teaching in a recognized university since obtaining his or her PhD or an equivalent qualification,
- have occupied the rank of associate professor for at least five years in a recognized university insider or outside the country,
- have conducted and published as an associate professor research in his field of specialization in refereed journals.

To be appointed as an associate professor, a person must:

- hold a PhD or an equivalent qualification from a recognized university and must have held the position of an assistant professor for at least five years (or eight years from someone outside the university),
- have conducted research in his or her specialization

Assistant professors must at least hold a PhD title. Lecturers must at least hold a Master's degree.

The faculty administrative and academic units provide various professional support services to faculty members in the areas of teaching and research. These services are the following (SER 2.1.3):

- different workshops and training sessions in areas of specialization,
- different workshops in e-teaching,
- IT workshops on how to use blackboard, zoom, and MS teams,
- students' advising workshops for the new faculty,
- encouraging faculty participation in different self-development activities abroad,
- encouraging collaborations between faculty members within the College, University and outside academic/research institutions
- conducting research-based seminars by research outreach department. Allocating a budget for attending workshops, conferences and training programs,

- encouraging the sharing of inter college expertise in areas of specialization

The central laboratories were established in 1997 to be the core location for practical experiments, training and research related to applied medical sciences. The central labs directorate which belongs to the deanship of academic support services is the administrative unit responsible for operating and managing the central labs. The central labs directorate duties include space management, purchasing new lab equipment, chemicals, tools and consumables, centralized lab utilities, equipment maintenance and asset management, sharing lab equipment between different programs, store services and lab safety management (SER 2.3).

The library homepage acts as a portal to all library resources and research tools. Users can search, find and download full text documents via the library homepage. The homepage also hosts the E-Forms, Tutorials, Policies, Users Guide, Announcement for events/activities, etc. The library subscribes to Athens, a Remote Access software that enables university community to access the online resource off-campus. The library is open all weekdays from 09:00 AM until 05:00 PM and is closed on Friday and official holidays (SER 2.3.2)

The University maintains a large-scale and multi-campus IT infrastructure including telecommunication, servers, data storage, up-to-date software and hardware technologies which are provided for the support of academic programs, administrative units and the university community.

The information technology center offers two types of support for faculty and students (SER 2.3.3):

1. Classrooms and Technological Support: classrooms are equipped with multimedia tables, virtual desktop infrastructures, smart projectors and internet access. Some classrooms are equipped with basic IT equipment (desktops and data shows). Other classrooms are equipped with Multimedia tables which are used for activities requiring advanced technological needs.
2. IT Support for Faculty, Staff and Students: includes academic computing support and IT technical support. The Department of Academic Computing Services provides support for faculty members on how to effectively use technology in the teaching and learning process. The technical support is provided by the Help Desk system.

The University provides funds to all faculty members who present their scientific research papers in two conferences (one international and one local) in every

academic year. Another support for research is offered through the subscription from the library to all major journals and databases in each discipline. The University provides funding and grant opportunity to department faculty members to initiate research in various fields of health sciences. Almost all of faculty in the department has applied and received this funding. In addition, the department faculty can apply to competitive research funding grants that is offered on a yearly basis. The University established research institutes and research groups as an important component of the research activity in the university. The Department of Health Services Administration has two research groups entitled "Health Economics and Financing Research Group" (HEFRG) and "Health and Workforce Studies Research Group". The University provides funds to these groups for research and academic activities. The research groups also receive funds from other research organization through competitive research funding bidding. (SER 2.3.4)

Judgement

New teaching staff is thoroughly briefed about the programs and their teaching responsibilities before they start teaching. The institute of leadership in higher education (ILHE) has delivered a series of interactive training and workshops to keep the faculty of University of Sharjah up to date with current pedagogical and educational teaching methodologies and technology that can help them to enhance the learning experience of students in face-to-face as well as hybrid/hyflex sessions. Students evaluate the performance of all teaching staff periodically.

