



AGENTUR FÜR
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

LIWA UNIVERSITY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MASS COMMUNICATION (BACHELOR)

WITH THE SPECIALISATIONS

- DIGITAL MEDIA (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)
- PUBLIC RELATIONS (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)
- ADVERTISING (ABU DHABI)

November 2025 / Abu Dhabi and Al Ain



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DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

BACHELOR OF MASS COMMUNICATION (BACHELOR) WITH THE SPECIALISATIONS

- **DIGITAL MEDIA (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)**
- **PUBLIC RELATIONS (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)**
- **ADVERTISING (ABU DHABI)**

OFFERED BY LIWA UNIVERSITY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments by the university and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 26th meeting on 8 September 2025, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Mass Communication**” (**Bachelor**) with the specialisations **Digital Media** (Abu Dhabi and Al Ain), **Public Relations** (Abu Dhabi and Al Ain), and **Advertising** (Abu Dhabi) offered by **Liwa University, United Arab Emirates** is accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

The accreditation is conditional.

The study programme essentially complies 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 condition has to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the condition has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 September 2026**.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2031**, provided that the conditions listed below are fully met. Otherwise, the accreditation may be withdrawn.

Condition:

1. Liwa University must improve the facilities and equipment available beyond the studio at Al Ain campus.

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

1. The faculty is encouraged to further strengthen its partnerships with the labour market, including local media, public relations, and advertising companies, particularly through expanded internships, joint projects to ensure that graduates are better equipped with the practical skills and industry familiarity required for direct employment.
2. A further update of the current curriculum in light of market demands and practical skills in the areas of media content creation and editing and AI techniques is recommended so that students are even better qualified and prepared for the media market.
3. Liwa University is strongly recommended to re-examine the assignment requirements towards the learning objectives and market demands to better assure that the programme is up to speed with digital technology.

4. The introduction of a selection process, e.g., in the form of an entrance test or competitive minimal grades should be considered in order to admit only students who are genuinely interested in the degree programmes at the Faculty of Media and Public Relations and to further improve the quality of education in the mass media programme.
5. In order to promote the mobility of FMPR students, partner institutions should be identified for MoUs, and learning agreements should be established to facilitate recognition.
6. To further enhance internationalization, Liwa University should deliver a Diploma Supplement upon graduation explaining the qualification and its position in the higher education system.
7. A more targeted staff recruitment strategy is recommended that includes the integration of academically qualified practitioners, ideally also from Arabic-speaking countries, to enhance the professional relevance of the programme.
8. An increase in the number of full-time staff is recommended to allow for a more even distribution of responsibilities and to safeguard the quality of teaching, research, and student support in the long term.
9. Opportunities for development in didactics, digital teaching tools, and assessment methodologies should be more systematically integrated into staff development.
10. The university is encouraged to critically review the relevance and sustainability of the Advertising specialisation. It may be advisable to phase out the focus area if a clear demand from students or industry cannot be established.

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

EXPERTS' REPORT

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

BACHELOR OF MASS COMMUNICATION (BACHELOR) WITH THE SPECIALISATIONS

- DIGITAL MEDIA (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)
- PUBLIC RELATIONS (ABU DHABI AND AL AIN)
- ADVERTISING (ABU DHABI)

OFFERED BY LIWA UNIVERSITY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Visit to the university: 27 to 30 April 2025

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr Lars Rademacher	Media Faculty, Chair for Public Relations, University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt, Germany
Prof. Dr. Maha Sami Alrashed	Associate Professor of Public Relations, Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts Department, Bahrain University, Bahrain
Björn Sievers	Director Brand Communications, Procter and Gamble, Germany (labour market representative)
Anna Zanke	MA student of Science-Media-Culture at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany (student representative)

Coordinator:

Ronny Heintze	AQAS, Cologne, Germany
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I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by nearly 90 universities, universities of applied sciences, and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes 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 academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the bachelor's programme "Mass Communication" with the specialisations:

- Digital Media (also in Al Ain)
- Public Relations (also in Al Ain)
- Advertising

offered by Liwa University, United Arab Emirates.

1. Criteria

Each programme is assessed against a set of criteria for accreditation developed by AQAS: the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master). 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 be used to 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 each programme since not all indicators can necessarily be applied to every programme.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in January 2024. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In September 2024, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programme and an appendix. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview of statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,

- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 02 December 2025. The final version of the SER was handed in in March 2025.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in February 2025. AQAS informed the university about the members of the expert panel and the university did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to 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 to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place from 27 to 30 April 2025. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. representatives of the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, of teaching and of other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS Criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the university for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 8 September 2025. 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 2025, AQAS published the report, the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel members.

III. General information on the university

Liwa University is a private institution with campuses in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain that offers 25 Bachelor and Diploma study programmes across four faculties (Faculty of Business, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Faculty of Media and Public Relations, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) with a total enrolment of 2,976 students (2,466 in Abu Dhabi and 510 in Al Ain).

Liwa University started in 1993 as Emirates College of Technology, later changing its name to Liwa University of Technology. In 2023, it merged with Khawarizmi International College to form Liwa University (LU). The University's focus area of teaching and research is in the field of media, public relations, engineering, information technology, business, and health sciences, which is said to be in line with the offering of the study programme to be accredited.

The study programme "Bachelor of Mass Communication" is offered at the Faculty of Media and Public Relations (FMPR) at both campuses in three specializations: Public Relations, Digital Media, and Advertising. All three specializations are offered on the Abu Dhabi campus, whereas in Al Ain, only Digital Media and Advertising are offered.

The SER describes that the Bachelor of Mass Communication programme at Liwa University plays a significant role in the institution's overall strategic planning. Mass communication, as a dynamic and rapidly evolving field, shall align well with LU's strategic objectives that focus on preparing students for the demands of modern media, journalism, and public relations sectors. It is said to help the institution strengthen relationships with media industries, government entities, and other stakeholders, thereby enhancing the university's reputation and influence. In addition, the study programme shall attract a diverse student population interested in various fields like journalism, broadcasting, and digital media. This diversity is said to support the university's goal of fostering a vibrant academic environment, increasing student enrolment, and enhancing the overall educational experience.

The Dean of FMPR, with support from the Heads of Departments and faculties are said to manage the academic and administrative aspects of the programmes offered by the faculty. While the Dean is more involved in strategic planning for the programmes (through various department-level committees such as course portfolio committees, and curriculum committees), the heads of departments are said to look after the operational aspects. Both are said to coordinate with various administrative departments such as finance, admission, student affairs, learning resources to provide support to students and faculties related to the programmes.

