EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics

College of Humanities and Sciences

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

March 2023

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EVALUATION REPORT

Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics

College of Humanities and Sciences

Prince Sultan University

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

January 2023

The Prince Sultan University has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics program. The evaluation is based on the "External Evaluation Standards" of foreign study programs, adopted by the Hcéres Board on January 31st, 2022. These standards are available on the Hcéres website (hceres.fr).

On behalf of the experts committee[2] :

Annick Rivens-Mompéan, President of the committee

For the Hcéres[1] :

Thierry Coulhon, President

In accordance with the decree n°2021-1536, November 29th, 2021,
[1] The evaluation reports "sont signés par le Président du comité". (Article 13) — "are signed by the President of the committee"(article 13).
[2] The President of Hcéres "contresigne les rapports d'évaluation établis par les comités d'experts" (Article 8, alinéa 8) — "countersigns the assessment reports made by the experts' committees" (article 8, alinea 8).

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I. STUDY PROGRAM IDENTITY SHEET

— **University/institution:** Prince Sultan University

— **Component, faculty or department concerned:** College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS), Linguistics and Translation Department (LTD)

— **Program's title:** Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Applied Linguistics

— **Year of creation and context**:

Since its creation in 1998, as the first non-profit private college in Saudi Arabia, PSU has grown significantly. Being a non-profit institution, established by the Riyadh Philantropic Society, explains why tuition fees are half price compared to other Saudi private universities.

Today, the University is composed of 6 colleges: College of Law, College of Humanities and Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Business Administration, College of Computer and Information Sciences, College of Architecture and Design.

For academic year 2021-2022, 7495 students were enrolled at PSU: 3463 male students and 4032 female students.

More specifically, the Bachelor of Applied Linguistics was created in 2001. It originally involved 2 tracks: ELP (English Language for Professionals), which is the only track offered now and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) addressed at Educators, which has been abandoned.

From its beginning, the program distinguished itself in two ways. Firstly, it was only open to female students. On the other hand, it was a bilingual program. The choice to open the Bachelor to female students "reflected the new orientation of granting women a major role in all the State affairs". Indeed, there was a need to educate female students to enter the job market in various sectors.

— **Site(s) where the program is taught** (Town and campus):

The campus is located in Riyadh. As in other universities in the Kingdom, the campus is divided into two parts, one for male students and the other for female students. The Applied Linguistics program is taught only on the women's campus.

Program director

— **Surname, First name**: El Dakhs, Dina

— **Profession and grade:** Associate Professor / Chair of the department

— **Main subject taught**: Linguistics.

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

— **Methodology and agency:**

The University has been fully licensed by the Ministry of Education since 1998 and has achieved accreditation twice from the local accrediting body: The National Center for Academic Accreditation evAluation (NCAAA).

— **Results:**

It has been granted Full Program Accreditation for 7 years (2016–2023).

Within the University, quality assurance is coordinated at the institutional, college, and departmental levels under the supervision of the Deanship of Quality Assurance and Development (DQAD), in collaboration with DQAD centers, including the Strategic Planning & Development Center (SPDC), the Quality Assurance Center (QAC), the Center for Statistics and Information (CSI), the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and the Policy Development Unit (PDU).

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAM

─ Human resources

The faculty for the Applied Linguistics Program consists of a team of 14 people:

Full professors	Associate professors	Assistant professors	Lecturers	Research assistants
1	2	5	3	2

A secretary is also working full time for the program.
In addition to these human resources dedicated to the program, other services offer both human resources and material resources at university level, in the spaces described below.

─ Material resources

The University is well equipped and provides updated spaces supporting both individual learning and technical support. These resources are offered at university level but some are specifically addressing the students from the Linguistics and Translation Department, due to their specificity. The committee has had the opportunity to visit the spaces described below.

A variety of material resources is available to both students and staff members.

