AQAS

AGENTUR FÜR
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

EXPERTS‘ REPORT

“NURSING” (BACHELOR),
“SPEECH THERAPY” (BACHELOR),
“PHYSIOTHERAPY” (BACHELOR),
“NUTRITION” (BACHELOR),
“OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY”(BACHELOR)
AND
“MIDWIFERY” (BACHELOR)

Universidad San Sebastían (Chile)

August 2021

HEI	**Universidad San Sebastían (Chile)**

Programme	**Nursing**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	306 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Programme	**Speech Therapy**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	300 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Programme	**Physiotherapy**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	301 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Programme	**Nutrition**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	294 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Programme	**Occupational Therapy**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	300 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Programme	**Midwifery**
Degree	**Bachelor**
Extent	303 Sistema de Créditos Transferibles (SCT-Chile)
Length of studies	10 semesters
Language	Spanish

Concept accreditation	☐
First-time international accreditation	☒
No. reaccreditation	

Responsible agency	AQAS e.V.
Responsible consultant(s)	Patrick Heinzer / Ronny Heintze

Content

Decision of the AQAS Commission

on the bachelor programmes

"**Nursing**" (Bachelor),

"**Speech Therapy**" (Bachelor),

"**Physiotherapy**" (Bachelor),

"**Nutrition**" (Bachelor),

"**Occupational Therapy**" (Bachelor)

and

"**Midwifery**" (Bachelor)

offered by

Universidad San Sebastían, Chile

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the AQAS Commission in its 10th meeting on 30 August 2021, the AQAS Commission decides:

1. The study programmes "**Nursing**" **(Bachelor)**, "**Speech Therapy**" **(Bachelor)**, "**Physiotherapy**" **(Bachelor)**, "**Nutrition**" **(Bachelor)**, "**Occupational Therapy**" **(Bachelor)** and "**Midwifery**" **(Bachelor)** offered by **Universidad San Sebastían, Chile** are accredited according to the AQAS criteria for Programme Accreditation.

   The accreditations are conditional.

   The study programmes essentially comply with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 September 2022**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.

3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2027**.

Conditions:

For all programmes:

1. The internships taken in semesters 9 and 10 require more explicitly defined intended learning outcomes.

2. A document (e.g. Diploma Supplement) for graduates has to be drafted explaining the position of the awarded degree in the Chilean higher education system and the academic degree structure in Chile. This will facilitate graduate mobility and help USS to further develop international cooperation and recognition procedures.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programmes:

For all programmes:

1. Although the nature of the basic science courses strives to level up the knowledge of the students, it might be wise to include programme specific links to the respective disciplines. This also might create synergies for interdisciplinary work of the health-related programmes.
2. English competencies should be strengthened in students and teaching staff in order to enhance their participation in international research activities beyond Spanish-speaking countries.
3. The verification of student workload should follow a more systematic approach. This will allow the programme management of the study programmes easier adjustment within the respective programmes.
4. To close the PDCA cycle, the results and changes for all programmes should be communicated to students and other relevant stakeholders in a systematic manner.
5. To foster international exchanges and smoothen recognition processes, learning agreements should be systematically developed with international partner universities.

Additional for “Nursing”, “Speech Therapy” and “Occupational Therapy”:

6. It should be assured that all course descriptions for the Nursing, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy programmes include a differentiation between theoretical components and practical components (with a clear differentiation concerning the workload for students) within the courses.

Additional for “Physiotherapy” and “Occupational Therapy”:

7. In the Physiotherapy and the Occupational Therapy programme the intended learning outcomes should differentiate multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary aspects of the courses.

Additional for “Occupational Therapy”:

8. The assessment methods for the Occupational Therapy programme should include objective structured clinical examinations to strengthen the assessment of practical competencies.
9. An extension of full-time occupational Therapy staff might be wise to implement a sustainable further development of the programme.
10. More support and resources should be given to enhance research and publication activities within the department of Occupational Therapy.

Additional for “Speech Therapy”:

11. A clearer demarcation between the four therapy fields (voice, speech, language, and audiology) in the Speech Therapy programme would give students a better overview and would enhance them to choose their specialisations.
12. More speech therapy-related research topics should focus on community outreach projects. This will support the connection between the community and the university.

Additional for “Midwifery”:

13. The Midwifery programme should encompass e.g. international health/midwifery care developments or palliative care of critically ill children and/or women in the further development of the programme.
14. A shift from the current multidisciplinary to an interdisciplinary approach might create a stronger cooperation between the Midwifery programme and other relevant disciplines, such as Nursing, Physiotherapy or Medicine.
15. It might be wise to focus more on a needs-oriented research in the Midwifery programme according to locally specific target populations.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

EXPERTS' REPORT

ON THE BACHELOR PROGRAMMES

NURSING (BACHELOR)

SPEECH THERAPY (BACHELOR)

PHYSIOTHERAPY (BACHELOR)

NUTRITION (BACHELOR)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (BACHELOR)

MIDWIFERY (BACHELOR)

OFFERED BY UNIVERSIDAD SAN SEBASTÍAN (CHILE)

Visit to the university: 25 – 28 May 2021

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. Laura Beatriz López	University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), Faculty of Medicine, School for Nutrition
Prof. Dr. Anke Helmbold	Catholic University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Department of Health Sciences
Prof. Dr. Elke Kraus	Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Professor for Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy,
Prof. Dr. Natalia Jimeno Bulnes	University of Valladolid (Spain), Faculty of Medicine
Prof. Dr. Babette Müller-Rockstroh	University of Applied Sciences Fulda (Germany), Department for Nursing and Health Sciences
Dr. Sonia Schiess	Self-employed Dietitian and Nutritionist PhD, Munich (Germany)/Santiago de Chile (Chile) (Labour market representative)
Damon Mohebbi	Student "Medicine" (University of Düsseldorf) and "International Health and Development Studies" (University College London) (student representative)

Coordinator:

Patrick Heinzer & Ronny Heintze	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

II. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 member institutions, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and pro-grammes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of both academic studies and teaching in Higher Education Institutions. The activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither restrained to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of Higher Education Institution.

III. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the bachelor programmes in "Nursing", "Speech Therapy", "Physiotherapy", "Nutrition", "Occupational Therapy", and "Midwifery" offered by Universidad San Sebastían (Chile).

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against a set of criteria for programme accreditation developed by AQAS. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015. To facilitate the review, each criterion features a set of indicators that can demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria. However, if single indicators are not fulfilled, this does not automatically mean that a criterion is not met. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of the programme since not all indicators necessarily can be applied to a programme.

2. Approach and methodology

The initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in 2019.

The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In 2021, the institution handed in a draft of the SER and the relevant documentation of the study programme and an appendix and statistical data on the programme. The appendix included e.g.:

- Overview of statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student drop-outs),
- CVs of the teaching staff
- Information on student services
- Core information on the main library
- Undergraduate/graduate academic regulations

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility and transparency. The final version of the SER was handed in in January 2021.

The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission in May 2020.

The nomination of the panel of expert

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective discipline/s, the labour market and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows principles for selecting experts of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

The Standing Commission nominated in December 2020 the before mentioned expert panel. AQAS informed the university about the expert panel members, and the Universidad San Sebastían (Chile) did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

The preparation of the site visit

Before the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement, including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university and the panel members to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

The site visit

After reviewing the Self Evaluation Report, a site visit to the university took place from 25 – 28 May 2021. The experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the HEI, the programme management, teaching and other staff, and students and graduates, in separate discussions and consulted additional documentation and student work. The visit concluded by presenting the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

The report writing

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS criteria for the programme accreditation. The report included a recommendation to the Standing Commission. The report was sent to the Universidad San Sebastían (Chile) for comments.

The decision

Together with the department's comments, the report forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to decide on the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, on 30 August 2021 the Standing Commission decided on the accreditation. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In October 2021, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation and the names of the panel of experts.

IV. General Information on the University

Universidad San Sebastián (USS) was founded in 1989 and is a private institution. According to the self-evaluation report (SER), the strategic guidelines of USS emphasise: ensuring comprehensive development of the educational process focused on learning; continued advancement from a mainly teaching organisation towards an organisation more developed in research; upholding internal quality criteria and consistency with requirements of the external regulatory framework; maintaining the financial and economic sustainability of USS, and consolidating its position within the Chilean higher education.

USS operates with four branches in the cities of Concepción, Santiago (two campuses), Puerto Montt, and Valdivia. It is organised in eleven Faculties and administrative units to support students and faculty members. The educational offering currently comprises of 46 undergraduate programmes, 27 Masters', two Doctorates, seven medical specialties, seven dental specialties, and 19 continuing education offers (called Diploma courses).