The SER describes that FMPR currently does not have any international partners, but it has several agreements signed at the local level. Further agreements are said to be planned in 2024-2025 to add additional partners.

IV. Assessment of the study programmes

1. Quality of the curriculum

Bachelor's 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

The study programme “Mass Communication” is nationally accredited and shall offer a comprehensive curriculum with three specializations: Public Relations, Advertising, and Digital Media, requiring 123 credit hours. The curriculum is structured into general education, departmental core, support courses, and specialization courses, emphasizing knowledge in communication concepts and theories, research, practical media production, and IT. Students shall gain hands-on experience through an external internship at the end of their studies and a capstone/graduation project.

The Intended (Programme) Learning Outcomes are said to be aligned with the Qualifications Framework Emirates (QFE) Level 7. There are general learning outcomes for the programme that are shared across all specializations, as well as specific outcomes tailored to each specialization's unique pedagogy, and specifications.

The General Education programme shall provide students with the skills to face the challenges of the modern era and to function in an increasingly competitive technological world. The teaching of general education courses and their inter-disciplinary collaboration shall prepare students for success in their chosen majors, like the media specializations, to cultivate a commitment to continuous learning and critical thinking and prepare them as effective communicators and citizens of high ethical standards.

1. LU College (General Education) Requirements (11 courses with 33 Credit Hours) are taught to all students of LU to prepare them comprehensively by mastering languages (Arabic and English), the ability to use modern technology, enhancing innovation and critical thinking, knowing professional ethics, Islamic culture, and the culture of Emirati society.
2. FMPR Departmental Core Requirements (9 courses with 27 Credit Hours including one course (3 CH) as an elective in the areas Political Geography, Consumer Behaviour, Art of Persuasion, Social Psychology): are taught to all students of the College of Media and Public Relations with its three specializations.
3. Supporting Courses (10 courses with 30 Credit Hours including one course (3 CH) as an elective in the areas Sociology, Modern Arab History, Global Issues, Modern Arabic Literature, Documentary Cinema) are taught to all students of the FMPR providing the supporting basics to form comprehensive knowledge that complements the understanding of media and public relations in society.
4. Specialization Courses (11 courses with 33 credit Hours) vary according to the chosen specializations (1) Public Relations Specialization, (2) Digital Media Specialization, (3) Advertising Specialization.

During the advance in their academic journey, students shall take additional courses that enable them to grasp the skills of explanation, discussion, analysis, and evaluation. In the final stage of their studies, students shall focus on application, typically through specialized courses, the internship, and the graduation project.

There is a study plan for every specialization including the study path in the programme, which shall ensure a balanced academic load in each semester and allowing flexibility in course selection, (except for those that require prerequisites). According to the SER, field training is undertaken in the third year after the student has completed 80 credit hours, including 12 credit hours from specialization courses. Additionally, the graduation project has to be completed in the fourth year.

There are two open elective courses which shall allow students to tailor their education according to their personal and professional interests, further enhancing the learning experience and better preparing them for the diverse labour market. These courses are said to be chosen from among those offered in other majors at LU (except for the student's major) without restrictions with the aim to broaden students' cultural and scientific horizons and develop new skills outside of their field of study. These two courses shall also offer flexibility in

the selection process, as they can be taken in any semester from the second year onwards. Preferably in the last semester, students can take another open elective course.

To ensure a high academic standard for their students, Liwa University considers it crucial to include courses that address methodology. These are Media Research Methods, Media Theories, and other courses that shall contribute directly or indirectly to equipping students with the necessary methodological tools for their academic path.

According to the SER, students are encouraged to conduct or participate in research projects. As much as possible, research and teaching are said to be linked and students engage in research projects as part of their coursework, allowing them to apply their learning to real-world problems. This hands-on experience shall reinforce theoretical knowledge and develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

FMPR students are said to participate in the annual research competition organized by the university. This event shall encourage students to engage with current media issues, fostering a spirit of inquiry and innovation.

The SER states that the study programme shall qualify students for various roles in governmental, semi-governmental, and private institutions, depending on their chosen specialization, such as Public Relations Specialist, Advertising Specialist, Journalist (Digital-Print), Radio and TV Program Producer, Radio and Television Presenter, Media Researcher, Information Analyst, Reporter, Ceremonies and Protocol Supervisor, Media Centre Supervisor, Content Creator and Editor for Websites, Social Media Manager, Digital Marketer, Digital Designer, Online Journalist, Video Producer, Digital PR Specialist, and Data Analyst.

Liwa University explains that the University follows the US credit system, where 2 ECTS credits convert to 1 US credit. Students taking 12 credits (or 24 ECTS) per semester are considered full-time while those taking up to 18 credits (or 36 ECTS) are at the higher end of the full-time spectrum. Therefore, an academic year consists of 24-26 credits (48-52 ECTS). Additionally, students also have the possibility to take additional 6 credits (12 ECTS) during the summer term, according to the SER.

40% of students' workload is described to be based on projects and assignments and 60% of their workload is based on tests (final, midterm, and intermediate) in theoretical courses. In mainly practical courses, 30% of workload shall come from the final exam, while 70% are for projects and assignments.

The faculty states that it offers short training programmes in the local media institutions. The faculty is also said to encourage students to participate in national and international forums such as the annual Global Media Congress in Abu Dhabi, the Arab Media Forum in Dubai, and others. Furthermore, the Faculty regularly host media practitioners from leading media institutions to support the theoretical and practical knowledge provided to students during lectures and to provide information about the latest developments in the media sector, according to the SER.

Expert evaluation

From the experts point of view the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the bachelor's programme "Mass Communication" at Liwa University are designed to reflect both academic rigor and labour market requirements. Academically, the ILOs are aligned with the UAE QF Emirates Level 7 framework and mapped to international standards like the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 6, ensuring that students develop theoretical knowledge, research skills, critical thinking, and ethical awareness. From a labour market perspective, the programme emphasises practical skills such as media production, digital content creation, advertising campaign management, and the application of AI tools, aligning with the rapidly evolving media and communication sectors.

Also, it can be confirmed that the learning outcomes are regularly updated through a structured process that includes annual Program Review Reports, Course Review Reports, and input from the FMPR Advisory Board,

which comprises industry professionals. Additionally, stakeholder feedback from employers, alumni, and students – collected through surveys and focus groups – directly informs curriculum revisions. Recent updates, such as the introduction of courses such as “Media” and “AI” and the planned specialisation in “Corporate and Government Communication”, demonstrate the faculties responsiveness to emerging industry trends and market demands.