1. The **IT Center** provides computer facilities, employs various platforms, and provides a wide range of software and applications, as well as programming and system support to staff, lecturers, and PSU departments.
2. The **Translation and Authoring Center (TAC)** is a specialized translation center that caters to the translation and language solutions of PSU and provides translation and editing services to local and regional entities.
3. The **E-Learning Center (ELC)** offers various E-learning platforms and tools for teaching and learning purposes. A PSU room/lab booking system, and all classrooms are provided with either interactive boards or traditional boards and projectors. All classrooms are equipped with PCs for the instructors. The Translation Program has a specialized interpreting lab to train students on different forms of interpretation (e.g., consecutive, simultaneous, and sight). The facilities also allow monitoring and assessing students' learning.
4. An additional available resource is **the Central Library**, which offers a variety of services and facilities. Among the most important services are the new arrivals displays, access to the library catalog and materials using a QR code, access to books on Kindle, the use of E-dictionaries, and the provision of plagiarism detection services. The library also provides referencing and citation services and several digital tools. Additionally, the Digital Library allows access to databases on and off campus.
5. **The Research and Initiatives Center (RIC)**, documents the research output of all the university programs. The RIC's website (https://ric.psu.edu.sa/) contains several dashboards that monitor the faculty members' publications, conference participation, internal and external grants, research labs, collaborations at the national and international levels, internal and external awards, etc.

STUDENT POPULATION: EVOLUTION AND TYPOLOGY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS

The program is open for female high school graduates, Saudi or non-Saudi.

Students apply for the preparatory year program[1](PYP), and only after passing the PYP can they join their academic major, including Applied Linguistics. Students can get exempted from the English language courses at the PYP stage if they score 5.5 on IELTS or its equivalent score on TOEFL or an English Proficiency Test that the Saudi National Center for Assessment administers.

The student population remains rather low, with a decreasing number of initial students over the years. The more recent figures that have been given during the visit show that the tendency is inverting and the number of enrolments has increased to 11 in 2021-2022.

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[1] The preparatory year program (PYP) is a one-year program for students preparing for a full multi-year degree curriculum at a university. It offers a bridge between high school and university-level studies.

Year	Campus	Gender	Initial	Students with Scholarships	Foreign students	Apprenticeship/ Coop	Graduated Students	Total Number of registered students
2017-2018	Women's Campus	Female	10	5	10	11	12	76
2018-2019	Women's Campus	Female	9	5	13	6	5	91
2019-2020	Women's Campus	Female	7	10	13	23	19	71
2020-2021	Women's Campus	Female	4	7	10	16	14	66

II.   VISIT DESCRIPTION

COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

— Dr. Annick Rivens Mompean, Chair of the panel - Full professor of English didactics - University of Lille, France
— Dr. Marie-Hélène Côté - Full professor of Linguistics - University of Lausanne, Switzerland
— Dr. Antonia Cristinoi - Full professor of Translation Studies – ESIT, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, France
— Ms. Elissa Lattouf - PhD student in Translation studies - Inalco/ISIT, Paris, France.

Hcéres was represented by Ms Michelle Houppe, Head of project, Europe and International Department.

VISIT DESCRIPTION

— **Date of the visit**: The visit took place from Tuesday October 25 to Thursday October 27, 2022. The committee carried out the visit on site.

— **Summary of the proceedings:**

Before the visit took place, the report of the exploratory mission (on-line exploratory visit on March 28, 2022), the self-assessment report and many appendices had been received by the experts. The self-evaluation report was sent according to the agreed schedule. It was very clear and supplemented by numerous documents in the appendix.

A preparatory meeting between the Hcéres Head of project, the Director of the Europe and international department and the panel of experts was held in Paris (October 6, 2022).

The on-site visit took place over two days, according to a schedule agreed between PSU and the experts' panel.

Once written by the panel chair, the report was submitted to all panel members for review.

— **Organization of the visit**

Day 1: Tuesday October 25, 2022

Time		Session	Audience
9:00 - 9:30	1	Opening session with top management: *Presentation of PSU University challenges*	Dr. Ahmad Yamani, PSU President Dr. Mohammad Aljibreen, Vice President, Academic Affairs Dr. Heba Khoshaim, Vice President, Campus for Women (CW) Dr. Nasser Alsadoun, Assistant to the Vice President, Administrative and Financial Affairs
9:30 -10:30	2	Presentation of the Bachelor in Applied Linguistics & Discussion	Dean of College, study program Director and his/her team 1. Prof. Mahmoud Almahmoud, Dean, College 2. Dr. Alia Mitchell, Vice Dean, College 3. Dr. Dina El-Dakhs. Chair, Department 4. Dr. Shaista Rashid, Assistant to the Chair, Depart. 5. Dr. Ivana Ronevic, Accreditation Team Leader
11:00 - 12	3	Bachelor faculty members	Representative panel of professors from the program 1. Prof. Hala Dalbani, Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics, Lebanese 2. Dr. Safaa Eissa-Associate Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics/TESOL, Egyptian 3. Dr. Hala Ismail-Assistant Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics/TESOL, Egyptian 4. Dr. Norah Almushrraf, Assistant Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics/TESOL, Saudi 5. Dr. Ivana Roncevic, Assistant Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics, Croatian 6. Dr. Shaista Rashid, Assistant Professor, Full time, Applied Linguistics, Pakistani 7. Ms. Maram Alkhodair, Lecturer, Full time, Applied Linguistics, Saudi
2:00 - 3:00 pm	4	Bachelor Students	Representative panel of students from the program under evaluation 1. Athary Dagag-Senior-Saudi 2. Mona Almokayad-Senior-Palestinian 3. Sofiya Shekh-Sophomore-Ukrainian 4. Ruqayyah Scott-Senior-American 5. Amal AlSaud-Junior-Saudi 6. Bayader Alobathani-Freshman-Saudi 7. Amena Naseer-Senior-Saudi