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of the College of Health Sciences at University of Sharjah shows a very high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as further development of the study programs they are responsible for. The expert group concludes that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the University and the faculty administration. As motivations to teach at the University of Sharjah, the faculty cites the University's good reputation, good working atmosphere, safe working environment and support mechanisms related to research and academic developed.

The experts find the amount of human resources allocated to the program to be sufficient to carry out its functions. The teaching staff is highly qualified. The teaching staff within the Bachelor "Health Services Administration" is in

possession of academic and technical credentials and experience adequate to their tasks. The University informs its employees about opportunities for personal and professional development transparently, and actively encourages their participation in workshops, training courses and conferences intended to improve their abilities, which is confirmed during the talks with the staff on site.

The experts visited the premises of the College of Health Sciences as well as the central laboratory building, where the skills labs of the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" is located. The skills labs are equipped with all relevant technology devices. From the experts' point of view, the quality of the laboratories and clinical areas used to train students in the programs are sufficient. Additionally, the experts were shown around the Research Institute of Medical & Health Sciences at the University of Sharjah, which was established in 2015. This institute supports more than 170 faculties and young researchers. According to the experts, the institute incorporates state of the art lab facilities with very good research equipment. The research groups focus on transnational biomedical research on areas including cancer, chronic inflammatory diseases, immunological disorders, genetic disorders, diabetes, drug discovery, neuro-pharmacology, and toxicology; in addition to public health and other research areas of local and regional interest.

Furthermore, some of the experts were able to visit the university hospital of Sharjah, which is located on the campus. The experts are convinced that the hospital is well equipped in terms of personnel and, especially, equipment. The hospital operates independently, the students only practice here via internships, just like with other cooperating hospitals. Both the teachers and the students would like to have their "own" teaching hospital. The evaluators also see this as a great opportunity to promote the practical skills and abilities of the students outside of the skills labs and even before the internship. Therefore, they recommend that the University reviews the extent to which cooperation with the hospital on campus can be intensified.

As a whole, it was ascertained by the experts that the Bachelor "Health Services Administration" has ample teaching facilities at its disposals. During the round of talks, the experts learned that the financial support for open access publications could be strengthened, as the fees sometimes have to be privately financed. The experts recommend that these costs be paid by the University.

