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FINAL REPORT

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORK (BACHELOR OF ARTS)

SOCIAL WORK (MASTER OF ARTS)

May 2026



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DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- “SOCIAL WORK” (BACHELOR)
- “SOCIAL WORK” (MASTER)

OFFERED BY UAE UNIVERSITY, AL AIN, UAE

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments by the university, and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 29th meeting on 18 May 2026, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programmes “**Social Work**” (Bachelor) and “**Social Work**” (Master) offered by **UAE University**, UAE, are accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

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 June 2027**. 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 June 2032**, provided that the conditions listed below are fully met. Otherwise, the accreditation may be withdrawn.

Conditions

Both programmes

1. The theoretical aspect of the discipline needs to be more strongly included in the curriculum to ensure the close connection with practical methods.
2. The handbook must be revised to adequately reflect the structure and the content of the programmes.
3. UAEU must establish a clear mechanism that links the outcomes of quality dialogues to curriculum development processes.
4. A transparent and institutionally defined and documented recognition programme must be implemented.

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

Both programmes

1. It is recommended to further streamline the connection between theoretical learning and practical application.
2. UAEU should offer additional language classes specifically for the Social Work context for students.

3. The establishment of a formalised and standardised quality dialogue with employers is recommended, including regular meetings (e.g. once per semester or annually) with clearly defined stakeholders, a structured agenda, and systematic documentation of outcomes.
4. It is recommended to review the administrative procedures for including guest lecturers and, where necessary, simplifying them to enable a more flexible inclusion of external expertise.
5. It is recommended that UAEU develop an internationalisation strategy especially for the undergraduate level to better reflect UAEU's already existing efforts on the graduate and research level.
6. UAEU should issue additional certification that is more similar to a diploma supplement in terms of entailed information such as information on the grading system and on the national higher education context.
7. It is recommended that UAEU more closely monitor the workload of the teaching staff and establish effective measures to reduce it if necessary.
 - a. A practicum director should be hired for each programme which assists students with planning and conducting their internship.
8. The university should broaden the range of practicum opportunities by expanding cooperation with field practise partners.
9. UAEU should develop more targeted measures to support early career orientation.
10. UAEU should develop mechanisms to ensure that such information is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Additionally for the master's programme

11. It is recommended to establish more transparency regarding procedures for documenting learning processes in the practice setting, as well as mechanisms for feedback between the university and placement institutions.
12. It is recommended to further sharpen the profile of the programme in terms of the balance of research and practice orientation.

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

EXPERT REPORT

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- “SOCIAL WORK” (BACHELOR)
- “SOCIAL WORK” (MASTER)

OFFERED BY UAE UNIVERSITY, AL AIN, UAE

Virtual visit to the university: 14-16 April 2026

Panel of experts

Prof. Dr. Jörg Fischer	Professor of Educational Concepts & head of the master's programme International Social Work, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, University of Applied Sciences Erfurt (Germany)
Prof. Dr. Christine Huth-Hildebrandt	Professor for Social Work, School of Applied Humanities & Social Services, German Jordanian University (Jordan)
Mr. Amin Stiller	Social worker, Head of Inclusion Department, Soziale Dienstleistungen Becker (Social Services Becker), Köln (Germany) (labour market representative)
Ms. Ina Marie Leukel	Student Social Work, University of Applied Sciences Dortmund (Germany) (student representative)
Coordinator Ms Jana Newiger	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

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 programmes **“Social Work”** (Bachelor) and **“Social Work”** (Master) offered by **UAE University**.

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 March 2025. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In June 2025, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programmes and an appendix. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview of statistical data of the student body
- the CVs of the teaching staff
- information on student services
- course descriptions
- 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 1 December 2025. The final version of the SER was submitted in March 2026.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the discipline, 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 2026. 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 to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a virtual site visit at the university took place from 14-16 April 2026. The experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. representatives of the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, the teaching staff as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The virtual visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings of the expert panel to the university representatives.

Reporting

After the virtual site visit, the expert panel 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 programmes. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 18 May 2026. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In June 2026, AQAS published the report, the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel members.

III. General information on the university

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) is a public research university based in Al Ain, UAE with more than 14,000 students currently enrolled. It was established in 1976 and is the oldest university in the United Arab Emirates. UAEU offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes across nine colleges: Business and Economics, Education, Engineering, Food and Agriculture, Humanities and Social Sciences, Information Technology, Law, Medicine and Health Sciences, Science. In addition to its Colleges, UAEU comprises nine research centres for several academic fields. The SER further outlines that UAEU's Science and Innovation Park works alongside business, industry, and public institutions to provide the UAE with research solutions. Students currently come from all seven Emirates and more than 60 other countries. UAEU uses rankings to benchmark with other universities in the region and beyond and implements a strategic plan which is revised and published every four years. In terms of internal organisation, the Vice Chancellor and his two Deputies are in charge of managing UAEU, including strategic planning, finances, and external relations and alumni. The provost oversees all academic matters such as undergraduate study programmes, academic personnel, the College of Graduate Studies, research centres, and consultation services. In addition, there are associate provosts for student affairs and research. As for the allocation of financial resources, they are distributed based on a combination of historical budget data, projected needs, and strategic priorities, as the SER states. To ensure that sufficient resources are available for each programme, the departments conduct periodic reviews of budget allocations throughout the academic year. Distribution criteria include enrolment numbers, strategic importance, and accreditation requirements.

The programmes under review are offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). CHSS was established in 1977, together with three other founding colleges. With more than 3,000 students currently enrolled and more than 140 faculty members, CHSS is stated to be the largest college of UAEU. The SER outlines that the College underwent a restructuring process in 2019 to be more competitive domestically as well as abroad, improve its functionality, and increase its accreditation potential. As a result, CHSS now consists of eight departments: Arabic Language and Literature, Cognitive Sciences, Geography and Urban Sustainability, Government and Society, Languages and Literature, Media and Creative Industries, Social Wellbeing, and Tourism and Heritage Studies. The SER outlines that the Dean is the Chief Academic, Financial, and Administrative Officer of the College. He is supported by a Vice Dean and two Assistant Deans for Research and Graduate Studies and for Student Affairs.