Day 2: Thursday October 27, 2022

Time		Session	Audience
9:00 - 10:00 am	5	Quality assurance	Quality Assurance Directors & Chairs of Program Quality Assurance Committees 1. Mr. Reda Aloufi, Director of Quality Assurance Center – Male Campus 2. Ms. Roohi Jan, Director of Quality Assurance Center – Female Campus 3. Dr. Alia Mitchell, Chair, CHS Quality Assurance Committee 4. Ms. Suhad Subhi, Co-Chair, CHS Quality Assurance Committee 5. Dr. Hala Ismail, Chair, LTD Quality Assurance Committee 6. Dr. Nada Almazrooa, Member, LTD Quality Assurance Committee 7. Prof. Hadeer Aboelnagah, Member, LTD Quality Assurance Committee
10:00 - 11:00 am	6	Alumni & Employers of the 2 Bachelor Programs	Representing different sectors of activity (employment or internships) 1. Reema Almadhon (TR), Creative Marketing, content manager 2. Maale Almazroa (TR), Banking, Senior Specialist 3. Jeeda Almejaish (AL), Theater & Performing Arts Commission/Ministry of Culture, Higher Education Vocational Programs Assistant Specialist 4. Lubna Al-Labboudy (AL), Hwadi Ltd.,Creative Copywriter 5. Hadia Hadid (AL), Scalers Learning and Development Associate 6. Abdulaziz Aldossary (employer), Ministry of Tourism 7. Atheer Alsuwailem (employer), Advertising, Zan Agency
12:00 - 2:00 pm	7	Closing session (last questions / no restitution)	Dean or Study programme director only 1. Prof. Mahmoud Almahmoud, Dean, CHS 2. Dr. Alia Mitchell, Vice Dean, CHS 3. Dr. Dina El-Dakhs, Chair, LTD

— **Cooperation of study program and institution to be accredited**

The visit has enabled the committee to meet all the people in charge, at all levels of the institution. The schedule presented above shows that the committee had the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of relevant interlocutors, at all levels: top management, deans, directors, staff, students, alumni…

Furthermore, the visit of the campus, organized on two days, has enabled the committee to have not only a clear idea of the premises but also to meet the administrative staff and ask all the complementary questions considered as useful. From laboratories to the library, from sports infrastructure to administrative support, the visits have provided a thorough understanding of the context.

The visit included several interviews with the actors involved (PSU Chancellor, Dean of College, quality assurance directors, faculty members, students, alumni and employers) and a tour of the campus with the presentation of the facilities (library, research labs, classrooms and equipment, Translation center).

The program representatives and the institution, through the Evaluation and Academic Accreditation Center, have been very cooperative, professional and available to provide all the required elements.

III. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The BA in Applied Linguistics is delivered by Prince Sultan University, a non-profit private university in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia). The program was established in 2001 and is offered exclusively to women; it is housed by the Linguistics and Translation Department (LTD) in the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS).

It consists of 133 credit hours earned in the course of 8 academic semesters. This program takes place in the context of the increasing demand for professionals in the English language in the country. With the status of English as an international language and a sizable number of expatriates speaking different languages, proficiency in English has indeed become an important asset in the national labor market. The program thus aims at developing the students' proficiency and communication skills in both oral and written English, as applied to different professional contexts.