As of June 2020, there were 34,994 students enrolled at USS (87% undergraduate; 13% graduate). As outlined in the SER, the number of postgraduate students has progressively increased since 2015. At the same time, there is a teaching staff of 6,111 faculty members, of which 1/7 is called regular staff with open-ended contracts (usually full-time) and 6/7 part-time, contracted for teaching services and student support, called adjunct staff. The functions of the academic body focus primarily on teaching and substantively on collaborative activities in the community. In addition, regular faculty members are increasingly encouraged to increase their research activities. USS also describes that it has progressed in the area of interaction with society. Since 2016 projects with various community sectors increased to over 100 collaborative projects in the sphere of education, production, culture, or services.

The study programmes to be accredited are located at the faculty of health sciences (Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy), the faculty of healthcare sciences (nursing, and nutrition), and the faculty of medicine and sciences (Midwifery). USS declares that the focus of the faculties is on the undergraduate and graduate programmes, the continuous development of teaching staff, the implementation of continuous education, and the inclusion of research and community outreach projects into the programmes. All study programmes are offered at all branches (Santiago de Chile, Concepción, Valdivia, and Puerto Montt).

When handing in the self-evaluation report, a total of 1,645 students were enrolled in the six programmes. The breakdown for each programme reads as 155 students (Speech Therapy), 252 students (Physiotherapy), 232 (Occupational Therapy), 470 students (Nursing), 296 students (Midwifery), and 240 students (Nutrition).

V. Assessment of the study programme(s)

1. Quality of the Curriculum

Bachelor/Master Degree
The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. *The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.* *The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.* *The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.* *[ESG 1.2]*

Description

1.1 General aspects that apply to all study programmes

Following the Chilean Higher Education regulations, USS offers study programmes combined with the right to practice the respective profession (*título profesional*). The structure of these study programmes usually last between five and seven years, and awards in most cases after the fourth year a bachelor's degree

(*licenciatura*). The professional degree (*título profesional*) requires one or more internships or supervised field internships and, in some cases, additional requirements such as thesis work, research projects or speciality seminars. The license degree and/or the professional degree allows students to continue onto a graduate programme (Master, Doctorate) and Medical or Dental Specialisation.

As typical for Chilean higher education institutions, USS uses so-called graduation profiles (*perfil de egreso*) to determine the intended learning outcomes (ILO) on the programme level. These graduation profiles are translated to expected performances that describe the ILOs on the course level. Furthermore, the curricula are organised in different educational areas (basic sciences, professional/subject-specific, and integral/crosscutting courses).

The general structure of all study programmes subject to the procedure comprises: a) basic science courses, b) subject-specific courses, and c) crosscutting courses. These courses of the curricula characterise the bachelor's degree. The professional degree of the respective discipline will be added to the curricula in the ninth and tenth semesters, which aim to provide a professional experience with internships in different fields. Although the bachelor's degree does not foresee a final exam, the study programme ends after the tenth semester with the final exam (*título de examen*), which allows students to hold the professional degree after passing.

Whereas basic science courses and subject-specific courses are more in line with the respective study programme, crosscutting courses are elective courses that several different departments of USS offer. Being part of the USS' educational project, these courses mainly cover topics that are not directly linked to the study programme but are seen as beneficial. The pool of courses covers courses such as ethics or anthropology. Curricular changes are recorded in a log directory (*directorios de registro*).

1.2 Nursing (Bachelor)

Description

Based on the graduation profile, graduates are expected to have multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral knowledge concerning preventing and caring for health issues in different types of medical institutions/settings (emerging and prevalent, individual and collective). Ethical and legal principles and public health policies, and nursing sciences are aspects that USS states are made known by the curriculum. Additionally, the curriculum aims to cover aspects of integral nursing care considering different cultural contexts. On the soft skills side of the curriculum, the SER outlines that the curriculum aims towards a humanist and responsible approach with entrepreneurship, leadership skills, and self-management skills.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 51 subjects and comprises a total of 306 Chilean transferable credits (*Sistema de Créditos* Transferibles; SCT). As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated in 54 SCT (16 subjects) of basic sciences, 236 SCT (31 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and 16 SCT of crosscutting subjects (four subjects). Consequently, the SER indicates a ratio concerning the educational areas of 18 % of basic sciences, 77 % field-specific subjects, and 5 % crosscutting subjects.

Basic science courses are carried out within the first year and cover human anatomy, human physiology, general and organic chemistry, and general biochemistry. These courses are provided by the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, and the Department of Mathematics and Biostatistics.

The field-specific subjects (carried out as theoretical and practical courses) start in the third semester and cover courses such as nursing of the vital cycle, mental health nursing, caring for the elderly, or community health I+II.

It is indicated that students will receive a bachelor's degree in nursing (*licenciatura*) after eight semesters. Within semester nine and ten, students will take two internships.

Based on the SER, the faculty updates the curriculum using sectoral councils, including external public and private institutions, the Chilean Association of Nursing Schools, and graduates who already have some working experiences as clinical tutors.

Experts' Evaluation

The bachelor programme "Nursing" shows transparent and well-documented intended learning outcomes, including subject-specific and interdisciplinary components. Overall, it is a well-founded and methodologically sensibly structured programme that meets the required standard. As interdisciplinary elements of the study programme, the participation in interdisciplinary courses, simulations, and community outreach projects are noteworthy and sometimes performed with the participation of several professional groups. Moreover, interdisciplinary work, e.g., teamwork, is addressed in the curriculum's structure. It became evident during the site visit that the programme currently fulfils the requirement of integrating interdisciplinary aspects in the curriculum. However, in the view of the expert's panel, a stronger focus still on interdisciplinary work is recommended (**Finding 1**). Although it became evident that the nature of the basic science courses at the beginning of the curriculum strives to level up students' knowledge, it might be wise to include programme specific links to the respective discipline. This will allow the health-related programmes to focus even more on interdisciplinary cooperation and might create synergies. One way to start cooperating might be to offer joint courses of the health-related programmes in the first semester(s). In the long run, this interrelation could also be used for the external presentation of the respective programmes.

The programme's curriculum is consistent with the training objectives in the "European Community White Paper". Essential are the processes for ensuring the relevance of the graduation profile. This regularly includes graduates and representatives from the labour market. Updates are made regularly and are well documented. Modifications to the programme were performed in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2019. The changes are transparently documented. As a result, the programme has a clear link to the national qualifications framework for bachelor programmes and is comparable to the European Qualifications Framework on the bachelor's level.

All the elements in the curriculum, the structure of the study programme and the required subdivisions are clearly described. This also includes the designation of elective and required subjects and the assignment of credits. The course overview and the "Curriculum Chart" show the content and the sequence of the courses. These cover the required areas of knowledge and take place course-dependently for various study programmes or programme-specifically. One of the programme's strong points is the clear connection to practical elements with the so-called clinical simulation as a significant asset of USS.

Nonetheless, it became evident that practical elements such as simulations and internships are also integrated into other courses than, for instance, only in the internships in semesters nine and ten. This structure serves to link increasingly complex learning objectives to the courses and is considered very useful. To make the structure more transparent, the specific elements of the courses should be more clearly identified (**see Finding 16**). In addition, the intended learning outcomes for the internships in semesters nine and ten need to be defined more explicitly. This will enable the programme to differentiate between the short internships/practical element within the courses and the block internships in semesters nine and ten (**Finding 2**).

Particularly noteworthy here are the community outreach projects and the integration of simulations at a high level. The programme has a strong link to Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America and Europe, which is logical. However, in the view of the expert's panel, research is of great importance for the discipline. In order to enhance the participation in international research activities beyond the Spanish speaking countries, English competencies should be strengthened in teaching staff and students (**Finding 3**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

1.3 Speech Therapy (Bachelor)

Description

USS indicated that the graduation profile includes knowledge on prevention, diagnosis, and therapeutical applications to enable or rehabilitate human communication. Graduates of this programme should have theoretical and practical knowledge in audiology, vestibular system, voice, speech and language, and orofacial movement. Furthermore, the curriculum enables students after completing the study programme to make interdisciplinary proposals and research projects to solve communication issues, balance, and human swallowing effectively.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 64 subjects, four mandatory internships, and comprises a total of 278 SCT. As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated in 74 SCT (18 subjects) of basic sciences, 196 SCT (42 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and eight SCT of crosscutting subjects (four subjects). Consequently, the SER indicates a ratio concerning the educational areas of 28 % of basic sciences, 66 % of field-specific subjects, and 6 % crosscutting subjects.

Basic science courses are carried out within the first year and cover mathematics, human anatomy, cell biology, and human embryology. These courses are provided by the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences and the Department of Mathematics and Biostatistics.

The field-specific subjects start in the third semester cover courses such as general linguistics, communication development, phonetics and phonology, or evaluation and intervention of language and speech of children and adults I+II.

It is indicated that students will receive a bachelor's degree in Speech Therapy (*licenciatura*) after eight semesters. Within semesters nine and ten, students will take four clinical internships in the specialised areas of children, adults, voice and audiology.