The two programmes under review, the bachelor's and master's programme of Social Work, are hosted by the Department of Social Wellbeing. The Department was restructured between 2017 and 2019 when it also changed its name from Department of Social Work to its current form to attract a broader range of candidates by developing new programmes in the future, thereby providing more career opportunities for graduates. Currently, the Department offers one undergraduate and one graduate programme (Social Work). Financial resources are reportedly allocated to programmes based on a combination of historical budget data, projected needs, and strategic priorities. Each programme submits an annual budget request outlining their financial requirements for the upcoming academic year, coordinating with the CHSS Finance Officer and the Finance Department. To ensure that sufficient resources are available for each programme, the departments conduct periodic reviews of budget allocations throughout the academic year. Adjustments are made as necessary to address any shortfalls or emerging needs. This includes budget reviews and the reallocation of funds to priority areas.

IV. Assessment of the study programmes

1. Quality of the curriculum

Bachelor's/Master'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]

1.1 Social Work (Bachelor)

Description

The bachelor's programme Social Work (BSW) is a full-time 8-semester programme that is said to comply with the standards of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), according to the SER. The programme is said to place a strong emphasis on field-based education as students spend two semesters in the field which is supposed to enable them to translate knowledge from the classroom into practical skills and competencies. The programme reportedly aims to educate, train, and prepare culturally competent generalist social work practitioners that promote social change and problem solving on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

The SER identifies the following four programme goals:

1. To graduate entry level BSW practitioners with the knowledge, values, skills to practice with the multicultural populations of the UAE, the GCC and the global community.
2. To prepare students for professional practice, to conduct research/dissemination of findings, and for community service.
3. To enhance traditional values of volunteerism, social solidarity, cooperation and mutual aid through real world humanitarian experiences.
4. To prepare today's leaders for professional practice and service in furthering a worldwide humanitarian and social development agenda to improve individual, children, family, groups and community's quality of life.

Against this background, the following nine programme-level Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are outlined in the SER:

1. Apply theoretical knowledge gained in human behaviour & social environment, social work practice, social policy and research courses to generalist social work practice.
2. Present orally and in writing the results of using the problem-solving method to case scenarios based on real life situations.
3. Conduct bio-psycho-social assessments, needs assessments, planning, and evaluation in relation to generalist social work practice.
4. Apply social work generalist practice theory and skills with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizational leadership in practice exercises and field practicum settings.
5. Apply critical thinking in their interventions with individuals, families, groups, organisations, and communities in their field practicum settings.
6. Communicate orally and in writing a research study including data analysis and the use of SPSS.
7. Apply a research-based case study on an issue and/or problem encountered in the field.

8. Model the professional and ethical behaviour expected of entry-level social work professionals, including the use of supervision for accountability and improvement of practice.
9. Develop self-awareness and learning practice strategies through self-study via readings, practice experiences and reflection.

The SER further states that the curriculum of the BSW programme has recently undergone two major structural adjustments aimed at streamlining the academic pathway and enhancing student focus within the discipline. First, all minor specialisations have been removed to allow students to concentrate more deeply on core social work competencies. Second, the General Education requirement has been reduced from 33 CH to 21 CH to optimise programme structures and reduce academic load without compromising the quality of education. In addition, several changes to already existing courses have been implemented and new courses have been added to the curriculum.

The current curriculum thus consists of 21 CH of General Education, 6 CH of college requirements, 70 CH of Major requirement courses, 11 CH of internship, and 12 CH of free electives. Major electives are no longer included in the revised curriculum.

The field-based approach of the curriculum consists of two field training experiences the first of which takes place in a school setting while the second is conducted in social service organisations. This dual-placement approach is supposed to ensure that students are exposed to diverse practice environments and thus equipped with a broad range of competencies. The SER further states that each student is monitored by a field supervisor who visits them on-site four to five times per semester to provide feedback and guidance. Student performance is evaluated using an assessment tool designed by the Department to measure the development of core professional competencies in social work.

Expert evaluation

The strengths of the bachelor's programme of Social Work (BSW) identified during the discussions and reviewing the provided documentation are clear. Drawing on its extensive prior experience, the university has successfully developed a programme and implemented it over a long period of time. It is evident that the programme builds on previous experience and involves a phased development process.

It is worth noting that the BSW is a genuine social work and social pedagogy programme that is truly grounded in social work. Social work and social pedagogy are neither treated merely as sub-disciplines – for example, alongside sociology or psychology – nor is social work viewed simply as a field of practice in which all kinds of disciplines and professions operate without a coherent academic and professional framework.

The focus on social work in its purest form is all the more commendable given that other disciplines likely exert significant influence and social work must hold its own. Precisely because social work, as a young discipline and profession, must continue to expand and defend its own expertise, it is important and commendable that the university consciously sees itself as a pioneer and backs up this claim with sustained commitment.

Furthermore, it is worth noting the shared understanding – from the university administration to the faculty, students, and alumni – that social work is viewed as a response to societal challenges and social issues and, as such, plays an important role in society. This shared understanding contributes significantly to the programme's identity and, consequently, to its success, as it extends to all those involved.

At the heart of all these efforts is a well-functioning degree programme that reflects on its own practices and provides students with adequate training and support for future careers in the field. The ILOs of the programme are clearly defined and documented for both the course and the programme level, and they fit well with the graduate profile. The curriculum is comprehensive and progresses systematically from general to more

advanced courses. Against this background, the expert panel assesses that the programme complies with the EQF level 6 for bachelor's programmes. Two internships are included in the programme, underlining the systematically implemented practical focus of the programme as well as the strong alignment and involvement of the labour market as industry representatives are part of the assessment of these internships. While this is commendable, the experts also learned during the meetings with the students and labour market representatives that the theoretical knowledge of the discipline is generally not strongly enough represented in the curriculum to ensure that theory and the underlying social issues and the practical actions required to address them are linked accurately. Against this background, the theoretical aspect of the discipline needs to be more strongly included in the curriculum to ensure the close connection with practical methods (**Finding 1**) so that students can appropriately respond to real-life challenges.

While graduates of the Social Work bachelor's programme are well equipped for careers in the field due to the comprehensive and practice-oriented curriculum, the experts learned that there is a discrepancy when it comes to the language of instruction (English as per UAEU's policy for all study programmes) and the language of the internship and work environment (mostly Arabic). All stakeholders involved with the programme (teaching staff, students, labour market representatives) reported that students are struggling to some extent when they have to apply their theoretical knowledge that is taught in English to an Arabic-speaking work context even if they are native speakers of Arabic. While it was reported that this issue usually resolves itself after a certain time, the transition could be smoother to facilitate the graduates' entry into the job market. At the same time, certain technical terms of the social work field in English showed to be slightly challenging for some students. Against this background, the expert panel recommends offering additional language classes specifically for the Social Work context for students (**Finding 2**). This will give local students the opportunity to familiarise with technical English used in social work and also introduce international students to Arabic, thereby fostering internationalisation at the student level.