While being very oriented to the labour market needs and focussing on good graduate employability, however, despite these structured efforts, experts believe that, given its strong commitment to this approach, Liwa University could further develop its partnerships with the market. This would not only provide students with valuable information and expose them to potential career opportunities, but also address the shortcomings of the past graduation workplace training time, as revealed during interviews with labour market representatives. Strengthening partnerships with the labour market, including local media, public relations, and advertising companies (particularly through expanded internships, joint projects, and advisory input) are encouraged to ensure that graduates are better equipped with the practical skills and industry familiarity required for immediate employment (**Finding 1**). Given that Liwa University offers a highly practical study programme and the demand within media and advertising industries is evolving rapidly, particularly with the increasing importance of artificial intelligence, a further update of the current curriculum in light of market demands and practical skills in the areas of media content creation and editing and AI techniques is recommended so that students are even better qualified and prepared for the media market (**Finding 2**). Since the current programme structure mainly emphasises theoretical features, which impacts learning outcomes and learner development, an update based on sound conceptual and practical considerations would ensure that the courses are evolving in accordance with the demands of the industry. For example, some employers offer students a variety of workshops that address the fundamental demands of the market, such as content editing and management. The panel learned from the interviews that for students to be 90% prepared for the market and more involved in the field, they still require more training in AI and deep seek.

The experts highly value that a strategy with a clear vision, values, and goals is currently being implemented, beginning in 2023 and lasting until 2028, according to the university’s senior management and the Faculty of Media and Public Relations. As a result, the university concentrated on several objectives, including assessing the existing programmes, such as the BA in Mass Communication, and producing the current programme to update the programme learning outcomes (PLOs) and reflect the demands of the academic, scientific, and labour markets. A new programme will be offered next academic year with a focus on AI among various specialisations of the programme (mandatory courses) and a master’s programme in media.

Additionally, when asked how PLOs would help students prepare for the workforce by encouraging skill development, application, and real-world experience, LU explained that students gain the technical, ethical, and practical skills necessary to be successful in the fields of communication and digital technology. As stated in the SER, the programme successfully incorporates its application-oriented learning outcomes and skill development into courses, internships, and graduation projects. For example, courses like “Digital Media Skills” (DMC 301), “Online Journalism” (DMC 401), and the capstone “Graduation Project” (DMC 422), where students produce real-world content for online platforms, strongly reflect PLO3 (DGM) and PLO5 (DGM), which emphasise the application of artistic principles and innovation in digital media aligned with ethical standards. PLO4 (PR) and PLO5 (PR) are comparable. However, upon further analysis the panel discovered that the kinds of assignments that students generated are in printed form and did not very well correspond with the most recent media/digital output that the market requires. The experts therefore recommend re-examining the assignment requirements towards the learning objectives and market demands to better assure that the programme is up to speed with digital technology (**Finding 3**).

LU has created the new curriculum for the BA of Mass Communication, which includes new courses on artificial intelligence along with minor modifications to the fundamental requirements and specialisations in PR,

advertising, and digital media. However, only PR and digital media are currently active specialisations, and students are no longer offered to enrol in the advertising specialization because of poor admission demand. Considering this, the university provides elective courses such as “Introduction to Advertising” and “Digital Photography”, while the panel understands that this is practice in progress and encourages LU to create a marketing strategy that promotes advertising specialisations. In addition, due to the opportunity to work on their own business or organisations, students typically specialise in PR more often than in other specialties. LU occasionally invites professionals to share their experiences and provide examples. There are numerous Memoranda of Understanding with different organisations to improve students’ public relations skills.

LU uses a number of procedures to gauge the programme’s impact on graduates, such as an open-door policy (dean and department head), a regular questionnaire, and multiple meetings with student representatives. As the faculty representative confirmed, the graduation survey is carried out nine months after graduation. According to a recent survey, 10% of graduates explain they are not interested in finding work. Since 30% of students are non-native, it is more challenging to keep track of their progression or career paths after graduation.

Another source of feedback that LU uses to develop its programmes is the advisory board. To address academic needs and future plans, the advisory board meets twice a year. Based on minutes provided by LU from 2023-2025, media programmes that regularly recommend and match the ambitions of the UAE labour market highlighted the significance of addressing the requirements and realities of the UAE labour market, particularly in the area of media, advanced technology realities in the media, and the application of artificial intelligence in various media.

Concluding, the panel appreciates the recent developments and additions and at the same time encourages to further update the courses in the three specialisations to reflect the rapidly evolving media market, taking into consideration the results of reviewing the current programmes, meetings with students, faculty, staff, and labour market representatives (some of whom are on the advisory board) (**see Finding 2**). Furthermore, LU places a strong emphasis on listening to the board to make sure that students are prepared for the workforce, to develop internships (field training), and to get input from the organisations where students receive training. Student affairs of LU are focusing on student portfolios as an extracurricular activity that might assist students in finding jobs, and the faculty also agreed that constant development is required due to the rapid evolution of the media market.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Procedures for quality assurance

Bachelor’s 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

The Institutional Research and Quality Assurance (IRQA) unit of the University is said to implement a comprehensive quality assurance framework aligned with CAA Standards. Policies are said to cover academic integrity, grading, curriculum, and student support. The academic programmes of the University are periodically reviewed at course and programme levels through reports and benchmarking, as the SER states. The faculty shall ensure that courses are current, promoting fair treatment and anti-discrimination. Stakeholder feedback, strategic planning, and student performance data shall drive programme enhancements. Employability and satisfaction metrics are said to be monitored, which shall reflect effective teaching and alignment with market needs and shall ensure high academic standards and a continuous development of the study programmes.

The IRQA Department is explained provide a Quality Assurance Manual which documents shall form the structure and design of the LU quality assurance framework covering academic and administrative units, integrated into one system that works to ensure that institutional activities, programmes, and services are continually appraised. Academic policies are said to include the Examination Policy, Assessment and Grading Policy, Curriculum Approval and Revision Policy, Internship Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Course Folder Policy, Academic Integrity and misconduct Policy, Anti-Plagiarism Guidelines, Student Attendance Policy, Course Syllabus Policy, Course Coordination Policy.

To enhance its educational offerings and institutional ranking, the University employs a quality assurance system based on the PDCA model (Plan-Do-Check-Act), according to the SER.