In order to update the curriculum regularly, the faculty indicates to use on national level documents of the Chilean College of Speech Therapists and the interaction with academics from Chilean universities during the national conference for Speech Therapy. On an international level, the faculty uses the conclusions of the comparative analysis of the professional training of speech therapists at national and Latin American institutions or the curricular guidelines of the bachelor's degree in Speech Therapy of the Brazilian federal council.

Experts' Evaluation

The curriculum is based on a graduation profile that is, being typical at USS, constantly updated to the labour market requirements and academia. During the site visit, the panel of experts found out that a strong relationship between the USS and the labour market supports this constant process. Curriculum updates were made relatively recently (2013, 2016, 2018) and consider international and external references, collegiate bodies and academics from other universities, institutions, and employers. Starting with basic science courses in the first two semesters, which strive to create a bridge between high school and university, the programme offers a clear structure that supports the learner's progression. However, the panel believes that these courses at the beginning might benefit from becoming more interdisciplinary, thereby connecting the health science programmes more together (**see Finding 1**).

In general, the intended learning outcomes on programme level cover four different areas of performance (education, health, management, and research). The intended learning outcomes are subject-specific, interdisciplinary, and transparently outlined. They also cover methodological and general skills. From a European perspective interesting is that the intended learning outcomes on the programme follow the cognitive, attitudinal, and skills model. The panel of experts commends this model because of the vital role of humanisation in

healthcare which employers very well consider. The intended learning outcomes include the diagnosis and rehabilitation of human communication disorders (speech, language, voice, and hearing), vestibular system and orofacial motricity. This means that the intended learning outcomes of the programme include both audiology and speech-language pathology, which is in Europe typically more separated. However, the programme manages to include both in a good way. The ILOs cover new developments in Speech Therapy, including Aquatic Therapy, auditory assessment in neonates, Speech Therapy for senior adults, and prevention of voice disorders in voice professionals (e.g. singers) or the general population.

The programme is comparable to the bachelor's level according to the European Qualifications Framework. As mentioned above, the USS graduation profile includes the European graduation profiles of both Audiologist and Speech-language Pathologist. This fact explains satisfactorily the longer duration of the USS programme when compared with European degrees.

The programme structure includes the *licenciatura* degree and the professional degree, enabling graduates to work as speech therapists, as defined in Chilean law. Thus, the programme's structure includes all subjects-specific academic courses within the first eight semesters, and two professional internships in semester nine and semester ten. However, the internships should be described in a more elaborated way, as already mentioned above (**see Finding 2**). This might clarify the content of these internships and might lead to a sharpened profile for the programme. The final degree examination covers a task where students must resolve an integrated clinical case related to at least three speech therapy fields (voice, speech, language, and audiology).

In general, the programme's structure is well defined, including the main content of the courses and the credit numbers and workload indicated. The institutional model strives to integrate practical elements in all subjects. However, the proportion of theoretical and practical components within each course is currently not described (**see Finding 16**). In addition, it might be helpful if the curriculum overview differentiates between the four fields explicitly, in case the programme management decides to establish additional elective courses (e.g. sign language courses from the Physiotherapy programme) (**Finding 4**).

The learner's progression for the programme follows a step model including theoretical knowledge, the acquirement of practical experience during the clinical simulation under a controlled environment, and actual clinical practice under supervision or tuition. This is also fostered by observation components or community outreach projects. Two integrative assessment milestones particularly monitor the learner's progression: Clinical Practicum final examinations and, for some subjects and courses, the Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE).

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

1.4 Physiotherapy (Bachelor)

Description

As outlined in the SER, graduates of the Physiotherapy study programme are expected to be able to assess, diagnose and implement physiotherapeutic treatments that focuses on the science of movement and helps people to restore, maintain and maximize their physical strength, function, motion and overall well-being by addressing the underlying physical issues. The programme aims to promote, prevent, and recover people's health following ethical principles and respect socio-cultural diversity. Besides, graduates will be enabled to carry out projects and research, which shall be beneficial for society. To foster disciplinary conceptualisation, the curriculum includes basic sciences and aims to stimulate students towards self-management.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 63 subjects and six mandatory internships and comprises a total of 301 SCT. As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated in 51 SCT (15 subjects) of basic sciences, 242 SCT (44 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and eight SCT of crosscutting subjects (four subjects). In consequence, the SER indicates a ratio concerning the educational areas of 16.9 % of basic sciences, 80.3 % of field-specific subjects, and 2.6 % interprofessional subjects.

Basic science courses are carried out within the first year and cover mathematics, chemistry, biochemistry, and psychology. These courses are provided by the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, and the Department of Mathematics and Biostatistics.

Within the field-specific subjects, the curriculum focuses on musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardio-respiratory areas taught as theoretical and practical courses. The field-specific subjects start in the third semester and cover courses such as movement analysis I and II, neurological dysfunction, ergonomics, or cardio-respiratory kinesiological intervention I+II+III.

Students recieve a bachelor's degree in physiotherapy (*licenciatura*) after eight semesters. Within semesters nine and ten, students will take two internships per specialised area (musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardio-respiratory).

As a key principle of USS's mechanisms to ensure that curricula are up to date, the SER stipulates that reference is made to several national and international frameworks. These references include the Chilean College of Physiotherapists, the national strategy of the Chilean Ministry of Health, documents provided by the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT) and the South America Region of the WCPT, and a white paper for the degree in physiotherapy provided by the network of Spanish universities (2004). In addition, it is stated that the curriculum might be updated through the labour market participation in the sectoral faculty council, visiting professors, or community projects.

Experts' Evaluation

The curriculum structure focuses on basic sciences courses in the first two semesters to ensure that students acquire the adequate basic skills that bridge the gap between high school and university, which were explained as a level up of students after high school. There is a great potential for interdisciplinary work which does not seem to be fully developed yet. For example, programme specific links to the respective disciplines could be included, creating synergies for interdisciplinary work. Due to that trans-, inter- and multidisciplinary potential of the bachelor programme in Physiotherapy with other health sciences related programmes, it might be beneficial for the programme to integrate interdisciplinary courses for health sciences programmes at the beginning and to ensure more interdisciplinary discourses within and across subjects (**see Finding 1**).

Following the national prerequisite, the programme has a defined length of ten semesters and consists of an academic degree (*licenciatura*; after eight semesters) and a professional degree. The academic degree corresponds to the national qualifications framework. During semesters nine and ten, internships are integrated into the curriculum. In comparison to the documentation within the first eight semesters, outlining the intended learning outcomes for the internships needs to be done more explicitly to differentiate between the practical components done during the courses and the actual internships (**see Finding 2**). After eight semesters, students write a bachelor thesis and a final theoretical and practical examination at the end of the programme. The panel of experts welcomes this combination since it demonstrates, on the one hand, the academic degree, and on the other, the professional expertise of students. Although this constellation is somewhat complex, it makes it comparable to other 6-8-semester long international bachelor's degrees of physiotherapy.

The programme's intended learning outcomes (based on a graduation profile) and course level are transparently described and consist of subject-specific components. They are published in the respective handbooks and on the learning platform for the programme as for all programmes in this cluster. Based on the discussions

during the virtual site visit, the panel of experts concludes that the latest developments in the field seem to be considered, including vivid interaction with the local labour market, which plays an important role. However, especially for physiotherapy as a profession that is an integral part of an interdisciplinary health care team, the interdisciplinary learning outcomes should be formulated more specifically, for example by differentiating them into multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary aspects (**Finding 5**).

Furthermore, English competencies of students and teaching staff should be fostered, thereby strengthening necessary competencies to better connect international and Spanish research. It is commendable that English has already been introduced as a subject, but this could be further enhanced if English could be integrated into some of the other subjects (**see Finding 3**).

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

1.5 Nutrition (Bachelor)

Description

USS defined the graduation profile for the study programme as having sound knowledge in food sciences, human nutrition, and community health management. Graduates are supposed to have competencies and skills that enable them to identify and resolve nutritional food issues in the community. They shall have an awareness of food and nutrition needs in Chile and beyond. They can actively address strategies to address issues appropriately.

Graduates might enter the labour market in different fields, such as public and private health institutions, food industries, public policy planning and implementation agencies, or research centres.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 57 subjects, six mandatory internships and comprises a total of 294 SCT. As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated in 34 SCT (ten subjects) of basic sciences, 236 SCT (40 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and 24 SCT of crosscutting subjects (seven subjects). Consequently, the SER indicates a ratio concerning the educational areas of 12 % of basic sciences, 80 % of field-specific subjects, and 8 % of crosscutting subjects.

As indicated, basic science courses of this study programme cover a set of courses that aim to lay a basic knowledge concerning body structures and functions, e.g. cellular biology, general biochemistry, human anatomy, and also includes courses like mathematics and biostatistics.