In the context of internationalisation, the institution's commitment in this regard was evident during the discussion rounds. This also includes exchange options for students enrolled in the Social Work programme, particularly for summer programmes and international internships. In recognition of the pursuit of internationalisation and the strengthening of the institution's own identity, the experts believe that it would be beneficial to embed these elements more firmly in the programme, for example by more proactively providing and promoting semester exchange options. While it is commendable that UAEU has established a successful teaching assistant programme that enables master's and PhD students to obtain their degrees abroad and return to UAEU as lecturers, bachelor's students of the Social Work programme will also benefit from being exposed to the international Social Work field early on.

As for documentation of the curriculum, while individual course descriptions are comprehensive, the experts identified some inconsistencies as the handbook does not adequately outline the structure of the programme and how courses are connected. The handbook must therefore be revised to adequately reflect the structure and the content of the programme (**Finding 3**) so that all stakeholders have access to transparent and comprehensive information on the programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

1.2 Social Work (Master)

Description

The master's programme Social Work (MSW) is a full-time 3-semester programme that was implemented in 2013. Students can also opt for part-time studies which must be completed within 2,5 to 3 years, according

to the SER. The 30 CH-programme aims to prepare graduates to join both the local and the global job market as specialised practitioners in the areas of health/mental health, criminal justice, applied research, policy analysis, community education, schools and in the planning and provision of social services in other areas. The programme is said to be guided by international standards, including the professional competency frameworks of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The curriculum was reportedly benchmarked against the Social Work programmes at Columbia University and the University of Urbana-Champaign, USA, in 2024. Against this background, the curriculum consists of 21 CH of advanced coursework and 9 CH dedicated to a 500-clock-hour field practicum. The curriculum reportedly comprises three generalist core courses (9 CH) in the first semester, three specialisation courses on a concentration of their choice (Mental Health or Criminal Justice) in the second (9 CH), and the practicum (9 CH) and an integrative course (3 CH) in the final semester. The field practicum policies and requirements are governed by the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) to ensure alignment with institutional standards for graduate education.

The programme goals outlined in the SER are as follows:

1. Graduates will practice in accordance with Social Work values and ethics that acknowledge the history and laws of UAE society.
2. Graduates will practice in a culturally competent manner that promotes quality of life and well-being, human rights and social and economic justice, with diverse Arab, Muslim, and expatriate populations of the UAE and GCC.
3. Graduates will use, produce, and apply research knowledge to enhance their skills for practice with the diverse Arab/Muslim families, children, individuals, groups, organisations, communities, and societies of the UAE and GCC.

Against this background, 8 programme-level ILOs are identified in the SER:

1. Use communication/facilitation skills ethically in building empowering relationships with the diverse populations in the UAE, the Arab Gulf and internationally.
2. Employ skills for influencing policy formulation and change in communities that advance social and economic justice.
3. Apply knowledge and leadership skills in managing projects, and working with community groups and/or organisations to address populations at risk and engage in community resource development
4. Demonstrate skills in quantitative/qualitative research design, data analysis, programme evaluation, practice evaluation, community needs assessments, and knowledge dissemination.
5. Apply the knowledge, values, ethical principles, and skills of a generalist social work perspective to practice with diverse social systems in the UAE, the Arab Gulf, and internationally.
6. Analyse social policies at a local, regional, national, and international level.
7. Evaluate existing research studies and one's own practice interventions.
8. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organisational change.

The SER further states that curriculum mapping is conducted to ensure that courses are purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students build on what they have previously learned, and that they are learning the knowledge and skills that will progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work. The MSW curriculum is said to employ both vertical and horizontal coherence throughout the programme. When a curriculum is vertically aligned or coherent, what students learn in one lesson, course, or level prepares

them for the subsequent course. When a curriculum is horizontally aligned or horizontally coherent, what students learn in one section of a course mirrors what students in different sections learn in the same course.

Prospective and currently enrolled students are said to obtain information on the MSW programme via UAEU's graduate student handbook, a general student handbook, and the field practicum manual.

Expert evaluation

The master's programme of Social Work at UAEU incorporates both international standards in social work education and regional societal requirements. This combination of international orientation and local contextualisation represents an important foundation for the continued development of the profession within the regional context. In comparison to the bachelor's programme, which has evolved over a longer period and undergone several revision cycles, the master's programme of Social Work is still in a phase of further profile development which is particularly understandable in light of the planned introduction of a doctoral programme. The programme is designed as a practice-oriented degree aimed at preparing professionals for complex fields of professional intervention. However, the experts learned during discussions with several stakeholders that the overall profile of the programme is not yet fully defined. Although the programme is currently practice-oriented, it could also be designed to prepare students for academic and research-oriented career pathways, or to systematically integrate both professional and academic trajectories. Given that social work is currently offered only at UAEU, students seeking to pursue academic careers within this disciplinary field are dependent on the availability of structured academic progression pathways. The experts therefore recommend to further sharpen the profile of the programme in terms of the balance of research and practice orientation, particularly regarding the planned doctoral programme (**Finding 4**). A clearer positioning of the programme would also enhance transparency regarding its objectives and further support the strategic development of the programme. In this context, it may be beneficial to consider structuring the programme into two tracks: one more practice-oriented and one more academically or research-oriented. Such differentiation could accommodate diverse student career goals while maintaining the overall integrity of the programme.

The current structure of the programme, including clearly designated advanced coursework and an extensive field practicum component, generally corresponds to international standards for professionally qualifying Master's programmes in social work and thus complies with EQF level 7 for master's programmes. The integration of practice-oriented teaching methods such as case analysis, simulation-based exercises, and project-based learning fully supports the transfer of theoretical knowledge into professional competencies. The curriculum structure generally supports the achievement of the ILOs and enables the progressive development of professional competencies. However, one aspect that deserves particular attention concerns the systematic integration of theoretical learning and practical application, especially for the field practicum. Although it is evident that practice-oriented learning forms represent a central component of the programme, the transfer of theoretical knowledge into concrete professional competencies is not systematically enough represented in the curriculum to ensure that theory and the underlying social issues and the practical actions required to address them are linked accurately. Against this background, the theoretical aspect of the discipline needs to be more strongly included in the curriculum to ensure the close connection with practical methods (see **Finding 1**) so that students can appropriately respond to real-life challenges. In the context of the field practicum, it is further recommended to establish more transparency regarding procedures for documenting learning processes in the practice setting, as well as mechanisms for feedback between the university and placement institutions (**Finding 1a**).