Decision

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

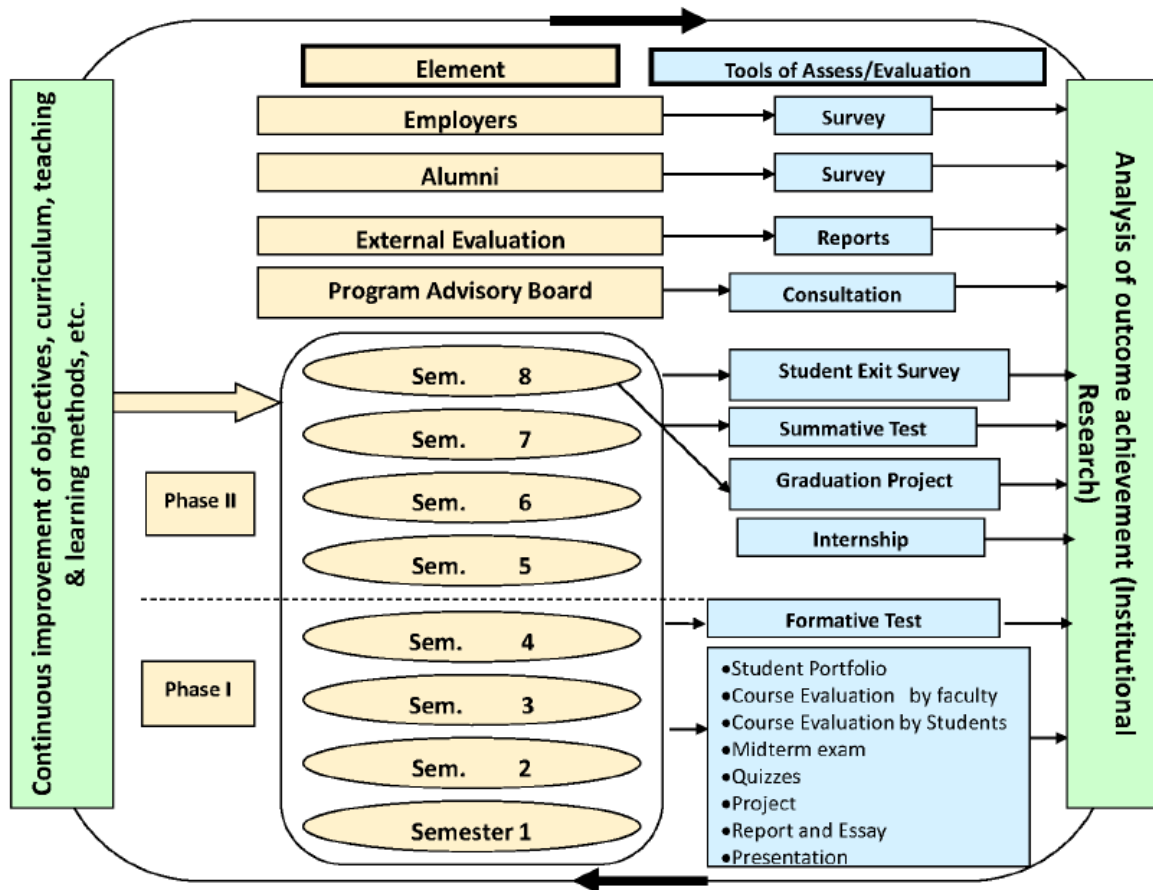
4.6 Quality assurance

Summary

The deanship of quality assurance, institutional effectiveness and accreditation is the central body to coordinate and control all related activities throughout the university. The deanship supervises, assesses and plans issues related to institutional research, institutional effectiveness, accreditation and professional development by dealing, amongst others, with the following responsibilities (SER 1.6.1):

- Coordination and preparation for national and international accreditation,
- design and update evaluation and assessment methods appropriate for each category of programs and verify all development plans,
- ensure that all existing and planned curricula meet the required standards and have well defined outcomes,
- prepare progress reports at all levels and periodically review and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and directions.

The following processes are implemented:



The course instructors/coordinator reflect on the course level data, such as grade distribution, student feedback, faculty feedback as well as performance of teaching and learning to make improvement recommendations for the course. The instructor/coordinator aligns the student assessment findings with the target KPIs for each learning outcome and concludes recommendations for future improvements. The chairperson/program coordinator revise the course e-files, use the recommendations status report and reflect on the program level data such as cohort analyses, grade distribution, student feedback, faculty feedback, advisory board and external evaluator feedback. (SER 1.6.3)

The department of Health Services Administration implements a routine evaluation of the Bachelor study program and its constituent courses. Therefore, the following surveys are used (SER 1.6.2):

- senior exit survey,
- student satisfaction survey,
- fresh students' survey,
- faculty satisfaction survey,

- alumni survey.

Each year, the department collects information on several areas related evaluating the study program, including the following (SER 1.6.4):

- Alumni survey,
- Senior exit survey,
- Employer survey,
- Student evaluation of internship and practicum,
- Follow up of program alumni status.