Theoretical and practical courses related to the discipline include basic nutrition I+II, nutrition pharmacology, food management I+II, or food safety and other courses which covers four main areas of professional performances: diet management, clinic, community health and research.

It is indicated that students will receive a bachelor's degree (*licenciatura*) after eight semesters. Within semesters nine and ten, students will take six internships where students qualify for the professional degree.

As outlined in the SER, the faculty considers essential competencies for the graduation of nutritionists by the Chilean College of Nutritionists, state of the art of training offerings in Chile, or annual circular harmonisation meetings to update the curriculum regularly.

Experts' Evaluation

Based on the graduation profile for the bachelor programme "Nutrition", USS has composed a curriculum that has a good and comprehensive structure. The graduation profile is constantly updated, and the updates closely follow the latest developments in the discipline. Training domains are stated according to international

guidance, based in scientific and evidence base of practice, health care professionalism in clinical and community fields, and food management at individual and institution level. The mix of theoretical aspects and its combination of practical components is very fruitful for graduates and highly appreciated by the labour market. It became clear that the composition of the study programme (combining the *licenciatura* after four years and the professional degree to work as nationally recognised nutritionists) is structured so that the graduation profile and the actual skills and knowledge of graduates have a precise match. The intended learning outcomes are demonstrated on the one hand during the courses and internships, but especially in the final thesis for the programme. The internships, being an essential character of the study programme, focus on food management, clinical professional and community health professional and the examination of these examinations cover cognitive, procedural and attitude skills, which are much appreciated by the labour market. Nonetheless, the intended learning outcomes and the content of these internships should be outlined in a more detailed way. Especially crosscutting competencies should be strengthened (**see Finding 2**).

The curriculum covers subject-specific courses (such as nutritional assessment, food sciences, basic nutrition) and cross-subject knowledge (psychoeducational learning, ethics, as well subject-related (public health, epidemiology) and methodological courses (biostatistics, research methodology)). Furthermore, students will learn general skills in courses such as oral and written expression or leadership courses. English competencies are also included in the curriculum (to analyse and interpret scientific articles), which supports one of the aspirations of USS to better connect to the non-Spanish speaking research. In comparison to the other programmes, this programme has already implemented more strategies to foster English competencies within the curriculum.

At the beginning of their studies, students will take basic sciences courses to create a bridge between high school and university. The rationale behind this has become clear to the panel of experts. However, the panel of experts believe that there is a vast potential that these courses could have a more inter-, trans- and multidisciplinary approach (**see Finding 1**).

The courses' documentation and functions are clear and give a clear overview of what happens when. The order of the curricular elements supports the learner's progression. The overview and the typical study plan differentiate between compulsory and elective courses (a pool of integral education courses). The integral education courses also include entrepreneurship, project development, leadership, and social responsibility, which is a big plus for the programme. Curricular modifications are documented, and the panel of experts had insights concerning the further development and adjustments to the curriculum. This overview of the courses includes, in addition, a clear indication of the workload for each course.

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

1.6 Occupational Therapy (Bachelor)

Description

USS defines occupational therapy as being based on engagement in meaningful activities of daily life (such as self-care skills, education, work, or social interaction) especially to enable or encourage participation in such activities despite impairments or limitations in physical or mental functioning. Graduates of this study programme strive to acquire the necessary competencies to assess patients and formulate make assessments relating to the person and his/her abilities, in the context of the specific environment and situation. The university outlines that the formulation and implementation of relevant and efficient therapeutic interventions and the promotion of autonomy and independence of individuals are key learning outcomes of the study programme.

The curriculum aims to provide students with knowledge on how to consider socio-cultural diversity responsibly.

USS indicates that common practice areas of occupational therapists are the healthcare sector, the education sector, or the social-community sector. Thus, graduates can work in relevant positions such as healthcare agencies, educational institutions with programmes for integration, nursery schools, or centres for inclusion in employment.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 56 subjects and six mandatory internships and comprises a total of 300 SCT. As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated into 24 SCT (seven subjects) of basic sciences, 268 SCT (45 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and eight SCT of crosscutting subjects (four subjects). Consequently, the SER indicates a ratio concerning the educational areas of 8 % basic sciences, 89 % field-specific subjects, and 3 % interdisciplinary subjects.

As indicated, basic science courses of this study programme cover a set of courses that aim to lay a basic knowledge concerning body structures and functions, e.g. human anatomy, biostatistics, and general psychology.

Within the profession-specific subjects, the curriculum focuses on students learning about personal and environmental factors on occupational performance. These theoretical and practical courses cover topics such as pathology I+II, paediatrics, psychosocial occupational Therapy I+II, or occupational Therapy for children and adolescents I+II.

Students receive a bachelor's degree in occupational Therapy (*licenciado*) after eight semesters. Within semesters nine and ten, students will take four internships to qualify for a professional degree (*título profesional*).

Based on the USS' mechanisms to ensure a continuous updating of the curriculum and related topics, the SER reports that the occupational Therapy department regularly considers guidelines and requirements provided by the Chilean College of Occupational Therapists and the network of Chilean occupational Therapy schools on a national level. In addition, the faculty considers the recommendations by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT).

Experts' Evaluation

The curriculum is built on a graduation profile, including guidelines and requirements of the Chilean Occupational Therapy Schools and the national requirements coming from the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, the graduation profile integrates the recommendations by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists. Based on these national and international requirements and recommendations, the programme is solid and is orientated towards the labour market requirements. The integration of an academic degree (*licenciatura*) after four years and the professional degree, which allow graduates to work in the field, appears to meet the need and requirements. The curriculum consists of three training areas (basic sciences, discipline-related, and crosscutting interdisciplinary courses) with a significant focus on discipline-related courses. There is a strong medical/science focus in the first two semesters. Whilst this is not specific to occupational Therapy, it bridges possible educational gaps and forms the basis for scientific thinking. Concerning these basic sciences courses, the panel of experts sees the potential of a stronger focus on inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary approaches within the health-related programmes (**see Finding 1**). The university could thereby strengthen its health programmes by taking into account the strong trend of this interrelated focus. There is a great potential for interdisciplinary work which does not seem to be fully developed. For example, programme specific links to the respective disciplines could be included, thereby creating synergies for interdisciplinary work. The learning outcomes are based on the graduation profile are subject-specific as well as interdisciplinary, but this needs to be substantiated more (**see Finding 5**).

In year five, students have compulsory internships, which are very valuable for the students. A particular asset at USS is the so-called clinical simulation, a feature where students learn clinical behaviour and environment in a mock-up hospital. Based on these experiences, students are able to build on it with more detailed internships in real case scenarios. Students are closely monitored by experts, creating added value of the programme. Besides this practical component in the curriculum, students encounter theoretical and practical components in most of the courses during their studies. However, the link between theory and practice could be more differentiated in the course descriptions (**see Finding 16**), and the internship descriptions for the last year could also be more explicit (**see Finding 2**). Summarising the curriculum for the programme, it became evident that the academic degree corresponds to the intended learning outcomes and the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework and the national qualifications framework. After four years, students have to write a bachelor's thesis to receive the *licenciatura* and a final theoretical and practical examination after ten semesters. Acknowledging the complexity of the Chilean system, this structure allows comparability with international bachelor's degrees, which are six to eight semesters. There is a clear progression of students visible throughout the programme.

The programme management demonstrated a well-structured and very comprehensive documentation of the occupational Therapy programme. All elements are documented, and a clear overview was provided on how the programme has been further developed in the last years. This documentation is available to students on the respective platforms and as hard copy versions in handbooks. The documentation differentiates between compulsory and elective courses, enabling students to adjust their study plans according to their own needs.

Apart from the clinical simulation asset of USS, the programme has a strong link to the community, which is very valuable for the society and also for students. The community outreach projects lead to clear research lines, which are valuable for the Chilean context and might be interesting for a more global audience. This current gap between local research projects and the more English focused scientific community might be impeded by insufficient communication in the long run. Thus, it is recommended to build English competencies for both teaching staff and students (**see Finding 3**). This might also lead to a broader audience for the community outreach projects and allow more structured participation in international research activities beyond Spanish speaking countries.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

1.6 Midwifery (Bachelor)

Description

The graduation profile indicated in the SER aims towards four areas: care, leadership and management, education and community work, and research. The curriculum aims to impart knowledge to intervene or support the promotion, prevention, cure, and rehabilitation of women's health. The study programme’s multidisciplinary approach includes expertise in midwifery, neonatology, sexual and reproductive health, gynaecology, epidemiology, and public health management. Graduates shall be equipped with knowledge of the demands and requirements of the social reality in primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare in the public and private health system. Furthermore, the curriculum aims to convey soft skills, such as the capacity for leadership, communication, management, and integration.