Disciplinary, methodological, and interdisciplinary content is visibly integrated and reflects both international developments and regional requirements. The connection between international perspectives and regional demands represents an important strength of the programme and contributes to the preparation of context-sensitive professionals. While internationalisation efforts are visible within programme documentation, their institutionalisation requires further development. For example, there are clear efforts to establish stronger connections with international professional networks. However, building sustainable international partnerships typically requires time and depends on the identification and engagement with suitable initiatives and collaborative opportunities. In the context of internationalisation on student level, the experts learned that there is a discrepancy when it comes to the language of instruction (English as per UAEU's policy for all study programmes) and the language of the internship and work environment (mostly Arabic). All stakeholders involved with the programme (teaching staff, students, labour market representatives) reported that students are struggling to some extent when they have to apply their theoretical knowledge that is taught in English to an Arabic-speaking work context even if they are native speakers of Arabic. While it was reported that this issue usually resolves itself after a certain time, the transition could be smoother to facilitate the graduates' entry into the job market. At the same time, certain technical terms of the social work field in English showed to be slightly challenging for some students. Against this background, the expert panel recommends offering additional language classes specifically for the Social Work context for students (see **Finding 2**). This will give local students the opportunity to familiarise with technical English used in social work and also introduce international students to Arabic, thereby fostering internationalisation at the student level.

While graduates of the Social Work master's programme are well equipped for careers in the field due to the comprehensive and practice-oriented curriculum, it might be beneficial to consider in the long term whether students could be given the option to write a thesis at the end of their studies. In light of the further academic development of the programme, such a thesis would be particularly valuable for students intending to pursue further academic qualifications. In view of the planned doctoral programme in social work, this measure would significantly strengthen preparation for research-oriented career paths. Experience at other universities shows that without sufficient academic training in the form of independently conducted and documented research projects, the transition from a master's programme to a doctoral programme can be considerably more challenging for students.

As for documentation of the curriculum, the review of the master's handbook shows that individual course descriptions contain partially overlapping or repetitive formulations. This is particularly evident in the description of teaching methods and competency goals, which appear in several modules in almost identical form. While this does not indicate structural deficiencies in the programme itself, it reduces the transparency of the distinctions between individual courses. The handbook must therefore be revised to adequately reflect the structure and the content of the programme (see **Finding 3**) so that all stakeholders have access to transparent and comprehensive information on the programme.

Overall, the master's programme of Social Work demonstrates a solid foundation and a clear orientation toward professional standards. The existing structures, together with an evident commitment to quality, provide a sound basis for further programme development.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

2. Procedures for quality assurance

Bachelor's/Master'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

According to the SER, QA policies and procedures at UAEU are based on institutional and federal guidelines and criteria. These policies and procedures are said to be in line with UAE's National Qualifications Authority (NQA) as well as the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), and include college-level curriculum review, domestic and international benchmarking, and course- and programme-level evaluation. UAE's Academic Quality Assurance Section and Institutional Research Section, which are part of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), oversee all QA procedures at UAEU and report directly to the Vice Chancellor.

As for curriculum review and development, the SER outlines that all study programmes are subject to an annual review based on the following four performance profiles: (1) Faculty, (2) Research Productivity, (3) Programme Viability, and (4) Course Offering. A set of performance indicators is used to measure the performance in each profile. The performance indicators data are said to be collected throughout the academic year, and the aggregated results are published at the end of each academic year. Department chairs review the results and subsequently develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) that includes remedial actions for each performance profile and must be carried out within two years. In addition, a campus-wide Learning Outcomes Management System (LOAMS) is in place to provide administrators with information on the assessment processes. The assessment management system is reportedly populated regularly with the latest information extracted from the Learning Management System (Blackboard), the Curriculum Management System (CurricUNET), and the Student Information System (SIS). Lecturers are required to collect and upload the assessment data to LOAMS.

The Department reportedly follows UAEU's regular programme review process which is outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual based on UAEU's Periodic Programme Review (PPR) process. The primary quality assurance system implemented is a structured programme review conducted every semester. This process is said to involve all faculty members and includes (1) a review of course-level ILO attainment for each course offered during the semester, (2) an analysis of teaching evaluations from the previous semester, and (3) structured faculty discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instruction for continuous improvement. The SER further states that all programmes maintain e-Portfolios that include the course syllabus, teaching materials, assessment instruments, model answers, quantitative analysis of student performance, graded samples, instructor review report, and student feedback. Course and lecturer evaluation forms are distributed at the end of each semester.

To ensure alignment with the labour market, the Department reportedly has a feedback system in place that includes surveys for three key stakeholder groups: recent graduates, internship providers, and employers. The graduate surveys assess aspects such as programme quality, preparedness for employment, and alignment of academic training and job requirements. Results are said to be analysed annually to track long-term

programme effectiveness and graduate satisfaction. Practicum providers are surveyed at the end of each academic year to evaluate the professional competencies, communication skills, and workplace readiness of the student while employers, especially those who have hired graduates of the programmes, are surveyed to evaluate employee performance, industry relevance of the curriculum, and emerging skills demands.

Expert evaluation

The Social Work study programmes are embedded in a comprehensive institutional quality management framework that follows national and international standards. The university has established formalised policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring, and periodic review, which are implemented at institutional, college, and departmental level. Central oversight is ensured through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), which coordinates data collection, analysis, and reporting processes.