Concerning the senior exit survey, the six students who participated felt like they need to be more oriented into the practical part of the major and to be more involved in scientific research and community activities. All six students reported that they acquired full knowledge about HSA. Currently, the department has no formal mechanism of alumni survey, but the HSA graduates stay in contact with the faculty for consultations, advice for postgraduate studies and career opportunities advising. (SER 1.6.2)

At the University of Sharjah, different support mechanisms are implemented. The colleges and departments have mechanisms in place to deal with students who are academically at risk. New students are provided with an orientation program, where every student is assigned to an academic advisor. The academic advisor helps with the course selection, academic planning and orientation. The advisors also assist students in making changes to their courses during add/drop periods and may recommend dropping, adding, changing and/or repeating courses. Advisors may discuss special circumstances and personal issues affecting their students and offer guidance. The Department Council also discusses special students' progress issues. Special requests received from students (regarding registration, progress, and special circumstances) are evaluated by the advisor and an appropriate suggestion is made, the requests are then sent through the College to the University's Students Affairs Committee for further evaluation.

In addition, students under probation are assigned academic advisors to follow-up on students' progress during their study in the program, identify problems they could be facing and advise them of ways to rectify such problems. Besides this, the department assigned one senior faculty member over the last four years to

serve as an advisor/mentor for students under academic probation. Furthermore, the deanship of student affairs has the student’s counseling department with the mission of developing the student’s balanced personality at the psychological, social, emotional and mental or skills level (SER 1.6.8).

The actual enrollment statistics can be seen in the following table:

Academic Year	Semester	Available Places	Actual Enrollment
2020/2021	Fall	40	21
	Spring	0	0
2021/2022	Fall	40	25
	Spring	0	0

Judgement

From the experts’ point of view, the University has a well-structured system of quality assurance spread across all of its units. The University has developed and documented a concept of quality assurance in education process, teaching and research, which serves as the basis for the quality-oriented development and implementation of the study program “Health Services Administration”.

The experts were granted access to the electronic administration system of the study programs. Here the feedback loops are closed by presenting evaluation results and action plans. The whole system is designed centrally, but all faculties have access and are obligated to update their own material. The experts are impressed by the wealth and detail of information and reports available there. Nevertheless, the experts recommend checking again where process flows can be streamlined. The staff report that sometimes the same information has to be made available in different formats for different responsibilities, which costs a lot of time. It might also be helpful to have one administrative employee per department who is responsible for keeping the system up to date.

The results of the internal quality assurance management are applied for the continuous development of the study program. In doing so, the University takes into close consideration the quality evaluation results as well as the analyses of students’ workload, their academic accomplishments and feedback from graduates. The experts appreciate that regularly meetings on different levels are held to improve the study programs.

Decision

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

4.7 Gender equality and equal opportunities

Summary

The University of Sharjah admits academically qualified and morally sound students irrespective of their national origin, color, gender, religion or disability. (SER 1.6.9)

At the University of Sharjah, a Disability Resource Center was established in 2013 to assure the service and support for people with disabilities. The Center assumes the responsibility of inclusion, integration and empowerment. To achieve this goal, the Center employs a comprehensive and integrated work system that takes care of people with disabilities from the time of their enrollment in the university until after their graduation. To achieve this goal, the Center has the following duties (SER 1.6.10):

- implement policies, plans and initiatives pertaining to protect the rights of people with disabilities
- achieve the objectives stipulated by the bylaws
- spread the culture of disability inside and outside the community of the university
- open and keep an electronic record including all information about students with disabilities
- provide support and counsel the disabled students
- evaluate the level of the services provided by the center
- receive complaints from people with disabilities and assure their transfer to the different deanships in order for them to take measures
- monitor the academic performance of disabled students and ensure the effectiveness of the learning process
- determine the suitable jobs, help in the job research and measure the effectiveness of their work placement
- establish open channels of communication between the Alumni Association of the university and people with disabilities to provide career counseling and guidance
- organize conferences, seminars and workshops related to the affairs of people with disabilities

The “Health Services Administration” department is inclusive and accepts as well as accommodates all students, unless the disability or chronic illness jeopardizes the clinical practice safety and affects the ability of the student to complete the program requirements.

Judgement

The University demonstrates its commitment to the provision of equal opportunities for all students and shows openness for diversity and social developments.