The curricular structure of the programme foresees a total of 73 subjects, seven mandatory internships and comprises a total of 303 SCT. As outlined above, the curriculum is differentiated into 55 SCT (17 subjects) of basic sciences, 228 SCT (51 subjects) of professional/field-specific subjects, and twenty SCT of crosscutting

subjects (five subjects). Basic science courses are carried out within the first year and cover subjects such as general and organic chemistry, human physiology, general histology, and human anatomy. These courses are provided by the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, and the Department of Mathematics and Biostatistics.

The field-specific subjects start in the third semester cover courses such as sexology I+II, gynaecology I+II, public health I+II, family health, and Midwifery I+II.

It is indicated that students will receive a pre-diploma in reproductive health after four semesters, a bachelor in midwifery (*licenciatura*) after eight semesters. Within semesters nine and ten, students will take seven clinical internships. Upon completion, students will receive a professional degree in midwifery.

In order to maintain an up-to-date curriculum, the faculty has implemented several instances for monitoring the programme. These instances include a faculty council, a programme committee, academic communities, branch team coordinators and the supervision/coordination of the clinical fields/clinical simulations.

Experts' Evaluation

The midwifery programme is a thoroughly planned comprehensive programme covering a woman's life cycle, thus challenging midwifery competencies in the entire field of sexual and reproductive health. It thus follows midwifery competencies as proposed by the International Midwifery Confederation, picking up ICM's definition of competence as "the combination of knowledge, psychomotor, communication, and decision-making skills that enable an individual to perform a specific task to a defined level of proficiency". The programme's curriculum clearly demonstrates the bachelor's level following the national qualifications framework and is comparable to the European Qualifications Framework.

The overall programme quality is predominantly very good. All curricular elements, as well as their functions, are documented. Methodological and didactic elements are clearly stated and demonstrate USS's high level of teaching/learning know-how. The progressive build-up of course contents and competencies throughout the course programme is easily comprehensible. The curricular structure of the study programme supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The order of curricular elements supports the learner's progression from novice to becoming a reflective/ reflexive practitioner able to both practice on high-quality levels in the hospital and community and shine as a strong advocate for women's rights in health care at a political/professional level. However, although the nature of the basic science courses strives to level up students' knowledge, it is recommended to include programme specific links to the respective disciplines, here to midwifery. This also might create synergies for interdisciplinary work between students of different courses, thus forming a basis for future interdisciplinary understanding and interprofessional teamwork (**see Finding 1**).

Both in the text and table, elements and courses used by other programmes – thus forming the basis of synergic efforts and potential interdisciplinary contact and debate among students – are clearly described. Courses and elements specific to the midwifery course programme are also clearly shown. Specific discipline-related course modules are clearly separated in structure yet also demonstrate their interconnection content-wise. However, while the curriculum covers subject-specific and cross-subject knowledge and subject-related, methodological, and general skills, the cross-subject knowledge and intended learning outcomes aiming at interdisciplinary and interprofessional teamwork are not documented well on the level of the intended learning outcomes. It instead seems as if the programme rests on the level of multidisciplinary (e.g. synergic share of basic scientific modules) understanding rather than shifting from to an interdisciplinary approach in order to create stronger cooperation between relevant disciplines, such as nursing, physiotherapy or medicine (**Finding 7**).

All theoretical courses clearly present desired qualifications as intended learning outcomes of the module, thus allowing students to know what is expected. Intended learning outcomes are formulated concerning subject-

specificity as well as to interdisciplinary nature. Internships, however, should have more explicitly defined learning outcomes if students and practitioners are to know and able to practice what is required and desired as learning outcomes of the respective internship and to link the acquired theoretical knowledge with situated practice. It is recommended that learning outcomes be formulated more clearly to guide both students and lecturers to what is to be learnt in practice to provide the best theory-practice transfer possible (**see Finding 2**).

Regarding profile-specific qualifications, it is further recommended that the campuses offering the midwifery course programme consider more closely needs-oriented research based on locally specific target populations. This could offer a specialisation of midwifery course programmes, distinguish the campuses and programmes from each other while at the same time providing each campus with a certain expertise in health care research (**Finding 8**).

There is an idealised typical course plan available. Here it is clearly shown that the curriculum to be accredited consists of both compulsory as well as elective modules. Both types of modules are clearly defined. While the compulsory modules consist of all basic and advanced clinical courses, elective modules allow further specialisation within specific fields of interest yet keep a tangible link to high-quality clinical practice.

The choice of elective modules is comprehensible and sufficient. For further curricular development, it might be helpful to remain open to allow adaptations or extensions of elective modules to encompass international health/midwifery care developments, for example, students' desires to study or do clinical internships abroad or look into adjacent fields of possible midwifery work, e.g. palliative care of critically ill children, women (**see Finding 6**).

USS' midwifery programme has a good evaluation programme in place. This clearly allows a thorough evaluation of the appropriateness of intended learning outcomes. Both lecturers and students and representatives of the labour market have confirmed that they are being listened to and that their opinion and suggestions are being integrated through changes to the curriculum if necessary. Learning outcomes thus are adaptable if the need arises. An example given by the midwifery staff was the adaptation of learning outcomes with regard to requirements due to the Covid pandemic. Another one was the need to focus more on vulnerable groups with regard to biophysical and psychological assessment qualifications due to the economic and social hardships brought upon by the pandemic.

The academic degree certifies academically trained midwifes, being able to justify their practice regarding ethics, law, and scientific evidence. With regard to clinical as well as other scientific modules, the criterion is fulfilled. However, English competencies should be strengthened in students and teaching staff. This will enhance the participation in international research activities beyond Spanish speaking countries and allow Chilean midwives to fully participate in international discussions and research activities for the profession (**see Finding 3**). Thus, one way could be to integrate, next to the introductory course in English respectively medical English, scientific reading into their courses to be discussed, summarised in English or set up journal clubs to practice scientific arguments in English.

The writing of a final thesis demonstrates the achievement of the intended level of qualification, while the professional degree requires a final examination concerning the practical components in the last year. Requirements are clearly stated, the programme guides through the process of writing and offers modules for obtaining basic and advanced research skills (literature research, writing skills or others) with the exception (see above) perhaps of a better-integrated language proficiency skill training.

Curricular modifications are documented transparently, have been justified comprehensibly, and have been shown and argued for to improve programme quality. The overall text describes the programme's handling with students who instead do part-time studies, for example, due to family circumstances or socio-economic necessities. As a result, the overall university report is robust in pointing to the different possibilities of getting

support. Thus, concerning psychosocial support and immediate obtainment of information, the programme demonstrates a high quality.

All curriculum elements are assigned a certain number of credits directly related to the expected workload; thus the programme's total workload is allocated to the different modules. Learning objectives, course examination, self-study time are well thought through – credit points are in good alignment with the workload stated.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Procedures for Quality Assurance

Bachelor/Master Degree
The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes. *A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.* *The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.* *Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.* *[ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]*

Description

Universidad San Sebastián has implemented a quality assurance policy and system that is centralised across all study programmes and at all branches as outlined in the SER.

On an institutional level, the quality assurance system is based on four pillars (institutional inputs, functional processes, evaluation processes, and education outcomes). These pillars aim to detect shortcomings concerning the mission of USS, the expectations and interests of the faculty, and the needs of the relevant stakeholders. The pillar for institutional input focuses on organisational aspects of USS as a whole (e.g. mission, strategic plan, policies, resources, or quality standards and criteria). The pillar for functional processes focuses on faculty related aspects (e.g. curricula, academic management, research, community outreach, financial allocation, or governance). The pillars for evaluation processes and education outcomes are more linked to study programme perspectives, such as internal and external evaluations or stakeholder consultations (in the case of evaluation processes), and indicators of progression and graduation, stakeholder satisfaction, graduate development, or recognition (education outcomes).

The responsibility of the study programme-related perspectives lies according to the SER with the respective faculty, especially with the management teams and teams for the programmes and branches. The Vice-Rector facilitates these processes for quality assurance. USS foresees several instruments and processes to verify the quality of its programmes, such as mechanisms for quality assurance (MQA), external accreditation, continuing improvement instruments, graduate student monitoring, monitoring student progress through the curriculum, information for quality management, and processes to assure the integrity of staff and students.

The MQAs cover eight main areas, which are study programme specific. By definition, the MQAs I) ensure the consistency of the graduation profile with the discipline requirements and trends, II) provide mechanisms for diagnosing and supporting first-year student progression, III) analyse information on indicators of curricular

progression (e.g. retention, pass rates, graduation), IV) verify the level of requirements for each programme while ensuring equalisation among the branches, V) guarantee student assessment of teaching staff performances, VI) monitor systematically the availability and quality of physical resources and materials, VII) promote the quality of the teaching staff quality by, e.g. allocating resources for academic improvement, and VIII) support and monitor collaborative projects as part of USS' commitment for community outreach projects.