At programme level, a broad range of quality assurance instruments is in place. These include course evaluations, programme-level learning outcome assessments through the Learning Outcomes Assessment Management System (LOAMS), annual programme reviews, and structured performance improvement plans (PIP). Furthermore, feedback is collected from multiple stakeholder groups, including students, graduates, internship providers, and employers. These mechanisms indicate a well-developed and formalised quality assurance system that covers relevant areas of teaching, learning, and programme management. In this context, the experts learned that the involvement of labour market representatives is currently mainly based on indirect feedback mechanisms such as surveys. While this provides useful insights, it does not fully meet the requirements of a structured and continuous quality dialogue. In order to strengthen the alignment between academic provision and labour market needs, the establishment of a formalised and standardised quality dialogue with employers is recommended, including regular meetings (e.g. once per semester or annually) with clearly defined stakeholders, a structured agenda, and systematic documentation of outcomes (**Finding 5**). Such a format will explicitly address the competencies required by the labour market, identify potential gaps in graduate profiles, and define concrete measures for curriculum development. The results of these exchanges should be formally documented and integrated into the programme's quality management cycle, ensuring that feedback from the labour market is translated into measurable improvements in teaching and curriculum design.

While the structure of the quality management system is generally comprehensive, there is limited evidence of its effectiveness in driving continuous improvement at programme level. In particular, the link between data collection, analysis, and the implementation of concrete improvement measures was not adequately demonstrated. Although performance indicators are systematically gathered and analysed, it is not always clear how these results are translated into targeted and measurable changes in curriculum design, teaching practices, or student support. Course evaluations by students, for example, primarily focus on student satisfaction and perceptions of teaching quality. While this provides valuable feedback, there is little indication that these evaluations are systematically linked to the achievement of learning outcomes or the development of professional competencies. Similarly, although LOAMS offers a structured framework for assessing programme learning outcomes, the available evidence suggests that the results are not consistently used to inform strategic programme development. Against this background, UAEU must establish a clear mechanism that links the outcomes of these dialogues to curriculum development processes (**Finding 6**). This could for example be accomplished through documented action plans, follow-up evaluations, and integration into periodic programme reviews. This is further underlined by the variability in student performance, particularly at the bachelor's level, which suggests that existing monitoring and feedback mechanisms do not yet fully translate into effective interventions at programme level.

Overall, UAEU's quality management system is well-developed in its formal structure and covers all relevant dimensions required by ESG standards. However, its effectiveness in achieving continuous quality

enhancement remains only partially demonstrated. Strengthening the feedback loops between data collection, analysis, and implementation of improvement measures is therefore essential.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

Bachelor's/Master'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 SER states that students are required to apply topics encountered in class by solving problems and doing exercises in class and at home. Reading and writing assignments and participation in discussions are also part of the learning methods. Faculty members are said to make use of technology in their teaching, e.g., using Blackboard LMS, smart boards, Microsoft Office programmes, multimedia, and internet resources.

As for the MSW, the programme is reportedly competency-based, and students and lecturers interact both synchronously and asynchronously through scheduled meetings during “office hours” via UAEU’s Learning Management System (LMS). Teaching methods reportedly vary according to course content and are selected to promote student engagement and meet the course-level ILOs.

The programme reportedly offers comprehensive and mini-lectures, followed by case study analyses, role-playing exercises, experiential learning activities, in-class and online discussions, flipped classrooms using visual and written case studies, assignments, small individual and group projects, and oral presentations. Faculty are also said to apply scaffolding approaches to guide students in completing more complex tasks. Students are also introduced to learning generative AI prompting, as well as demonstrations on how to use AI tools to support academic writing. Course materials can be accessed through smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Students use their own devices for this, according to the SER.

Feedback on progress and performance is said to be provided for students through clear statements of course- and programme-level ILOs to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning as stated in the SER. Faculty are reportedly encouraged to conduct a mid-term check-in with students, asking which teaching methods should stay or go. Feedback from this mid-term check-in, observations from class, and student feedback at the end of the semester are used to enhance teaching and learning activities, as stated in the SER.

Outstanding academic performance of students is said to be rewarded by, e.g., qualifying for the Dean’s List of the College for an academic semester with a GPA of 3.6 or higher or graduating with honours if a high GPA is maintained.

The SER outlines that multiple assessment tools are used to ensure that students acquire the specified knowledge, skills, and competencies and meet the learning outcomes of the courses. The assessment tools typically include midterm and final exams, quizzes, projects, extended papers, in-class presentations for the bachelor’s programme. For the master’s programme, student performance is reportedly assessed using summative and formative methods, emphasising applied, competency-based tasks such as case-based learning,

project-based learning, role plays, and practice framework development rather than traditional exams. Examination regulations are said to be available online in the form of specific guidelines for students.

As for appeals and complaints, if possible, they are to be solved on an individual basis. Otherwise, students can make a formal request to the department chair to have their grade reconsidered. Such requests are forwarded to the Student Cases Committee which deals with complaints regarding grades and similar issues. If the issue still can't be resolved at that level, it is referred to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, as outlined in the SER.

As for exam organisation, each programme reportedly formulates its own policies regarding the administration and technical aspects of these exams through the Quality Control Unit (GKM) with coordination at central level. The SER further states that midterm and final exams are conducted through various methods, including offline exams which are communicated via the student portal. Online exams are conducted through internal platforms or via a Google Form link. Hybrid exams reportedly require students to attend scheduled exams in person, using their own laptops.

The examination schedule is determined in accordance with the IPB academic calendar. Midterms are conducted after the seventh week of lectures while Finals take place after the fourteenth week, as stated in the SER. The scheduling process reportedly follows a structured procedure which involves the central level and the Departments and ends with the publishing of the final schedule on the student portal. Students who are unable to attend exams due to valid reasons can resit the exam, according to the SER. In addition, students with grades of D or E can take a retake exam. The highest grade attainable from a retake exam is C. The SER further outlines that students with physical disabilities are assigned accessible examination rooms. Students facing mental health challenges can take their exams in a quiet, supervised environment.

The policies and procedures regarding examinations are documented and published in IPB's Academic Guidelines, according to the SER.

Expert evaluation

The experts learned during discussion with the teaching staff and students that a wide range of student-centred teaching and learning methods are employed and encourage active participation and independent learning. The combination of lectures, case study analyses, role-playing, project-based learning, and discussion-oriented formats is effective and helps accommodate different learning styles while fostering student motivation and engagement. The use of digital learning platforms and technological tools supports flexible learning pathways and facilitate access to teaching materials. The materials are aligned with the intended learning outcomes and promote both subject-specific and methodological competencies. At the same time, the experts recommend to further streamline the connection between theoretical learning and practical application (**Finding 1b**). While practice-oriented learning methods are in place, an even stronger integration of structured reflection formats could help further improve the transfer of theoretical content to practical situations.