IRQA is said to support the continuous quality enhancement through the following actions:

1. Ensure academic and administrative departments prepare department-level strategic plans based on college-level strategy
2. Provide all departments with data that helps them assess and improve their annual plans
3. Through audits, ensure that the departments comply with the standards of regulatory bodies and policies of the University.

The quality and effectiveness of the study programmes are said to be periodically monitored at both course (at the end of each semester) and programme levels (annually). As the SER states, improvements are made to courses, teaching methods, learning outcomes, and overall student learning experience.

According to the SER, IRQA periodically conducts external stakeholder surveys through the Blue Survey platform. The survey forms are sent to all external stakeholders. Once the survey is complete, the outcomes are said to be shared with all internal stakeholders for further action. Furthermore, FMPR's Advisory Board is said to play a vital role in shaping the curriculum, providing industry insights, and ensuring the relevance of academic programmes to current media practices.

To understand the market's needs during, the SER describes that LU hired Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to conduct a market study. As a result, the faculty suggested creating a new academic specialization in institutional and government communication after consulting with the advisory board and approval by the Board of Trustees.

The SER describes that the majority of FMPR students are already employed, so that there is limited scope for career placement for them. However, Liwa University explains to organize an annual career fair in March of every year to connect students seeking jobs with local employers. Also, for some students, their internship or work placement is explained to sometimes be a conduit for employment.

Throughout the past five years, there have been 1390 graduate students overall, and 960 graduates - or 69.1% - have progressed in employment. An employment rate of 69.1% is relatively strong, according to the SER, as many incoming students already have jobs.

Expert evaluation

The bachelor's programme in Mass Communication at Liwa University is fully integrated into the university's overarching quality assurance (QA) policy and procedures, which are in alignment with national accreditation standards. The QA system covers a wide scope. Regular programme and course evaluations are conducted, with student feedback collected through formal surveys at the end of each course and semester, as well as through informal channels such as advisor meetings and open-door policies with deans and heads of department. The open-door policy was confirmed and emphasised in discussions with students and the dean and should be maintained.

The evaluation process also includes the analysis of student workload, progression, completion rates, drop-outs, final grades of cohorts, satisfaction, and grade distributions. The experts carefully discussed and appreciate that there is a heightened awareness of grade inflation, and measures are in place to address unusually high grades. Student satisfaction and academic performance data are systematically reviewed to inform programme development and respond to emerging needs. The fact that surveys are systematically conducted in various areas is very positive. QA procedures lead to quality enhancements, which is important. For example, feedback from students and advisory boards has resulted in an increased number of practical courses and the upgrade of studio facilities. Following a faculty review, the FMPPR removed some courses, and added new ones to enhance practical skills, including "Introduction to Media and A.I.", "Production of Materials for P.R.", "Content Creation for Digital Media", and "Advertising Campaign Planning".

Identified issues, such as the need for more practical training, have led to curriculum adjustments and changes in admission requirements. In 2024, the Course Development Committee recommended reducing the number of course prerequisites to enhance accessibility and streamline the academic pathway for students. The fact that actions are derived from the survey data and changes are made is a good thing. The implementation of identified needs for action should not decrease.

Responsibilities within the QA system are clearly defined. Senior management, deans, and heads of department oversee the implementation of QA policies, while teaching staff are responsible for course delivery, assessment, and responding to student feedback. Advisory boards, including industry representatives, meet bi-annually to provide input on labour market trends and programme relevance. Targets such as increasing enrolment, improving student satisfaction, and maintaining high employability rates are set and monitored through key performance indicators. These targets are considered adequate for ongoing programme monitoring and revision. However, considering intake development, the expert panel also highlights that increasing enrolment numbers and student satisfaction should still not be achieved by lowering admission requirements or course objectives, as this will later be at the expense of employability.

What has already been mentioned but should be emphasised is that internal and external stakeholders are actively involved in QA processes. Students participate in surveys, focus groups, and direct feedback sessions with advisors and deans. Industry representatives serve on advisory boards, offering insights into market requirements. Feedback is shared with teaching staff through committee meetings and with students via class discussions and focus groups. The fact that feedback and evaluation results are shared with students and staff is considered as positive.

Information on labour market requirements is collected through advisory boards, graduate surveys, and partnerships with industry. Alumni are surveyed nine months after graduation to assess employment outcomes. While there is some data on the sectors where graduates are employed, tracking is more effective for those remaining in the UAE, as many expatriate graduates are harder to track. LU should ensure that adjustments to the curriculum continue to be implemented in favour of current labour market requirements (**see Finding 2**).

The university has established clear policies such as the Anti-Bullying Policy, Fair Treatment Policy, Diversity Policy and Speak Up Policy. Staff and students are encouraged to report incidents confidentially. Upon receiving a complaint, the university conducts an immediate investigation while ensuring the complainant's confidentiality and protection. Disciplinary actions are applied as necessary, ranging from warnings to termination. Victims are provided with access to counseling and are safeguarded against retaliation. These policies are regularly reviewed to maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the university community. The fact that there are concepts for anti-discrimination is positive. Considering the hierarchies present at universities, the fact that there are concrete processes in the event of incidents is highly commendable.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

Bachelor's 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

The faculty states that it prioritizes a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, incorporating in-person instruction and digital platforms such as Blackboard for communication and course management. The learning methods are described as follows: lectures, group projects, practical studio or lab activities, and work placements, ensuring students gain a balance of theoretical concepts and practical skills. Diverse student needs with flexible scheduling and specialized assistance for special needs students are said to be supported. Additionally, interactive tools and intelligent classroom technology shall enhance engagement and active participation, fostering a collaborative and inclusive educational environment. In some courses, group projects shall allow students to practice teamwork and project management skills to complete a collaborative project. In several digital media courses, students are said to be engaged in practical activities in a studio or lab to develop their applied skills. In addition, all students are required to join work placements related to their field of study in selected organizations to expose them to real-world professional environments, according to the SER.

The assessment methods are described as follows: written exams, assignments, group work, presentations, and projects have been introduced to align with each course's intended learning outcomes. Midterm exams are said to take place in the midway of the semester, and final exams after the end of the instructional period. The exam dates are said to be listed in the annual calendar schedule, which is issued at the start of each academic year and includes information on exams for each semester. Students shall receive detailed test schedules with timings for every course at least two weeks before the exams, furthermore, students shall receive an Email from the Student Affairs Department to notify all students of the exam schedule.

According to the SER, a re-examination is only permitted for students with valid and documented excuses reviewed by a dedicated committee determining whether the excuse is accepted or rejected. Re-examination opportunities are said to be limited to one attempt only. If a student misses an exam without a valid excuse, they are considered to have failed the course.