This English Language for Professionals (ELP) track prepares students to enter professions related to communication and the media, public relations, journalism, advertising, editing and publishing, business and management, in both the public and private sectors. This professional orientation is built on a solid background in the linguistic structure of English. The program thus offers (in addition to the University and College requirements) a specific combination of courses in theoretical and applied English linguistics, general and specific English language, generic skills such as communication and information technologies, as well as written Arabic. It is also capped by a mandatory 7-month co-operative experience (Co-Op), whereby students serve as interns in institutions relevant to their program, with joint supervision from the institution and the program. Another characteristic feature of study programs at Prince Sultan University is the emphasis put on extra-curricular activities, which support and enrich the students' learning experience. This combination of practical and theoretical courses and professional experience and activities establishes the distinctiveness of the BA in Applied Linguistics and distinguishes it from similar programs in the country.

2 - PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAM'S SELF-EVALUATION APPROACH

The program's self-evaluation approach is based on Hcéres' evaluation guidelines. All four fields present in the framework are thoroughly tackled, and compliance with each standard is showcased. The university's self-evaluation approach falls within a complex structure of quality assurance, as established at Prince Sultan University. The Program, Department, College and Institution are involved through different committees in regular interaction, such as the program Curriculum Review Committee and Quality Assurance Committees at each level, with the coordination and leadership of the Evaluation and Academic Accreditation Center. The self-evaluation relies on a set of evaluations and reports, such as students' evaluation of courses and annual surveys, instructors' course reports, and annual program reports, which are periodically produced to monitor enrolments, students' academic performance, progression and satisfaction, attainment of learning outcomes, graduates' employability, and other such indicators. All stakeholders, including alumni and employers, were specifically consulted for feedback. A SWOT analysis is also provided, tackling what the university sees as strengths and weaknesses in its Applied Linguistics program. The University also provided a set of areas and priorities for improvement.

IV. EVALUATION REPORT

1 - TRAINING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The Applied Linguistics program is licensed by the Saudi Ministry of Education and was the first bachelor's degree program in Applied Linguistics to achieve full program accreditation by the Saudi National Center for Academic evAluation (NCAAA) in 2016. The program is aligned with the Saudi National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Regarding the local positioning of the BA program, PSU is the only private university that offers a BA in Applied Linguistics in Riyadh.

The PSU's Bachelor's program in Applied Linguistics matches with the global direction towards multi-/interdisciplinary education. In fact, the program learning outcomes (PLOs) even emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the program. As an example, PLO 2.1 (Skills) includes the analysis of the structure, function, and evolution of language at the levels of phonology, morphology, grammar, syntax, and semantics, in addition to exploring the relationships between language and psychology, society, thought, and culture. The Program provides graduates with a thorough understanding of the linguistic features of English from both theoretical and applied perspectives. It focuses on how languages are structured, developed and learned, and how they relate to social issues in the countries in which they are spoken.

The Applied Linguistics students participate in a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Examples include the choice of a relevant student club, the participation in relevant competitions (e.g., The Written Speech Competition, the News Story Competition, the Short Story Competition, etc.) and the enrolment in a variety of intercultural/international programs (e.g., PSU's Model United Nations, the Intercultural Program with Durham University, international summer trips, etc.). These activities help students gain more confidence in themselves and become more focused on building a successful career in the future.

This program is specific in Saudi Arabia. It targets students who wish to pursue a career in media, translation, publishing, research, advertising, or management positions in educational institutions. The program also prepares graduates to continue their studies at the Master's level, although there is no such track at PSU. The knowledge of English has become an important requirement for competing in the Saudi labor market and a recent government policy made English an essential component of the national curriculum.

Additionally, the program is developed in a coherent and complementary manner to the Translation program, as some of the courses are shared by the two programs. Academic partnerships are formalized through memoranda of understanding and agreements with different institutions, such as Durham University (Great Britain), with which PSU organizes different programs, forums and symposiums.

The Applied Linguistics program uses several socio-economic and institutional partners to provide sponsorship to its activities, internships for its students, and feedback on the career readiness of students and the marketability of the program.

A mandatory 7-month Cooperative Program (Co-Op) also allows students to get hands-on experience in the market. During this Co-Op, students are closely followed by an academic advisor and a company advisor and are then requested to submit a report that they defend as their senior project. The ties between the program and the companies and institutions taking in Co-Op students are maintained and often lead to long-term cooperation actions.