External lecturers are regularly invited to hold classes in both programmes. However, the experts learned that it takes a rather complex and time-consuming administrative process (e.g., obtaining security clearance) to include them in the delivery of the programmes, even if their lectures are held online. The experts therefore recommend reviewing these administrative procedures and, where necessary, simplifying them to enable a more flexible inclusion of external expertise (**Finding 7**). In addition, it might be beneficial to include the alumni network more strongly in teaching activities to enhance the practical relevance of the programmes even further.

Examination and assessment procedures are clearly structured and transparently regulated, with transparent and fair grading rubrics in place. Different examination formats, such as written exams, projects, presentations,

and case-based assignments, enable a differentiated assessment of learning outcomes. Procedures for appeals and retake exams are documented and accessible to students. In addition, appropriate arrangements are in place for students with special needs as well as for dealing with illness or absence during exams. Overall, the impression of the expert panel is that the programmes benefit from a well-organised and fair assessment system.

Overall, it is evident that the programmes feature diverse and well-structured teaching, learning, and assessment procedures that support a student-centred learning environment and provide a solid foundation for the acquisition of professional competencies. The identified areas for enhancement primarily concern the further strengthening of the integration of theory and practice, as well as the targeted incorporation of external expertise and alumni into teaching. In this context, team-teaching models, among other approaches, could also be useful.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Bachelor's/Master'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 to the UAEU is generally based on the admission policy which is issued annually and sets forth the specific admission criteria for each of the following categories: (1) citizens of the United Arab Emirates, (2) MENA region students, (3) students from Asia and Africa, (4) international students, (5) mature students and (6) children of UAEU employees. As for the bachelor's programme, general undergraduate admission requirements are said to be publicly available in the Undergraduate Student Handbook. Data of past student cohorts provided in the SER shows that even though the employment rate of graduates is slightly lower than college average with an upward trend, overall employability is still low due to several factors such as cultural and social norms, geographic constraints, sector-specific preferences, and limited awareness of opportunities, according to the SER.

For the master's programme, general graduate admission requirements are said to be publicly available in the Graduate Student Handbook. The MSW admits students with a GPA of 3.0 and a score of 6 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). As the MSW has a professional orientation, it offers specific provisions for factoring relevant work experience into calculating the GPA for conditional acceptance. The Academic Council must approve these provisions as stated in the SER. Admission data of past cohorts provided in the SER shows that applications for the programme exceed by far actual admissions as many applicants reportedly fail to meet the admission requirements. Student retention, satisfaction, and graduation rates are adequate according to the provided data.

According to the SER, student progress is monitored by the advising unit and the undergraduate and graduate studies office at the college level. Upon selecting an academic programme, each student is assigned an academic advisor who monitors their progress and ensures that they take the appropriate number of courses each semester. This is done through "Degree Works", a web-based, degree-auditing and tracking tool which enables students and advisors to evaluate academic progress towards graduation in accordance with major requirements outlined in the college catalogue. This tool allows students to identify which requirements have been

satisfied, and which requirements are outstanding. In addition, Degree Works can be used to perform a “what-if” analysis to determine how current coursework on a student transcript would be used if a different major was selected.

Graduation documents and certificates are reportedly secured and archived at university level, while the University also uploads the graduates’ personal information to the Ministry of Education’s website to confirm the authenticity of the documents and facilitate the attestation of degree certificates if necessary.

Expert evaluation

Admission to both programmes is based on clear and transparent criteria. This is particularly convincing in the master’s programme, where the admission profile is academically and professionally coherent. A strength of the current system is that admission is not based on GPA alone. Relevant professional experience can be considered in addition to formal academic performance. For example, the experts learned during the meetings with university representatives that applicants with a GPA of 2.4 may be admitted if they can demonstrate two years of relevant work experience. The fact that these exceptions are regulated at university level supports consistency.

Student progression is generally feasible and consistently monitored. Academic advising and the platform Degree Works provide an adequate framework for monitoring progress and indicates that around 95% of students complete their studies on time. The remaining delays are linked mainly to personal circumstances, as the experts learned during the virtual site visit. However, progression is not equally reliable for all students. In the bachelor’s programme, the gender-based division of classes, combined with the low number of male students, restricts course choice in cases where not enough male students are available to reach the minimum number of students for a given class. This may delay progression. Considering that UAEU has already started to implement mixed classes, it could be beneficial to expedite this process for programmes with a strong gender imbalance such as the Social Work bachelor’s and master’s programme. Other possible solutions to address this challenge would be to offer otherwise unavailable classes as summer courses, announce these in advance, and allow appropriate exceptions to regular course-load requirements. Additionally for progression in the master’s programme, the experts learned that most students are already employed and are thus less flexible when it comes to scheduling their classes. While UAEU and the Department of Social Work already have certain measures in place to accommodate these students, it might be beneficial to further expand these efforts to particularly include more flexible scheduling of specialisation courses to support timely graduation with the students’ interest in mind.

As for recognition of externally obtained credits, there is a Ministry-issued policy for this procedure which is implemented at UAEU. However, the University has not yet established a documented institutional system for recognition of externally obtained credits, including those from international student exchanges, and prior learning that is based on the Ministry’s policy. A transparent and institutionally defined and documented recognition programme must therefore be implemented to ensure equal treatment, procedural clarity, and more reliable support for mobility in an international context (**Finding 8**). In this context, it is further recommended that UAEU develop an internationalisation strategy especially for the undergraduate level to better reflect UAEU’s already existing efforts on the graduate and research level (**Finding 9**). This strategy could include defining clear goals for internationalisation to better consolidate existing structures, define success, and initiate necessary steps (such as increasing the proportion of incoming and outgoing students).

Upon graduation, students currently receive a transcript of records that outlines attended courses and respective grades, the final grade as well as majors and minors and the obtained degree. While this documentation is sufficient to get a comprehensive picture of the students’ qualification, in the context of increasing

internationalisation efforts on the undergraduate level, UAEU should issue additional certification that is more similar to a diploma supplement in terms of entailed information such as information on the grading system and on the national higher education context (**Finding 10**). This will make it easier for students to pursue graduate degrees and careers in international contexts.