It is important for the faculty to address the needs of all types of students at FMPR: (fresh students, mature/adult students, employees, and other categories). So, the schedules are said to taking place at different flexible times: mornings, evenings, and weekends.

Liwa University explains that it respects the national traditions and cultural norms of UAE and defines diversity as variety by age, gender, family/national background/origin, marital status, physical ability, political persuasion, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, or any other protected class.

To the UAE Ministry of Education's directives on integrating students with disabilities, the University has developed a policy for handling these cases, explaining how these students are accommodated in the teaching process and examinations, as the SER states. The Faculty of Media and Public Relations is said to offer special classrooms for deaf students, which are taught by a faculty member and a sign language expert, to facilitate information delivery. These students are said to study the same curricula as regular students and undergo learning assessments using the same evaluation tools specified for the course. Students with special needs, such as autistic students or students with Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD or ADHD), are said to be integrated with regular students. They shall be supported by a shadow teacher who assists in information delivery. Coordination meetings are held between the shadow teacher and the lecturer. In cases where a student's health requires it, the shadow teacher may accompany the student to exams to facilitate understanding or writing if the student cannot do so independently, according to the SER.

The SER describes the multi-campus Policy which shall ensure that professors and students at both campuses get equal academic and administrative services.

Courses' coordination, quality control, and effectiveness are said to be regularly monitored, both at the course and programme levels. Decisions are said to be made to enhance the quality of courses, teaching methods, learning outcomes, and any other aspects related to the educational process.

As the SER describes, Liwa University has established an Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy to provide clarity on this matter for everyone (students, faculty, and staff). In case of any complaints by students or faculty, a committee is said to be formed by the faculty Dean to review and decide on the complaint, with recommendations forwarded to the faculty Dean. Students are said to have the right to discuss and appeal against their grades.

Expert evaluation

From the expert's point of view, one of the outstanding strengths of FMPR in terms of learning, teaching, and assessment of students is addressing the needs of all types of students studying at the faculty (e.g., fresh students, mature/adult students, employees, mothers/caregivers, and students with disabilities).

Examples of Blackboard / intelligent classrooms use in teaching and learning were provided on site during the meetings and in the documents, also methods of assessment and the course assignment rubrics, such as group projects were provided and explained.

While the concept of the role "shadow teacher" at Liwa University was explained and LU supplied evidence to support this claim and listed the names of students with special needs together with the names of the teachers who were in charge of them, the experts did not meet any special needs students because the university said that all of them had previously graduated, nor did the experts get the opportunity to meet shadow teachers. However, students were also interviewed in this regard and confirmed the general availability of support.

To improve their ability to teach their courses and meet the desired learning outcomes, as well as to stay up to speed with the rapidly evolving media market, staff members participate in seminars and conferences. They employ a variety of strategies, including bringing in experts to speak with students and incorporating the

findings of recent research into the curriculum while giving rigorous ethical considerations. Additionally, the faculty staff noted that although students utilise AI to complete their assignments, they are evaluated in various ways, such as oral presentations, discussions, and Plagiarism software (e.g., SafeAssign).

The panel also learned during the interviews that teaching staff also holds frequent meetings to talk about the latest developments in the field and how they plan to incorporate them into the programme. To this end, they also invited several Emirati media professionals to speak to students, as well as various influencers, TV producers, and advisory board members.

According to the faculty staff meeting with the expert panel, within the framework of the Emiratis Association and through various assessment techniques, staff of the programme promotes soft skills as student's abilities vary. They also examine and enhance students' abilities by employing new assessment methods, such as giving lectures on the applications of AI in media activities. Although teaching staff confirmed that they use different types of assignments within the practical courses in line with the programme learning outcomes, the evidence was not fully sufficient to support this claim **(see Finding 3)**.

For a course with several sections and teachers, LU assigns a course leader who also coordinates the assessment tools on both campuses to ensure that the final exam is the same. The programme also features a procedure assuring that students in every section are evaluated fairly. Furthermore, the experts confirm that appropriate student appeals procedures are in place at LU.

According to the curriculum, most of the courses in the three specialisations are also practical, requiring students to create various materials for their assignments. Examples of these materials include websites, magazines, and the media coverage of the university's recent conference held in the third week of April 2025, which was entirely produced by AI applications and various AI-generated videos that show the numerous skills that made the students marketable. As mentioned above, a careful analysis of the implementation indicated that there is some need for a systematic analysis of course learning outcomes and respective assessment forms as the provided evidence indicated that this match has not been fully achieved in all courses **(see Finding 3)**.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Bachelor's degree

Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

[ESG 1.4]

Description

Admission

The SER describes that the admission process to FMPR is managed centrally by LU's Office of Student Recruitment and Admission. Students are said to need at least 60% in their secondary school certificate or equivalent (e.g., High School) to be eligible. No additional language requirements currently exist. Admission statistics show consistent growth from 2019 to 2023, with a notable increase in 2023 due to relaxed national admission rules, according to the SER. The Office of Student Recruitment and Admission is said to organize additionally orientation sessions where a representative from the faculty meets with new students.

Most students are said to come from the UAE, suggesting strong local recruitment. The data also shall indicate the potential for increasing international diversity, as seen by rising numbers from Yemen and other regional countries. The presence of students from countries within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region shall indicate the institution's regional focus.

Currently, there is no selection procedure in place for the study programme, as stated in the SER.

Progression

Student progression is said to be monitored through exams, academic advising, performance reports (via grade reports and personal feedback), and support services (tutoring services, workshops). Each student is assigned an academic advisor who regularly reviews their academic progress and provides guidance on course selection, study habits, and career advice. Scheduled meetings are arranged between students and advisors to discuss academic performance, set goals, and address issues, according to the SER.

Recognition

The SER describes the University policies for international student mobility and recognition of competencies of other institutions and prior learning.

Liwa University is said to have an International and Exchange Student Policy established to provide an effective, accountable, and transparent framework for managing inter-college relations. The Policy establishes a framework for the governance of visits by international students, including exchange students, international students, and others, according to the SER. FMPR states that it will explore avenues during the next academic year, 2024-2025, to establish such opportunities and the means to support them financially.

Certification

The University awards a bachelor's degree in Media; graduates receive an official Diploma and a final transcript at the end of their studies.