In conclusion, the Applied Linguistics program is developed in line with the University's missions, visions and values. Students are well-prepared to meet the market demands.
Faculty members are encouraged to conduct research. Students are also introduced to research techniques in addition to the development of their skills in Applied Linguistics. The program provides graduates with a thorough understanding of the linguistic features of English, the knowledge of which is an asset in today's context. The Co-Op undertaken by the students guarantees ties with the socio-economic world, allowing them to have a first work experience, with tight links between the University and the future employers.

2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The BA in Applied Linguistics, and each of its component courses and activities, are associated with clear learning outcomes that are known to the students. These learning outcomes include:
   1) knowledge of the core areas of linguistics and applied linguistics and understanding of the connections between linguistics and other fields;
   2) general skills such as critical thinking, research skills, team work, and oral and written communication, targeting diverse audiences and using appropriate digital technology.
Students are prepared to pursue an academic or professional career.

The study plan is well designed in that it provides an adequate balance of courses falling especially within five categories (beyond institutional requirements):
   1) general English language,
   2) English linguistics,
   3) English language for professionals (ELP),
   4) generic skills such as communication and information resources,

5) elective courses that allow students to develop a more personal orientation.

The progression between courses is sound, as general English courses are taken toward the beginning of the program and ELP courses in the second half, with English linguistics courses distributed across the first three years from more general to more specific topics.

To guide them through the program requirements, each student is assigned a supervisor for the total duration of the program. While there is a model study plan, which specifies the courses to be taken in each semester, a certain amount of flexibility is offered to accommodate the students' individual paths. Yet, it is not clear to what extent this flexibility results in classes including students at different levels, which may limit progression between and within courses.

The courses involve a diversity of teaching and evaluation methods, in a learning-friendly environment characterized by a low student-teacher ratio and a dynamic and involved teaching staff. The program favors a learning-by-doing and project-based approach, which appears conducive to achieving the learning outcomes. Students are constantly encouraged to give feedback on their courses either formally (specific forms) or informally. During the interviews, they insisted on the fact that their comments were always taken into account.

Teaching methods are named in program specifications and include contemporary approaches like collaborative, project-based, discovery learning, and flipped instruction. Students are trained in information technologies, and this skill is a part of the program and course learning outcomes. Some courses demonstrate an explicit focus on these skills. To benefit from this variety of learning modes and to stay abreast with market needs, students in the Applied Linguistics program are well-trained in information and communication technologies.

At the end of every course, the course instructor completes a course report that includes an evaluation and analysis of the achievement of the learning objectives and further details about the delivery of the course in terms of content, teaching methods, assessment methods, and educational resources. The course report also allows room for the instructor to reflect on the course as a whole and make recommendations for improvement. Based on feedback in all course reports, the program director prepares the annual program report to analyze and assess the performance of the program as a whole, including all courses.

The ELP approach is appealing and original. It also rests on a solid foundation in the core areas of English linguistics, more than what is typically seen in the domain of applied foreign languages. The articulation between English linguistics and ELP courses should however be clarified and strengthened, in particular with respect to the interpretation of "applied" linguistics" (see Field 3).

The elective courses allow students to explore other fields, in particular those related to the professional areas most relevant for graduates of the Applied Linguistics program (business, marketing, etc.). The integration of these related fields, as well as additional languages, in the study plan should be more explicit and systematic. Electives should be part of the core of the program to ensure the offer is easily available to all students. In addition to the extracurricular activities, the inclusion of the electives in the core of the program would allow the design of a very adapted and updated course, gaining in visibility and offering challenging content, responding to the professional needs of the students.

The program is capped by a 7-month cooperative professional experience in the professional world. This internship component is highly appreciated, due to its longer duration (in comparison to similar Co-Op programs offered in other universities) and its joint supervision between the receiving organization and the study program. While the Co-Op component is a clear asset, its relevance could be strengthened in the final reports written by students by a more thorough consideration of the articulation between the students' professional experience and their training in the Applied Linguistics program.

Finally, curricular activities are supplemented with extra-curricular activities that students are encouraged to engage in, in order to develop a number of skills that prove to be very appreciated by the employers, as interviews have shown.

In conclusion, the study program in Applied Linguistics is well structured in its balanced interaction between courses on general English, English linguistics, English language for professionals, and generic skills. It is complemented by a 7-month cooperative professional experience and a strong offer of extra-curricular activities. Students receive the necessary academic guidance and they benefit from an open and dynamic approach to teaching. The cross-disciplinary nature of the discipline should however be better reflected in the design of the program and the electives should be included somehow in the curriculum to facilitate their access.