In addition, the experts learned that it is currently a challenge for graduates of the Social Work programmes to obtain the official license for social workers after graduation. Obtaining this license includes a lengthy process of three years and renewing it also poses some bureaucratic challenges. The experts believe that it would be beneficial if UAEU would support their graduates in this process more systematically, for example by using their alumni network and providing professional development opportunities. This would support graduates in their professional development beyond the formal programme structure and help them remain available for the labour market.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

5. Teaching staff

Bachelor's/Master'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, the Department of Social Wellbeing currently employs 6 faculty members holding a PhD in Social Work, 2 instructors and 1 training specialist, with two additional faculty members being expected to join the Department in the Fall of 2025 and Spring of 2026. The faculty contributing to the programmes are said to come from diverse backgrounds including the USA, the UAE, India, Saudi Arabia, Portugal, and South Africa.

As for teaching staff recruitment, UAEU reportedly has procedures in place to ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process. Selection criteria and required qualifications are based on the academic position that is to be filled. The recruitment process, selection criteria, and employment conditions are outlined in UAEU's Academic Personnel Policies Manual and in the Employee Handbook.

As for teaching staff development, the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) reportedly offers opportunities to develop and enhance teaching performance. A particular focus of the Centre is the promotion of emerging digital technologies. CETL comprises an Instructional Design Unit, a Teaching, Scholarship and Assessment Unit, a Faculty Professional Development Unit, and a PhD Students Teaching Academy. The National Faculty Support Programme (NFSP) provides an opportunity for national faculty members to enhance their professional development by attending conferences, workshops, and training courses. In addition, teaching staff receive support to advance their research. This includes financial support to attend one international conference per year. More conferences can be attended if third-party funding is available.

The performance of the teaching staff is said to be subject to regular evaluation. The faculty performance review covers all areas of a faculty member's activities (research, teaching, and service) and is facilitated via an online system. The SER further states that the outcome of the performance review informs the faculty

promotion system, which evaluate the professional development of faculty members and their achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service. The promotion process also reportedly requires external review of research. In addition, all faculty must include proof of teaching effectiveness as part of their portfolio for promotion as well as for contract renewal.

Expert evaluation

When it comes to the teaching staff, the picture is impressive. The university has succeeded in assembling a highly competent and diverse team that brings together a variety of professional perspectives and cultural backgrounds. It is clear that the university is also consistently able to recruit new, qualified faculty members and maintain a steady supply of qualified staff for both programmes over the long term. Recruitment strategies follow transparent procedures and are documented. The high proportion of international staff reflects the university's clear positioning and its commitment to integrating international perspectives into teaching and research. This international background of the team presents a significant opportunity for the strategic development of both degree programmes and UAEU's internationalisation efforts in general. For instance, international lecturers could help establish the university as part of an international social work network and leverage their strengths even more effectively to advance the internationalisation of teaching.

During the meetings with university representatives, the experts learned that the workload for the teaching staff, particularly for assistant professors, is rather high. To reduce the workload, UAEU has already implemented mechanisms such as establishing different tracks (research, teaching or balanced) for associate and full professors. These tracks include reductions in teaching or research respectively. However, this track system is not available to assistant professors. In addition to teaching and research, the academic advisor system at UAEU and internship supervision and support are additional time-consuming tasks teaching staff has to master. To ensure the long-term quality of both teaching and research, it is therefore recommended that UAEU more closely monitor the workload of the teaching staff and establish effective measures to reduce it if necessary (**Finding 11**). In this context, a practicum director should be hired for each programme which assists students with planning and conducting their internship (**Finding 11a**) as this would significantly lower the workload of the current teaching staff and also help professionalise collaboration with the professional field, thereby further strengthening the link between theory and practice in the curricula of the Social Work programmes.

As for staff development, various incentives and support opportunities are available for lecturers to conduct research projects, attend conferences, and publish in international journals. In addition, UAEU offers plenty of opportunities for teaching staff to improve their teaching and research skills through workshops and other specialised training opportunities.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Learning resources and student support

Bachelor's/Master's 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

As for facilities, UAEU comprises lecture rooms, labs, and studios. All classrooms are said to be equipped with desktops, laptops, interactive smart boards, and AV systems. UAEU's IT Support Services are supposed to facilitate teaching, learning and research. Live assistance can be requested via the IT Help Desk.

UAEU further provides spaces in several buildings and the main library to display student projects, as stated in the SER. These centrally located venues can be booked via a pre-booking system and are equipped with display infrastructure.

The main library, which is also accessible online, comprises print reference and general collections as well as special collections. Electronic tools and databases are available both on and off campus, with user support via LibChat and EZY Proxy. If an item is not available in the UAEU collection, faculty and students can request it via the online document delivery service. Small lecture rooms are said to be available for research groups, guest lectures, and private meetings. All rooms are fitted with advanced audio-visual equipment and have a capacity of 25-40. They can be booked via the local booking system.

UAEU reportedly offers a variety of student services, including Student Health & Wellness Services and Student Customer Services. Services aimed specifically at enhancing employment skills include those offered by the Centre for Career Placement & Alumni (CCPA). This unit is supposed to help students prepare for a career by providing them with opportunities for career readiness, employability skills, and internships through the JAHIZ programme. It also connects students and graduates with employers to provide job opportunities.

The Student Success Unit (SSU) offers academic support and is said to help UAEU students fulfil their academic potential and build the skills necessary to be successful in their future lives and careers. UAEU's Learning Resources Centres, such as the Tutorial Centre, the Reading Centre, the Writing Centre, the Technology Centre, and the Speaking Centre, are said to offer personalised support, training opportunities, and workshops in the respective areas to address the needs of the diverse student body. In addition, UAEU provides assistance and services for international students and students with special needs. For the latter, lecture recodes, extra time, contact with instruction, alternative exam, early class registration, as well as assistive technology for students with visual impairment, such as Braille Sense, Book sense, Fair View, ClearView, Eye Pal Solo (Reader), ClearNote, and Ibsar Software are available. According to the SER, the University also offers counselling and financial aid.

Upon enrolment, each student is reportedly assigned a faculty member as academic advisor to oversee academic progression. Student appeals are reviewed and decided by the Student Academic Grievances and Appeals Committee (SAGAC). The Committee's work is said to be conducted in a way that ensures confidentiality as defined in the University Policies.

UAEU uses the e-learning platform Blackboard to check student work for plagiarism.

Expert evaluation

Facilities and learning resources at UAEU are modern and adequately available for students of the Social Work programmes. This is underlined by digital infrastructure that supports regular course delivery and student learning activities. Students as well as teaching staff have access to digital research literature and databases both on campus and remotely.