Expert evaluation

The formal requirements for admission and specific prerequisites for programmes at FMPR at Liwa University are defined and communicated to prospective students. These requirements have evolved in line with recent regulatory changes, which have granted the university more flexibility in setting admission criteria. There is currently no selection process at FMPR as can be seen from the SER. Recognizing the practical requirements and skills to succeed in the labour market and also assure graduate success of LU, the faculty might consider introducing or defining minimum entry requirements or grades to admit only students who are genuinely interested in the degree programmes at FMPR and are aware of the course content (**Finding 4**). This might also include a reflection of the relevance of Arabic and English language in the media sector.

Liwa University actively gathers data on the admission procedures of past cohorts, using key performance indicators such as enrolment numbers to inform recruitment strategies and improve support services. This data-orientated approach might help the university to better align its offers and admission procedures with the needs of its students.

The university has implemented mechanisms to recognise prior learning. Within the national legal frameworks, regulations are in place for the recognition of competences and the transfer of credits from other higher education institutions. These regulations are documented and accessible to students, and they adhere to regional and international principles. This generally facilitates the mobility of students. In order to promote the mobility and include international exposure (also to other media markets) of FMPR students, partner institutions could be nominated and learning agreements should be established for recognition (**Finding 5**). The FMPR is

already exploring the prospects of mutual recognition of competences with other local higher education institutions and should pursue this further.

Upon completion of their studies, graduates receive documentation that provides transparent information about the qualification gained, including learning outcomes, national context, level, and status of the studies. While the documents do not explicitly mention a diploma supplement, the university emphasises the importance of clear and internationally understandable certification to support graduates in both the labour market and further academic pursuits. To further enhance internationalization a diploma supplement combining key information about the qualification, outcomes systemic context, e.g. in accordance with European guidelines could also be made available to students to facilitate the admission of FMPR graduates to further studies in Europe (**Finding 6**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Teaching staff

Bachelor's 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

According to the SER, all FMPR teaching staff usually hold a PhD. degree in their fields. In the 2023-2024 academic year, FMPR employed 16 full-time (FT) and 4 part-time (PT) teaching staff in the spring, and 15 FT and 3 PT in the fall. The teaching staff's teaching load is explained to be 24 credit hours or eight courses per year (including summer terms). The part time teaching staff are explained to be limited to teach no more than six credit hours (or two courses) per semester. Faculty contracts are described to be renewed every two years or terminated with notice. Faculty development shall include professional development activities like attending academic conferences, and participation in further education programmes to enhance teaching skills and keep up to date with advances in technology.

The Academic Staff Employment Policy states that Liwa University is committed to recruiting the right talent for the right position through a competitive process based on the principles of merit, competence, diversity, and equality (without reference to gender, race, nationality, etc.). It further states that the university will recruit qualified academic staff who have a verified record of teaching, research, and community service. It is said that the university aims to recruit academic staff with industry as well as academic experience. All recruits must have teaching experience in a higher education institution of a period appropriate to the level of their appointment, as the SER states.

The SER describes the process for teaching staff recruitment as follows: The process starts with preparation of proposal from the Dean based on the need of the programme, then, approval from the VPAA for a position based on demonstrable need. After drafting a position announcement that includes a position statement, and qualifications required HR announces the position via their recruitment channels. The Dean subsequently forms a search committee composed of himself, the head of department, and a teaching staff in the same specialization. The search committee reviews all applications and selects a short list of applicants who meet

the position requirements. Short-listed applicants are then interviewed via videoconferencing, and each is given a score. The candidate with the highest score is selected, and approval for employment is then sought from the VPAA and President.

The Academic Staff Professional Development Policy shall list areas in teaching, research, leadership/management, HR, mentoring, which are supported by the University. The teaching staff at FMPR shall regularly participate in various further education programmes to enhance their teaching and learning skills as well as assessment methods.

Scholarly activities of the teaching staff shall ensure that the curriculum is grounded in the latest academic and industry developments, providing students with contemporary and relevant knowledge.

Expert evaluation

The faculty responsible for the programme demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment and dedication. All teaching staff members are highly engaged and show a strong sense of responsibility, both in the delivery of courses and in the academic advising of students. The academic qualifications of the faculty are appropriate with regard to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Advisors are not only supportive when it comes to individual course selection but also provide valuable guidance on broader questions concerning the academic progression of students.

The university has provided a comprehensive overview of all teaching staff involved in the programme. The documentation includes academic qualifications, professional backgrounds, duration of contracts, and current workloads. Based on the available data, the qualifications of the faculty generally align with the academic and pedagogical requirements of the programme.

Based on this information the panel recognizes that LU manages well to attract and employ academically well qualified staff. At the same time, the expert panel noted that a number of faculty members appear to lack substantial practical experience in the field. This is particularly relevant in a practice-oriented discipline such as media and communication. While academic excellence is clearly present, the connection to industry practice could be strengthened. In the further development of the programme the panel therefore recommends a more targeted recruitment strategy that includes the integration of academically qualified practitioners, ideally also from Arabic-speaking countries, to further enhance the professional relevance of the programme (**Finding 7**).

In terms of staff quantity and workload, the current team must be operating at capacity. Faculty members are responsible not only for teaching but also for student advising and organisational duties, often across multiple programmes. The current staff-to-student ratio is hardly sufficient to ensure sustainable workload management. While the panel understands the existence of workload peaks, the current staff ratio will not enable a sustainable programme success. The panel recommends increasing the number of full-time staff to allow for a more even distribution of responsibilities and to safeguard the quality of teaching, research, and student support in the long term (**Finding 8**).

Recruitment processes for teaching staff are in place and follow a formalised and transparent procedure. They cover all relevant fields. At the same time, it was not entirely clear to what extent external and guest lecturers are also systematically introduced to the specific requirements and learning outcomes of the programme which might be an area for increased attention in the future, particularly as an increased visibility of LU might lead to an increase in their number. Hence, the university is encouraged to further formalise the onboarding process for guest lecturers, ensuring that they are familiar with the curriculum structure, learning objectives, and assessment strategies.

Regarding long-term staff planning, the documentation provided indicates that most of the teaching contracts are generally secured for the duration of the accreditation period. Where this is not the case, the university has expressed its intention to retain current faculty or replace them with similarly qualified individuals. Also, in light of the high workload of the current staff, a more detailed strategic staff plan that includes clear measures for succession and capacity development would clearly benefit the faculty, particularly as the new campus development in Al Ain will enable quantitative increase.

The panel of experts positively recognize that opportunities for staff development are in place and also regulated, but its implementation could be further expanded. While there is evidence that academic staff have access to further training, particularly in subject-specific fields like AI, opportunities for development in didactics, digital teaching tools, and assessment methodologies should be more systematically integrated (**Finding 9**). This applies not only to academic but also to administrative staff, whose ongoing professional development is essential for the effective operation of the programme.