3 – ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The program closely monitors enrolments, performance (in individual courses and overall), satisfaction, graduation, and employability, through a series of yearly indicators. These indicators are found in particular in the Program Annual Report and they are based in part on the course reports completed by instructors at the end of every academic semester. A portion of these statistics are made public on the College's website (e.g. student enrolment and graduation rates).

The program is characterized by relatively low enrolments, but high levels of satisfaction, from students, alumni and employers alike. The number of new students enrolled in the four-year program has decreased from 10 in 2017-2018 to 4 in 2020-2021. The cancellation of scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education is given as one important reason for this drop.

Employability rates within six months of graduation are good to excellent (between 58% and 100% between 2017-2018 and 2020-2021). The social relevance of the program thus does not appear to be in doubt: the demand for professionals in the English language is increasing, given the status of English as an international language and the large number of expatriates speaking different languages in Saudi Arabia. Students often pursue their career in the organization in which they spent their Co-Op internship. But these employability rates do not take into account the fact that women in Arab countries often do not enter the job market after graduation for family reasons.

The on-site meetings with students and graduates have suggested that they are highly appreciative of the level of support and guidance they receive from their teachers, supervisors and professors, which contributes to their academic success. Students also fill out course evaluations and yearly satisfaction surveys. Unfortunately, the synthesis of these documents made available to the Committee provided an incomplete picture of student satisfaction. The Annual Program Report for 2021-2022 has been provided after the visit as an example of the synthesis of these documents.

Yet, despite its high level of student satisfaction and its relevance in the socio-economic context, the program needs to strengthen its attractiveness. The Department has already adopted different measures to promote the Applied Linguistics program among high-school students, which seem to have resulted in an increase of new students from 4 in 2020-2021 to 11 in 2021-2022.

The program has developed a number of strategies to attract the relevant audience (women interested in studying languages, generally with a good level of English), listed in the Self-Evaluation report and also discussed during the interviews:
- A website including relevant information about the program vision, mission, learning outcomes, the structure of the program, the study plan, course descriptions, and relevant career options (https://www.psu.edu.sa/en/CHS/acd-eng);
- Recordings of the events organized by the department for the faculty members, students and the public;
- Program news are regularly posted on Twitter (including competitions won by students, certificates awarded);
- Preparation of new promotional material for the program;
- Intensification of the presence of the program on Twitter (the most popular social media platform in Saudi Arabia) and on the Internet (updating websites);
- Organization of an annual English linguistics competition for high-school students;
- Organization of various events highlighting the excellence of the program;
- 50% scholarships to excellent Applied Linguistics applicants;
- Curriculum revision to ensure its compatibility with the job market.

But it is more generally the name and branding of the program that have to be adapted to better reflect its content and highlight its attractive features. The name "Applied Linguistics" appears inadequate. On the one hand, the defining element of the program, and the one that attracts students to it, is English, and specifically English for professional purposes, rather than linguistics. Linguistics provides an essential foundation to the program, but not its aim. Moreover, the courses focus on English linguistics, not general linguistics, and this should

be reflected in the course titles. On the other hand, the term "Applied Linguistics" is misleading in two ways. First, this term primarily refers to language teaching, a component that was until recently a distinct track within the program. With the program now defined by its unique ELP track, its name has to be adapted accordingly. Second, even with a broad view of "applied linguistics", the ELP courses do not generally fall under this concept. The program specifically combines ELP, English linguistics and relevant generic courses; while this combination is original and appealing, it does not correspond to Applied Linguistics.

To sum up, the BA program in Applied Linguistics is quite effective in maintaining various indicators of the program's and students' success, during the program and after graduation. Students and alumni appeared equally satisfied with the program, with respect to its content, to the variety of teaching methods, and to the sustained academic support they received. The name of the program, however, does not quite do justice to the quality of its content and it should be better aligned with its objectives.

4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Linguistics and Translation Department is managed by a chairperson and an associate chairperson. They closely collaborate with four committees:

1. the Curriculum Review Committee,
2. the Marketing Committee,
3. the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee,
4. the Recruitment Committee.

A department council is also convened once a month to discuss new policies and to inform faculty members on changes taking place. The roles and responsibilities of the teaching staff are defined in the Faculty Governing Policies and Regulations Handbook. As for the staff members assuming administrative posts as well, their roles and responsibilities are defined on an institutional level in the PSU's Handbook of Organizational Structure.