Student support services are broad and generally convincing. Central academic services and support units are available to assist students with preparing for employment and improving their general academic skills such as academic writing. In addition, individualised support through academic advisors is in place and students feel well taken care of. Non-academic support and counselling services include units for students with

special needs who are eligible to receive individual accommodation and assistive support as well as international students. Several scholarship options exist, and students can apply for assistance. Together with the available learning resources, this provides an excellent framework for study progression and completion.

Field education is generally well supported. The internships of the programmes are systematically supervised and monitored closely. Intervention mechanisms exist if difficulties should arise. However, the experts learned in the discussions with stakeholders that placement options for internships are limited which might result in limited exposure of students to the social work labour market. The university should therefore broaden the range of practicum opportunities by expanding cooperation with field practise partners (**Finding 12**).

As for student mobility, exchange opportunities are not always sufficiently promoted or available. While students regularly use the summer break to engage in activities such as international summer schools, options for semester exchanges are limited and students have to organise them mostly on their own. In the context of implementing an internationalisation strategy that explicitly includes the undergraduate level, UAEU should communicate international exchange opportunities more actively and develop more accessible mobility formats (see **Finding 9**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Information

Bachelor's/Master'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

UAEU distributes information on their study programmes predominantly via its websites in both Arabic and English. Besides the main website which provides information on libraries, admission and other services, the programme websites reportedly include all relevant information on the programmes such as the programme outline and objectives, a model study plan, ILOs, and course descriptions.

Regulations and policies for both students and staff are available as handbooks and manuals (e.g., student handbook, field practicum manuals for students and supervisors, employee handbook).

Expert evaluation

Comprehensive and detailed information about the study programmes is accessible through institutional channels, including the university website, social media platforms, and regular information events such as Open Days. These measures contribute to enhancing the visibility of the programmes and reaching prospective students. While thus all stakeholders have access to sufficient and up-to-date information, the experts believe that additional promotion of the programmes may be beneficial to strengthen the general public's perception of social work as a profession, given that the social work profession in the UAE is still in a phase of development. As public outreach activities carry particular strategic importance, UAEU should develop more targeted measures to support early career orientation (**Finding 13**). In particular, information sessions in schools and orientation activities for students immediately following secondary school graduation could contribute to this objective. Such initiatives may help to promote a more differentiated understanding of the fields of practice in

social work and provide prospective students with a realistic view of professional career opportunities. In the same context, it might be beneficial to make greater use of existing alumni structures within public outreach activities. Alumni can play an important role as multipliers by making their professional experiences visible and contributing to the societal recognition of the profession. This is particularly relevant in contexts where the professional role of social work is not yet fully established across all sectors of society.

With regard to gender balance and diversity within the student body, the targeted inclusion of male students in promotional activities represents a reasonable strategy for supporting a more balanced gender distribution. At the same time, it would be beneficial to evaluate such measures systematically and to regularly assess their effectiveness.

Regarding the provision of information on admission requirements, the experts learned during the discussion rounds that the publicly accessible information on this topic are not always up to date. UAEU should develop mechanisms to ensure that such information is reviewed and updated on a regular basis (**Finding 14**). Transparent and up-to-date information constitutes an essential prerequisite for fair selection procedures and supports the transparency of institutional decision-making processes.

Overall, fundamental structures for informing the public and all stakeholders are in place. At the same time, it is recommended to further develop the strategic orientation of public outreach activities, particularly with regard to early information for prospective students, the use of alumni networks, and the continuous updating of publicly available information to further enhance the dissemination of comprehensive information.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the expert panel

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programmes “Social Work” (Bachelor) and “Social Work” (Master) offered by United Arab Emirates University with conditions.

Commendation

The two Social Work programmes offered by the CHSS at UAEU display a clear commitment to academic excellence. It is especially commendable that UAEU is a pioneer among academic institutions in the UAE with regard to establishing and promoting the discipline of social work in the country, thereby highlighting its broader societal relevance.

Both curricula are well structured and prepare students very well for the labour market. The high quality of graduates was commended by labour market representatives. The comprehensive quality assurance system that is in place at UAEU further supports and ensures that national and international standards of teaching and learning are met. The teaching staff of the programme is very well qualified, has plenty of international experience and backgrounds, and is highly motivated and engaged with students of the programmes in terms of academic advising. Learning, teaching and assessment methods are diverse and student centred, with a state-of-the-art information system supporting student progression. Available facilities and resources are outstanding, and academic as well as non-academic support services are adequately available for the entire student body, including students with special needs.

Findings

1. For both programmes, the theoretical aspect of the discipline needs to be more strongly included in the curriculum to ensure the close connection with practical methods.
 - a. For the master's programme, it is recommended to establish more transparency regarding procedures for documenting learning processes in the practice setting, as well as mechanisms for feedback between the university and placement institutions.
 - b. For both programmes, the experts recommend to further streamline the connection between theoretical learning and practical application.
2. For both programmes, the expert panel recommends offering additional language classes specifically for the Social Work context for students.
3. For both programmes, the handbook must be revised to adequately reflect the structure and the content of the programmes.
4. For the master's programme, the experts recommend to further sharpen the profile of the programme in terms of the balance of research and practice orientation.
5. The establishment of a formalised and standardised quality dialogue with employers is recommended, including regular meetings (e.g. once per semester or annually) with clearly defined stakeholders, a structured agenda, and systematic documentation of outcomes.
6. UAEU must establish a clear mechanism that links the outcomes of quality dialogues to curriculum development processes.
7. The experts recommend reviewing the administrative procedures for including guest lecturers and, where necessary, simplifying them to enable a more flexible inclusion of external expertise.
8. A transparent and institutionally defined and documented recognition programme must be implemented.
9. It is recommended that UAEU develop an internationalisation strategy especially for the undergraduate level to better reflect UAEU's already existing efforts on the graduate and research level.
10. UAEU should issue additional certification that is more similar to a diploma supplement in terms of entailed information such as information on the grading system and on the national higher education context.

11. It is recommended that UAEU more closely monitor the workload of the teaching staff and establish effective measures to reduce it if necessary.
 - b. A practicum director should be hired for each programme which assists students with planning and conducting their internship.
12. The university should broaden the range of practicum opportunities by expanding cooperation with field practise partners.
13. UAEU should develop more targeted measures to support early career orientation.
14. UAEU should develop mechanisms to ensure that such information is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.