USS aims towards constant improvement for each study programme. In order to do so, the instruments cover a systematic review of the graduation profile and, consequently, an adaptation to ensure consistency with the learning outcomes on the course level. For the study programmes under review, it is stated that clinical simulations are an essential part of the respective study programme and that their scope is reasonable. Changes are made transparent in log directories to follow the development of the respective study programme.

Graduate student monitoring procedures will collect feedback regarding the respective study programme and the appropriateness of the study outcome. The SER indicates that USS has implemented an institutional graduate policy using different follow-up mechanisms, such as graduate surveys (by using a graduate network platform), a graduate contact programme, or by using sectoral councils. Sectoral councils consist of professionals in the area of health, whom the faculties can contact. It is stated that graduates of USS are part of some sectoral councils. In addition, the graduate network drafts a quarterly employability report on graduates.

Based on the statements in the SER, the faculties have implemented several systematic instruments that allow USS to follow students' progress. The indicators that USS can use cover enrolment trends, enrolment performances, first-year and total retention trends, courses with the tendency of difficult passing, or faculty members assessments. As part of an integrated key performance indicator platform, USS collects data concerning students' progression for each study programme and at each branch to create an early warning system to anticipate potential dropouts. In addition, this data is used to enable the faculties for an intra- and inter-institutional benchmarking and to testify to the progress of community outreach projects and their success.

According to the SER, these internal data collection procedures are used to create specialised reports within the quality management. These reports aim to provide comparable information for each study programme that supports USS in its decision-making processes. These specialised reports cover student curricular progression, early warning reports, enrolment trends, employability reports, social mobility reports of USS students, reports on programme and institutional accreditation, domestic ranking report, and analysis on the impact of accreditation procedures on the study programmes.

Furthermore, the university states that policies are implemented that focus on the integrity of students, faculty members, and administrative staff. These policies outline university-wide standards on transparency, internal regulations, or regulations on science ethics, a protocol for reporting violence or sexual harassment, or spin-offs or licensing procedures.

In the SER, USS describes, in addition, a system that collects information that aims to enable the university to develop the respective study programme further. The key performance indicators cover admission performances, student profiling during their studies (subject pass rates, retention, timely graduation), or the composition of the student body. Furthermore, USS collects information on the relevant resources and their availability to students at the branches.

Experts' Evaluation

The overall quality assurance system at USS is on a very high level and very detailed. Eight mechanisms for quality assurance with their corresponding objective, processes, and implementation cycles have been established. Within the USS, the general management responsibilities of each of these mechanisms are comprehensive and follow clear regulations. It became evident that this overall QA structure at USS is applied to all six programmes adequately. The mechanisms include regular course and programme evaluations,

progression and completion monitoring, and an evaluation of changing societal needs, which has had particular importance in the Chilean context in the last years.

Additionally, academic (peer) evaluations complete the student evaluation of teaching staff performance. During the site visit, the meetings have indicated that the implementation of the described QA procedures follows a clear structure and is comparable for all programmes. They involve both internal and external stakeholders. Any student can approach the Student Support and Performance Institute (CREAR) to receive academic or personal support, if necessary. Labour market representatives participate in the graduation profile updates, usually as sectorial councils. They may also participate in research and community outreach projects. Standards and protocols of the university also include ethical aspects and preservation of institutional integrity. There is a protocol for reporting and acting in cases of bullying, violence, and sexual harassment to avoid any activity that may undermine the dignity or self-esteem of a student, faculty member, administrative, or authority at our institution, thereby promoting healthy coexistence within the USS community. This protocol is disseminated to all the community members. Additionally, USS focus on the humanization of healthcare. Therefore, promoting the acquisition of better attitudes may indirectly reduce intolerance and discrimination behaviours in the university community.

In general, the workload of courses is following the estimated and outlined workload. However, during the site visit, the workload has been named on more than one occasion as having a mismatch between estimated and actual workload. One of the reasons might be structural, evolving from the Chilean higher education system, therefore the panel of experts believes that a systematic approach towards workload evaluation should be implemented (**Finding 9**). The results might show some room for manoeuvre within the basic science courses and allow for some adjustments to the workload.

For all six programmes, it has been demonstrated that the quality assurance procedures lead to concrete results, and that measures were taken when appropriate. An early warning system has been implemented to identify those at drop-out risk for socio-economic reasons. In these cases, USS offers academic and social support, which might lead to scholarships or other financial support mechanisms, an excellent example of the solid structure at USS. The CREAR platform can also indicate students who are potentially academically at risk, which lead to support from the CREAR service team. In the last couple of years, there is a high percentage of non-timely graduated students for all the programmes. For example, in 2019, there was an average time of 28.6% of students completed their studies on time, and the average duration of studies was 11.5 semesters. However, these numbers are in the average range if one compares it to the general national trend. Potential reasons have been discussed in the virtual visit, including socio-economic, academic or personal reasons (see above for concrete measures in these cases).

Interestingly, there are various strategies to facilitate curricular progression, including peer academic tutoring (confirmed by students), developing teaching materials, motivational workshops, and psycho-emotional care. Reasons for drop-outs could also be recorded, as well as potential students who had discontinued a programme and in the future might continue the same or a different one. USS, however, has implemented concrete measures to support their students (starting with more support for students, but also by providing more scholarships to students with complex socio-economic backgrounds).

Overall, the university creates a culture that very much focuses on quality assurance processes. All stakeholders participate in the quality assurance activities, which is a good sign of a vital university that focuses on the further development of the university itself and of its programmes. There is a straightforward reporting mechanism from course level to programme management level to the faculty and top management level. However, the information about results and changes should be communicated to students because this will lead to a better engagement of students as an essential part of the further development of the respective study

programme. Thus, to close the PDCA cycle for the programme, the results, measures, and changes should be communicated to students in a structured manner (**Finding 10**).

The documentation for the programmes indicates that tracer studies of alumni are carried out regularly. Graduates may participate in the sectorial and/or consultive councils to update the graduation profile, in research or community outreach projects, or eventually as part-time or full-time teachers/professors, therefore contributing to students' education and programme development.

USS follows a clear policy concerning academic fraud with a clear definition of steps and potential sanctions. This approach follows a university-wide policy. It became evident that this policy is applied to all six programmes in this cluster.

Data collection for the programmes has been systematised and includes the latest data on tracer studies, employability, first-year retention, timely graduation or the average time to complete the studies. This information is collected and used for purposes of updating graduation profile. For example, in the speech Therapy programme, sources of information included: Chilean Health policy, Chilean Universities, the Chilean Association of Speech Therapists, Speech Therapists at national and Latin American institutions, the Audiology and Speech Therapy Council of the Speech, Language, and Audition Association, the UK Health and Care Professions and the Brazilian Federal Council. Data on students are systematically collected at entry, including sociodemographic, academic, and individual information. This measure facilitates future quality assurance actions, including identifying student special needs or students at drop-out risk.

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

Bachelor/Master Degree
The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process. *Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.* *Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.* *[ESG 1.3]*

Description

Based on the information given in the SER, USS differentiates its teaching methods into theoretical and practical components. In general, USS provides educational support material, such as written or audio-visual materials or real-life situations based on the community outreach projects. The HEI emphasises that the study programmes under revision pay special attention to practical experience. Consequently, the percentage of applicable content is between 44 % (Physiotherapy) and 70 % (Nutrition).

Theoretical classes cover lectures, problem-based learning scenarios, case studies, group work, role-playing, or the analysis of clinical cases. Practical courses aim towards a learning setting that can be a real-life experience (Clinical internships) or a simulation (Clinical simulations). Clinical internships are mainly carried out in the last year of the study programmes and are supervised by clinical faculty members. A clinical simulation is a learning tool based in USS' clinical simulation centre, which creates clinical situations that students will face in their professions. According to the SER, USS includes the possibility to transfer the knowledge into practice

by including community outreach projects into the teaching of the respective study programme. USS outlines that since 2015, 36 external projects with 74 external organisations have been developed and carried out.

USS uses traditional and non-traditional assessment methods for the study programmes under review. Traditional assessment methods are written exams, oral exams, presentations, individual or group work, or reports. Non-traditional assessment methods include entry examinations for an internship, laboratory work, seminars, laboratory reports, field practice or internships, written or oral presentations of research work, or national cross-cutting assessments. For all branches, USS uses the same academic calendar, which enables the university, on the one hand, to plan simultaneously and, on the other hand, gives students in advance an overview regarding the assessments.

Students can appeal their grades based on regulations that USS has developed. USS additionally declares that the staff responsible for the study programmes have an open-door policy, which can help to advise in particular situations.

Experts' Evaluation

During the digital site visit, the experts could confirm the variety of the teaching methods, learning, and assessment applied at USS. The didactical concept consisting of classroom events, self-study elements, internship rotations at different clinical sites and community outreach projects fulfils the requirements for a mix of didactic methods. The teaching and learning forms presented correspond to the standards of the subject disciplines of health sciences.