The experts take positive note of the fact that actual cases of dealing with students with disabilities or chronic illnesses could be named in the discussions. Overall, the experts conclude that the University’s actions on the provision of gender equality and promotion of equal opportunities for students with particular living circumstances are implemented in a transparent manner.

Decision

From the experts’ point of view, the requirements of this criterion are fulfilled.

5 Conclusion

Overall, the experts were impressed and highlight the strong commitment and engagement demonstrated by all levels of the University of Sharjah. The student-centered philosophy of the University is highly appreciated, as students are treated with care and respect. The structure of the Bachelor study program “Health Services Administration” are clear, with a good balance between theoretical, practical, and clinical work. The programs follow both national and international requirements and use modern learning techniques to create a well-rounded curriculum. Although mobility opportunities are available, they are not very frequently used at this time. The University should continue to focus on internationalization and mobility for students and staff. The examination system is well-regulated and fair, with a variety of tools available to assess student progress. The staff is highly qualified and there is a good balance between research and teaching. The quality assurance system in place is robust. Evaluation results are used to make changes, and the monitoring system on the program level is a useful

tool. The University should periodically reevaluate the QA system to make it as lean as possible and retain only essential processes. The institution has non-discriminatory practices in place for admission and promotes gender equality.

Based on the information from written documents and the results of the on-site visit, the experts concluded that the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" offered at the University of Sharjah fulfil the above-described criteria. Hence, the Experts recommended that the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS make a positive decision regarding the accreditation of the study program.

For the continuous development of the study program, the experts have outlined the following recommendations:

- Marketing efforts should to be focused and increased to attract a higher number of high potential students. Additional networking efforts to ensure a higher visibility of the program amongst potential industry partners and as a networking opportunity should be explored. To ensure the graduates attractiveness to potential employers, direct conversations and roundtables with stakeholders could also be helpful.
- The University should continue to focus on internationalization and mobility for student and staff.
- The mentoring and support system for national and non-national students throughout their studies, especially in regards to potential job opportunities should to be reviewed and optimized to ensure swift transitions without knowledge loss.
- The experts recommend that the curricula of the various study programs at the College of Health Sciences should be reviewed in regard to possibilities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
- New courses and certifications that provide the students the necessary skills to effectively manage cost-saving practices, such as Lean Management, Six Sigma certifications etc. should be implemented.
- The experts recommend to intensify the practical experience for students, providing an early and lasting connection between employer, student and University.

- The University should consider examining the students individually in the form of a thesis in order to make it more internationally comparable.
- The University should translate its internal credit hour system into the European Credit Transfer System and attach it as an appendix to the diploma to ensure international compatibility.
- The experts recommend revising the module manual and suggest combining some modules to reduce the number of examinations.
- The experts recommend checking again the electronic quality assurance system regarding to where process flows can be streamlined. It might also be helpful to have one administrative employee per department who is responsible for keeping the system up to date.
- The University should pay for Open Access publication fees.

6 Decision of the accreditation commission

Decision of the accreditation commission of May 4th, 2023

This resolution of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS is based on the application, as well as the expert review and the on-site visit covered in the expert report.

The on-site visit of University of Sharjah took place on January 23 and 24, 2023 according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the "Accreditation Criteria for International Program Accreditation" which have been developed in close accordance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group as well as the response opinion of the University of Sharjah.

The regulated study period in the Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" is four years / eight semesters. The study program requires the obtainment of 134 credit hours (CH) according to the internal credit hour system. The study program consists of 43 courses out of which eight are university requirements, seven are college requirements and 28 are program requirements. The language of instruction is English. The Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" is completed with awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Science". Admissions take place every fall semester. The first batch of students was admitted to the study program in the academic year 1999/2000.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS considers that all Accreditation Criteria are fulfilled and adopts the following decision:

The Bachelor study program "Health Services Administration" is accredited for the duration of five years, until September 30, 2028.

For further development and enhancement of the study program, as well as of the University as a whole, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS supports the recommendation articulated in the expert report.