Finally, the expert panel had difficulty assessing the viability of the specialisation in Advertising. There appears to be limited student demand in this area, and the number of qualified faculty members who are specialised in this subject is notably small. Given these findings, the panel encourages the university to critically review the relevance and sustainability of this specialisation. It may be advisable to phase out the focus area if a clear demand from students or industry cannot be established (**Finding 10**).

In summary, while the teaching staff shows strong academic commitment and provides robust support to students, the faculty would benefit from an increase in personnel, a stronger integration of practitioners, and an expanded approach to staff development. These measures would strengthen the programme's delivery and ensure that its quality is upheld throughout the accreditation period.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Learning resources and student support

Bachelor's degree

Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.

Guidance and support are available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.

[ESG 1.6]

Description

The University website shall provide up-to-date information about the study programme, including course descriptions, intended learning outcomes, admission requirements, and qualifications. The SER describes the open-door policy of the Department Heads and advisors, providing information to the students.

The FMPR supports the central student events offered by the University (such as the orientation event), and it organises several events on its own (regarding graduation projects, visits by media professionals, annual student research poster exhibition).

Each of the FMPR teaching staff is required to hold office hours (10 hours weekly), during which academic assistance is provided to students. Liwa University has appointed a specific faculty expert whose main task is student success and academic counselling, and coordinating between students and the teaching faculty, according to the SER.

As the SER describes, LU provides 51 classrooms as well as several different-sized rooms, computer labs with main design and editing software, and digital studios for practical learning (one at each campus). Regular maintenance and updates of material resources are managed by the IT department. The library offers print and digital resources. Currently, the library contains 6,123 books and periodicals in FMPR disciplines. Two technical staff shall support the programme and its facilities on both campuses. Students shall receive detailed public information, orientation, academic advising, and specific support services, including for those with special needs.

Students can use a health clinic, have access to a dining area, a prayer room, a recreational area, and can join any campus community that caters for different interests like wellness, sports, photography, etc.

The total tuition fee for FMPR programmes at the Abu Dhabi campus is AED 144,300, which is approximately 35,940 €. For the Al Ain campus, the fee is AED 127,170, or about 31,683 €. The Financial Aid and Discount Policy shall provide an effective framework to support academic excellence.

Expert evaluation

Students at Liwa University access course descriptions, intended learning outcomes, teaching methods, forms of assessment, and workload expectations through course syllabi, which are distributed at the start of each semester. These details are also accessible via the Blackboard learning management system, which instructors use to post course materials, assignments, and announcements. Additionally, academic advisors guide students through course selection and curriculum pathways to ensure clarity on course expectations.

Liwa University coordinates course offerings through the Course Development Committee, Faculty Council, and registration office to ensure coherent scheduling and to avoid content overlap. Study plans are structured to provide a balanced academic load each semester, with clear prerequisites and elective options. Annual Program Review Reports and semesterly Course Review Reports further ensure content alignment and timely program completion.

From the expert's point of view, the university provides appropriate material resources, including updated digital studios, computer labs, classrooms, and specialised media equipment, particularly for the media and public relations programme. Major investments, such as the Abu Dhabi Digital Studio upgrade and new facilities in Al Ain, support hands-on learning aligned with industry standards. Financial resources are allocated annually based on programme needs and strategic priorities to ensure adequate infrastructure.

Currently the studio and digital equipment on the Al Ain campus are not up to date. The studio seems rather improvised, and the experts learned in the interviews about only a single digital camera being available, which cannot be used for projects outside of the campus. The panel of experts fully support the course taken by LU with the construction of the new campus and consequent update of facilities, also allowing appropriate studio equipment as well as availability of required technology. The new Al Ain campus will have better facilities; these are urgently needed. Consequently, the panel underscores that Liwa University must improve the facilities and equipment available beyond the studio in order to also achieve the learning outcomes at Al Ain campus. (**Finding 11**). With the construction already underway the panel understands that LU is already on a very good path to achieve this important milestone.

The university library offers both print and digital resources, including national and international literature relevant to media, public relations, advertising, and communication. Access to databases, journals, and updated media references supports students' research and coursework needs. Continuous resource updates and online access ensure that students can meet their intended learning outcomes effectively.

The merger of Liwa College of Technology (LCT) and Khawarizmi International College (KIC) has brought together the libraries of both institutions. However, to date, these two collections have only been housed within the same library facilities in Abu Dhabi, without being fully integrated into a single unified library system. This fragmentation makes it more difficult for students to navigate and access resources efficiently. A complete merger of both library collections will help improving usability and streamline access for students.

Students receive advisory support through academic advisors, the Student Success & Academic Counseling Office, and career counselling services. Regular consultation hours, individual academic planning, and risk monitoring for at-risk students ensure comprehensive academic and personal support. Additional support is available through the Career Development Office and specialised services for students with disabilities. Liwa University also provides orientation sessions and introductory workshops for new students to familiarise them with campus resources, academic policies, and programme expectations. Information sessions and career fairs also target potential students, helping them understand programme offerings and career prospects. These activities support smooth transitions into college life.

While the documentation notes local partnership agreements, it indicates that international exchange partnerships are still being developed, with new agreements planned in 2024-2025. Currently, exchange student support appears limited, but expanding partnerships and planned agreements suggest growing capacity to assist incoming and outgoing students in the future. The panel fully supports this trend as also the development of Liwa College to Liwa University opens new doors for international cooperation. Currently, Liwa University predominantly targets the local Abu Dhabi and Al Ain markets, and students are educated also for these labour markets.

Students are supported in securing practical placements through internships coordinated by the faculty and Career Development Office, with partnerships such as the Sky News Arabia Academy providing hands-on training. The internship course is mandatory, ensuring students gain real-world experience relevant to their specialisation. Faculty and career advisors assist in organising placements and mentoring students during internships.

Liwa University considers student diversity by offering flexible class schedules (morning, evening, weekends), support for students with disabilities (e.g., sign language interpreters, shadow teachers), and multicultural learning environments. Policies and resources cater to working students, mothers, and students with special needs to ensure equitable access to education and resources. From the panel of experts point of view the flexibility in delivery and support of students is a clear strength of the programme and university. It showcases how the institution caters to the need of society and reaches individuals enabling their academic advancement beyond traditional pathways.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

7. Information

Bachelor's 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

The FMPR describes to ensure the accessibility and transparency of its information by offering it through the LU official website, at social media, in public meetings and via both digital and print publications. Tailored information is provided for diverse stakeholders, and a new College Campus Community Platform, launched by the Student Affairs Department, shall soon enhance student engagement. Additionally, LU is said to regularly participate in national educational exhibitions. This shall ensure transparency and easy access for all interested parties.