The described path from the initially increased level of guidance/support in the modules of basic sciences in the first semesters to the development of practical competencies in the higher semesters is in line with the learning objectives of the modules and the entire degree programmes. Students are well informed about the components, methods, and assessment criteria. There is good communication between students and lecturers. During the interviews, the expert group understood that the learning and teaching didactic methods stimulate student self-reflection and engagement.

The expert group wants to highlight one remarkable aspect of the students' learning experience that enables students to transfer their knowledge outside the university context. The community outreach projects are elements within the student life cycle where theoretical and practical aspects interlace and are great opportunities to engage with the local communities. Simultaneously, community outreach projects are suitable settings to conduct field research. It became evident that all programmes combine the respective research lines with community outreach projects, which is a valuable asset. However, especially the speech Therapy programme could improve the level of involvement of academics in research concerning the community outreach projects (**Finding 11**).

There is a high level of clarity concerning the assessment methods applied for all six programmes. Students are well informed about the assessment methods used in the courses, the assessment criteria, and the organisation of the assessments. All assessment types fit the respective intended learning outcomes of the courses. However, the occupational Therapy programme might also extend their assessment methods with the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) to enable an even more practice-related assessment of clinical competencies (**Finding 12**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

Bachelor/Master Degree
Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification. *[ESG 1.4]*

Description

As usual for Chilean universities, USS uses a nationally comprehensive admission procedure, the so-called single admission system (*Sistema único de admisión*). The system considers the grades from the secondary education of applicants and the score in the university selection test (*prueba de selección universitaria*, PSU). By using these results, potential students can apply nationally by stating their preferences concerning both higher education institution and study programme. The university selection test covers examinations in Spanish, mathematics, and history. USS outlines that potential students can either apply by using the regular admission or the special admission procedure. The regular admission procedure is based on the results of the PSU. For each programme, USS assigns weightings concerning each subject of the PSU. According to the admission regulations at USS, the special admission procedure is designed for international students who wish to apply at USS or local students that either fulfil specific criteria (outstanding performances in secondary education or students with disabilities) or students having professional experience or coming from another university. Details on the admission modalities and admission requirements are outlined on the USS website.

Furthermore, USS's study programmes are published on the website of the external agency that manages the single admission system and the PSU. The final admission and the final enrolling procedure at USS are located at the USS admission and dissemination unit. When entering the respective study programme, students will take a diagnostic assessment to detect potential special needs in an early stage.

Following a university-wide regulation on recognition of prior learning, students may hand in documents regarding their competencies to be recognised. The responsibilities lie with the faculties, and the study programme coordinators will make the final decision of recognition of prior learning. By regulation, at least 50 % of the study programme has to be taken at USS. Furthermore, final graduation theses or research reports cannot be recognised.

Following the self-evaluation report, graduates of the study programmes receive a certificate and a document explaining the requirements for achieving a bachelor's degree and a professional degree.

Experts' Evaluation

USS has clear, transparent and comprehensive admission criteria which are published on its website. In addition to regular admissions described above, there are supplemental admissions on special requirements for Chilean and international students. These admission procedures require an interview and an admission committee to decide on each case. In order to provide assistance to students in their learning processes and reduce the generally high drop-out rate in Chile, USS has introduced additional assessments and offers a wide range of counselling and support services for students (e.g. workshops, peer tutors, summer courses). The data from the last cohorts provide an overview of the applicant situation and the students in the courses.

The crediting process follows established standards with fixed responsibilities. This considers both skills that were achieved at other universities and achievements made outside of the university. The decision on recognition is made based on documents. Moreover, interviews are also conducted in exceptional cases. The

possibility of recognition of prior learning is limited to a specified number of credits and selected courses. For example, research reports and the final theses are excluded from the possibility of recognition.

Currently, USS has some structured student exchange partnerships with Spanish speaking countries. Placement decisions are made by a committee that meets twice a year. One of the strategic goals of USS is to internationalise its programmes. Therefore, the systematic development of learning agreements with similar programmes will smoothen the recognition processes and foster the international exchange of students and staff (**Finding 13**).

Graduates receive the *licenciatura* and the professional degree certificate upon completion of their studies. For the national context, this is self-evident because of the high level of clarity concerning the programmes. However, supplementary documents explaining the respective study programme and the national context must be drafted for all programmes (**Finding 14**). These documents should explain the qualifications achieved, the context of the study, and the level and status of the programmes. In the long run, this will foster communication with international partners, facilitating recognition, mobility of students (both during and after their studies), and cooperative agreements.

Conclusion

This criterion is partially fulfilled.

5. Teaching Staff

Bachelor/Master Degree
The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. *Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.* *Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.* *[ESG 1.5]*

Description

USS outlines that the university differentiates between full-time and part-time professors. Full-time faculty members are employed for 33 hours/week, whereas hours of part-time members differ with a maximum of 32 hours/week. As typical in the Chilean higher education context, USS has implemented a so-called equivalent full-time staff system that quantifies the ratio between students and full-time staff. USS indicates that most part-time professors are teaching more practical-oriented courses (e.g. clinical simulations). In general, the position of teaching staff differs between tenured, associate, assistant, instructor, adjunct, and academic assistant.

As of 2020, the Faculty of health sciences comprises 493 teaching staff members at all four branches (69 full-time professors and 424 part-time professors). The number differs between 184 professors at the Santiago branch (20 full-time and 164 part-time), 142 in Concepción (20/122), 78 in Valdivia (15/63), and 89 in Puerto Montt (14/75).

The Faculty of healthcare sciences consists of a total of 903 members (144 full-time professors and 759 part-time professors), which is divided per branch as follows: Santiago (32/316), Concepción (42/206), Valdivia (45/107), and Puerto Montt (25/130).

As listed in the self-evaluation report, the Faculty of medicine and sciences outlines a total of 553 members (55 full-time and 498 part-time). The table shows that the Santiago branch has 24 full-time and 209 part-time

members, the Concepción branch has 16 full-time and 164 part-time members, and the Puerto Montt branch 15 full-time and 125 part-time members. This Faculty is only present at these three branches.

Based on a university regulation, each Faculty has implemented several mechanisms to foster the academic body. These mechanisms are applied to all full-time professors and are progressively implemented for part-time professors. Regularly, the respective dean of the Faculty agrees with the academic on the academic commitments which he/she will take. These commitments might be academic assignments, management actions, community outreach activities, research or professional development tasks. Annually, each academic will be assessed (performance assessment) against his/her academic commitments or evaluation of students. Another mechanism is driven by the vice-rector's office and includes the professional development of the academic body, which is financed by USS's "FADA Scholarship programme" (*fondo de apoyo al desarollo académico;* academic support fund).

Experts' Evaluation

During the site visit, the experts checked the required resources concerning staff in light of the programmes' enrolment numbers. It became clear that the programmes have appropriate staff in quality and quantity to carry out the programmes and achieve the intended learning outcomes. In many instances, part-time lecturers are assigned to some courses, which is relatively typical for the Chilean context. However, there are clear procedures in place to incorporate new lecturers for the different programmes. Following the centralised quality assurance instruments at USS, there are mechanisms to ensure permanent and part-time staff quality on the same level. USS is highly active to introduce these staff members holistically into the USS system. All teaching staff members have a solid academic background. As stated above, the current composition of staff members with a mix of theoretical and practical staff members is fit for purpose and adequate in light of the enrolment numbers. Despite that, the current number of staff for the occupational Therapy programme is lower compared to the other health-related programmes. An extension of full-time staff might be wise to implement further sustainable development of the programme (**Finding 15**).

Recruitment procedures are transparently outlined. Open positions are publicly announced either on the USS homepage or social media channels. The faculty of the respective programme has defined an academic profile of staff used in the recruitment processes for the respective department. It is defined that all staff members shall have a postgraduate degree. The recruitment process also focuses on academic background and current research interests.

The staff development concepts, defined on the university level at USS, comprise didactical and discipline-related training that strive to expand the knowledge and competencies of staff. During the pandemic, a primary focus was on new ways of teaching in virtual environments. Furthermore, additional training is offered to staff related to the values defined in USS's general vision (e.g., humanism).

One significant asset of USS' study programmes is the vital link to the community and the community outreach projects. During the site visit, many examples have been presented and discussed. In general, the research output in the link between research and the integration of research results in teaching is vivid. However, it might be wise to provide more support to the research and publication activities for the occupational Therapy programme (**Finding 16**). One aspect already outlined in chapter1 refers to the English competencies of staff. Keeping in mind the relevance of USS's research output for non-Spanish speaking countries, additional training could be offered to staff members (**see Finding 3**).

The documentation of the teaching staff has been clear and transparent. The number of teaching staff and teaching hours are documented. Although the overall workload of staff (teaching, administration, research) is appropriate for the delivery of the programmes (directors of the programmes are full-time professors), there

are still some specific needs such as a more significant number of full-time professors for the coordination of the research activities with the community.

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

6. Learning Resources and Student Support

Bachelor/Master Degree
Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities. *Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.* *[ESG 1.6]*

Description

All six programmes under review use the common facilities provided at all branches. It includes classrooms with multimedia, computer laboratories, auditoriums, research laboratories, and conference rooms. As a unique learning resource, USS indicates the USS simulation hospital, which aims to provide a close-to-reality experience to students. Practical courses are given in so-called clinical fields (*campos clínicos*). To enhance the practical approach of the study programmes, the university has an active exchange with several hospitals to provide internships in the last years of the programme. Students use this practical experience in order to gain the right to hold a professional degree.

USS's main library holds literature for the respective study programme. As stated in the SER, each branch covers between 85 – 90% of the primary and supplementary literature for the study programme. The goal of the university is to close this gap by 2021.

The university provides several offerings concerning the support of students. USS aims to cover the whole student life cycle, starting with a diagnosis assessment at the start of the studies to assess the potential weaknesses of students. The offerings embrace academic peer tutorials (students helping students), annual coaching programmes (to strengthen students' learning processes), motivational workshops (e.g. leadership skills, professional guidance, and cross-cutting skills). Furthermore, USS offers educational, psychological care to students, which aims to provide education learning strategies. In case of bad performances, students can also participate in so-called "alternate semesters" or summer schools. This is usually done in case USS detects a high non-passing rate for some courses. Also, USS has implemented a student wellbeing unit and a unit for sports and life. The wellbeing unit covers activities that benefit students' development by providing initiatives such as "promoting self-care and stress prevention" or "Healthy living". The sports and life unit offers workshops in sports, culture, and art. As part of the internationalisation strategy of USS, the university has established an international affairs unit that aims to exchange experiences of students who already had studied abroad.

In the information process of potential students, information on scholarships can be found on the homepage of USS. The university lists several scholarships types (e.g. countrywide scholarships or enrolment scholarships provided by USS).

Experts' Evaluation

All course descriptions are available to students. They contain the intended learning outcomes, methods of learning and teaching, assessment methods, and the expected workload (self-study and in-class hours). It

became apparent during the site visit that a more precise differentiation between theoretical and practical components within the courses would be beneficial for students but also for teaching staff (including a clear differentiation concerning the workload for students) (**Finding 17**). This task might give students an even more transparent overview of their time management which in the end might be helpful to lower the drop-out rate.

One of USS's strengths is the sound thought-through set of procedures applied to ensure that the programmes and courses are coordinated on both content and organisational levels, thereby minimising the risk of potential overlap. The university offers all kinds of services that ensure students' physical and emotional well-being throughout the whole student life cycle. Concerning support services for students, the report stated transparently that new and potential students are being offered introductory courses or lectures to various topics needed for primary orientation. An apparent strength of all USS campuses are the sound institutionalised student advisory services available to students. Information about these services is made available to students well, specialised information sessions are offered regularly, and all services are offered on a straightforward, low threshold basis. In addition, the university provides individualised advising for specific programmes/programme content. Teaching staff offers regular consultation hours and is available to students. Students with special needs may be outgoing/incoming students; parents as well as disabled students are offered special services, counselling and information. Specific advice also pertains to information and support in planning internships or practical placements. Student diversity is explicitly considered when selecting students and staff, and accordingly also when allocating, planning, and providing learning resources, student support, and further qualified training of teaching staff to develop their competencies.

During the digital discussion rounds, the expert group learnt about the support mechanisms in place at USS. With study secretary and director positions in each programme, problematic fields in the student life cycle are regularly identified and addressed. When students join the university, there are USS units that profile the students and their needs. They also create levelling activities such as peer mentoring or tutoring in the first semesters. In case needed, psychological support is available.

About learning resources, the report and the virtual site visit demonstrate that available material resources for the study programmes are in place (e.g. computer, workplaces) and are deemed necessary to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Both lecturers and students mentioned that the university could provide students with extra computing facilities when the university had to suddenly switch to online teaching due to the pandemic. Laboratories for the basic science courses are adequately equipped and supported by technical staff. As the health programmes of USS use laboratory and clinical resources, which could not be entirely assessed during the digital site visit, this should be done during the confirmation visit. The speech Therapy programme, for instance, uses laboratories for student teaching. During the confirmation visit, one focus could be whether the laboratory equipment and dedicated workspaces reflect current professional standards and are supported by technical staff. However, the equipment in the laboratories and dedicated workspaces, e.g. in the clinical simulation hospitals, reflect current professional standards and facilitate the attainment of intended learning outcomes. All libraries are well equipped and provide access to general and specific literature for all course programmes, including access to a wide range of international databases, which enable students to achieve their learning outcomes concerning an academically informed clinical practice.

In the clinical internships in the higher semesters, students are assigned to an academic tutor and a clinical tutor on-site, and they work collaboratively together. Coaching, guidance, and support are essential in the student-tutor relationship. The experts commended USS on creating the simulation hospital and gained the overall impression that students benefit from this one-on-one learning environment.

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

7. Public Information

Bachelor/Master Degree
Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders. [ESG 1.8]

Description

As outlined in the SER, USS has different paths to inform the public about its study programmes, the activities at USS, community outreach projects, or additional information of any type. For all kind of external information, USS uses either nationally published reports on the Chilean higher education system, the distribution of printout material during school fairs, or the USS website, which outlines the curricular content for each study programme, or the admission requirements for each study programme at each branch.

Internally, USS uses a platform with personalised access. This platform (*MiPortal*) contains information on grades, learning material, communication between faculty members and students, or assessments. Additionally, USS has implemented another platform (*MiMundo*) which can be used for the curricular follow-up or an overview of students' performances.

Experts' Evaluation

The information management for the study programmes focuses on general information of potential employment fields for all programmes. The primary source of information is the USS homepage. As indicated above, the management staff for all the branches have regular contacts with labour market representatives and potential employers. The information outlined also includes vacancies for research lines and community outreach projects. In addition, information on non-programme specific activities is published on the USS homepage. This includes talks on job readiness, workshops on labour market trends and needs, pilot workshops addressing topics relevant to specific professions, and a formal online course on counselling for employment and self-employment. USS has developed a special regulation concerning this matter to systematise spin-offs, knowledge transfer activities, and licensing.

Conclusion

This criterion is fulfilled.

VI. Findings of the panel of experts

Findings:

1. Although the nature of the basic science courses strives to level up the knowledge of the students, it might be wise to include programme specific links to the respective disciplines. This also might create synergies for interdisciplinary work of the health-related programmes.
2. The internships taken in semesters 9 and 10 require more explicitly defined intended learning outcomes.
3. English competencies should be strengthened in students and teaching staff in order to enhance their participation in international research activities beyond Spanish-speaking countries.
4. A clearer demarcation between the four Therapy fields (voice, speech, language, and audiology) in the Speech Therapy programme would give speech Therapy students a better overview and would enhance students to choose their specialisations.
5. In the Physiotherapy and the Occupational Therapy programme the intended learning outcomes should differentiate multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary aspects of the courses.
6. The midwifery programme should encompass e.g., international health/midwifery care developments or palliative care of critically ill children, women in the further development of the programme.
7. A shift from the current multidisciplinary to an interdisciplinary approach might create a stronger cooperation between the Midwifery programme and other relevant disciplines, such as nursing, physiotherapy or medicine.
8. It might be wise to focus more on a needs-oriented research in the Midwifery programme according to locally specific target populations.
9. The verification of student workload should follow a more systematic approach. This will allow the programme management of the study programmes easier adjustment within the respective programmes.
10. To close the PDCA cycle, the results and changes for all programmes should be communicated to students and other relevant stakeholders in a systematic manner.
11. More speech Therapy-related research topics should focus on community outreach projects. This will support the connection between the community and the university.
12. The assessment methods for the Occupational Therapy programme should include objective structured clinical examinations to strengthen the assessment of practical competencies.
13. To foster international exchanges and smoothen recognition processes, learning agreements should be systematically developed with international partner universities.
14. A document (e.g. Diploma Supplement) for graduates has to be drafted explaining the position of the awarded degree in the Chilean higher education system and the academic degree structure in Chile. This will facilitate graduate mobility and help USS to further develop international cooperation and recognition procedures.
15. An extension of full-time occupational Therapy staff might be wise to implement a sustainable further development of the programme.
16. More support and resources should be given to enhance research and publication activities within the department of Occupational Therapy.
17. The course descriptions for the nursing, speech Therapy and occupational Therapy should include a differentiation between theoretical components and practical components (with a clear differentiation concerning the workload for students) within the courses.