Expert evaluation

The experts confirm that Liwa University ensures that relevant stakeholders and the general public are informed about the programme and its key elements through several structured mechanisms outlined in the self-evaluation report:

The bachelor's programme in Mass Communication, its curriculum structure, and intended learning outcomes are available on the programme website, which provides accessible, up-to-date descriptions of the programme content, specialisations, and graduate competencies. Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are clearly defined and mapped to national and international frameworks (QFEmirates and ECTS), ensuring alignment and transparency for stakeholders.

The university provides detailed admission statistics and procedures, including planned admission numbers by term and location (Abu Dhabi and Al Ain campuses). The admissions process is guided by clear policies that are shared with prospective students and stakeholders.

As a very positive aspect and also in line with LU target group, flexible admission cycles (fall, spring, and summer terms) and support for diverse student populations (e.g., working professionals, students with disabilities) are communicated through the university's admission office and online platforms.

Currently, Liwa University accepts all students who fulfil the requirements outlined in the policies. An entrance test or any other selection concerning prior experiences of students does not exist. As a result, Liwa University has a very diverse student body which makes it harder to guarantee a constantly high level of discussions in the classroom and with this the quality of education. Liwa University might want to assess whether an entrance test could help to further improve the quality of education in the mass media programme (**see Finding 4**).

The degree awarded (Bachelor of Mass Communication) and its recognised accreditation status are publicly available. The report confirms national accreditation by the UAE Ministry of Education (CAA), with reaccreditation secured until June 2026. This ensures that both prospective students and employers are aware of the recognised value of the qualification.

Details about teaching methods (lectures, group projects, studio work, internships), learning resources, and student-centred pedagogies (e.g., Blackboard LMS, smart classrooms, flexible schedules) are provided both in the SER and via stakeholder engagement activities. Following careful analysis, the experts confirm that the Institutional Research and Quality Assurance (IRQA) unit monitors and shares data about student satisfaction, course evaluations, and programme reviews. Regular surveys, focus groups, and advisory board meetings involve stakeholders in discussions about curriculum updates, teaching quality, and assessment methods.

Stakeholders, including employers, alumni, and advisory boards, are consulted on the relevance of the curriculum and employability needs, with feedback integrated into programme improvements.

The panel of experts also learned that Liwa University uses annual career fairs, partnerships (e.g., Sky News Arabia Academy), and participation in national and regional forums (e.g., Global Media Congress, Arab Media Forum) to inform external stakeholders about the programme's offerings, student capabilities, and institutional updates. LU has also put in place several processes and structures to ensure that the information it provides to stakeholders and the public is impartial, objective, and regularly updated. Based on the SER and the expert's visit, the following processes and structures could be identified:

The IRQA unit oversees the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data about programmes, student satisfaction, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness. The IRQA also audits academic and administrative departments to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and institutional policies, including the accuracy of public information. It publishes the Quality Assurance Manual and coordinates periodic stakeholder surveys and data collection (student surveys, alumni feedback, employer surveys), ensuring evidence-based and unbiased reporting.

Furthermore, Liwa University has formal policies governing course descriptions, academic integrity, programme review, curriculum revision, and public information dissemination (outlined in the Policy and Procedure Manual). These policies ensure that academic and programme information is standardised, consistent, and vetted through multiple levels (department, faculty, IRQA, and governance councils) before being published. At the course level, Course Review Reports (CRRs) are compiled every semester by faculty and audited by department heads and deans. These reviews ensure course content and descriptions remain accurate and current. At the programme level, the Program Review Report (PRR) is compiled annually, incorporating feedback, benchmarking data, and programme performance indicators. The PRR undergoes internal review and informs updates to programme documents.

The FMPR Advisory Board, composed of industry professionals, provides independent insights on the relevance and quality of the programme. Their input helps ensure that publicly shared programme information reflects current industry standards and is not internally biased.

Finally, the university's communications and IT departments maintain the official programme website, ensuring information is updated based on approved materials from academic units and IRQA. This adds a further layer of accuracy and consistency.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programme “Mass Communication” offered by Liwa University with conditions.

Commendation:

The faculty and staff responsible for the programme demonstrate a remarkable level of commitment and dedication, which is reflected in the strong (academic) support of students. Teaching staff is highly engaged, motivated, and dedicated both to teaching and advising students. Equipped with academic excellence and rigour as well as an understanding for the importance of labour market involvement, the institution provides a solid programme with a focus on practical skills and an openness to feedback and continuous improvement.

Findings:

1. The faculty is encouraged to further strengthen its partnerships with the labour market, including local media, public relations, and advertising companies, particularly through expanded internships, joint projects to ensure that graduates are better equipped with the practical skills and industry familiarity required for direct employment.
2. A further update of the current curriculum in light of market demands and practical skills in the areas of media content creation and editing and AI techniques is recommended so that students are even better qualified and prepared for the media market.
3. LU is strongly recommended to re-examine the assignment requirements towards the learning objectives and market demands to better assure that the programme is up to speed with digital technology.
4. The introduction of a selection process, e.g., in the form of an entrance test or competitive minimal grades should be considered in order to admit only students who are genuinely interested in the degree programmes at FMPR and to further improve the quality of education in the mass media programme.
5. In order to promote the mobility of FMPR students, partner institutions should be identified for Memoranda of Understandings and learning agreements should be established to facilitate recognition.
6. To further enhance internationalization LU should deliver a Diploma Supplement upon graduation explaining the qualification and its position in the higher education system.
7. The panel recommends a more targeted recruitment strategy that includes the integration of academically qualified practitioners, ideally also from Arabic-speaking countries, to enhance the professional relevance of the programme.
8. An increase in the number of full-time staff is recommended to allow for a more even distribution of responsibilities and to safeguard the quality of teaching, research, and student support in the long term.
9. Opportunities for development in didactics, digital teaching tools, and assessment methodologies should be more systematically integrated into staff development.
10. The university is encouraged to critically review the relevance and sustainability of the Advertising specialisation. It may be advisable to phase out the focus area if a clear demand from students or industry cannot be established.

11. Liwa University must improve the facilities and equipment available beyond the studio at Al Ain campus.