PSU's BA in Applied Linguistics adopts the principle of pedagogical alignment. The study program's objectives, content, teaching methods, and learning outcomes are clearly listed in the Program Specifications. Likewise, the syllabus, which is disseminated to students in the first week of the academic semester, is based on the course specifications. The alignment is completed with a course report, which every course instructor writes at the end of every academic semester to comment on the achievement of the course objectives, delivery of content, assessment of learning outcomes, actual grade performance, and the use of teaching methods, and an annual program report, which every department chair along with the course group supervisors complete on an annual basis to reflect on the fulfillment of the program specifications.

Research is supported through the Research and Initiatives Center, and faculty are incentivized to publish their research in reputable journals. They are assigned courses according to their research interests. Students contribute to research labs, and their research skills are supported through writing courses and the Writing and Tutoring Center.

The Applied Linguistics Program is responsive to the needs of the socio economic sector. In its last round of major curriculum review in 2016-2017, the program was directed toward equipping students with the language competence needed for professionals. Hence, some theoretical courses were replaced with more interdisciplinary courses that prepare students for the job market. This major change was informed by feedback from alumni who had already joined the job market and learned its needs, in addition to feedback from the employers of our graduates who assessed our students' readiness for their chosen career paths.

PSU and the Department ensure that the Applied Linguistics Program has the resources required to achieve its objectives. The Department manages the recruitment of new faculty members in accordance with PSU Recruitment Policy. All teaching staff have internationally accredited degrees and are offered additional professional development programs by the Department centers. Several institutional policies with respect to teaching and learning are in place to provide support to new and existing faculty members on different fronts. Examples include the New Faculty Orientation Policy and the Faculty Mentoring Policy. In line with Professional Development Policy, the institution provides several professional development programs and schemes for its teaching staff.

Faculty members are encouraged to deliver training workshops on their research and teaching, which counts toward their annual evaluation. Teaching excellence is recognized institutionally through an annual teaching

award and an exemplary Moodle course award. Some faculty members of the Applied Linguistics Program won these awards over the last few years.

Faculty members are highly encouraged to engage in activities with other institutions on promotion or thesis defense examination committees. They also serve on advisory boards and consultative committees and provide invited talks and consultation services.

In conclusion, the program is following an efficient continuous improvement scheme, in alignment with standard quality assurance measures at PSU. The achievement of program learning outcomes in the BA in Applied Linguistics program is assessed through direct and indirect measures. These measures are reported and analyzed in the program assessment plan, program report as well as individual course reports. Feedback from the students and alumni are taken into account, as they themselves have mentioned during the meetings and appreciate.

V. CONCLUSION

The review of the documents provided, the onsite visit and the interviews allowed the committee to fully grasp the structure and operating methods of the Applied Linguistics program. The professional dimension of the program, ensured by the long cooperative education program and co and extracurricular activities is underlined by both alumni and employers. It is also constantly developed by the teaching staff, through feedback from the companies welcoming Co-Op students. The program, which shares a series of courses with the Translation program, is rather well balanced and can ensure a fair disciplinary progression with the help of the academic advisor. It also offers multiple opportunities for students to practice and develop complementary skills through activities that complement the curriculum.

The BA program in Applied Linguistics is well designed and original, with a good balance between four areas: general English, English linguistics, English language for professionals, and generic skills; elective courses allow students to define a more personal orientation. One of the strengths of the program relates to its Co-Op component, which provides a strong link with the needs of future employers and offers students a real professional opportunity. Mostly, students spend the last seven months before graduation in well-known companies, banks, and associations, and often remain in their Co-Op place for their first job. As the alumni that were interviewed have confirmed, finding a good company for Co-Op Education is competitive, but the tools required to be successful are offered to students in various curricular and extracurricular activities. The program leads to high employability rates.

Students benefit from a very supportive environment, thanks to an excellent student-professor ratio and a dedicated staff always attentive to the needs of students. The program engages in a genuine pedagogical reflection and in a continuous self-evaluation process. The program thus appears to meet the students' expectations as well as those of the job market. Yet, it attracts a very small number of students and corrective measures have to be taken to improve its attractiveness. The Department has already reflected on the reasons for this limited attractiveness and put in place a few initiatives to promote the program among high-school students. More specifically, the Committee sees a lack of adequacy between the current name and branding of the program and its content and objectives. "Applied Linguistics" is neither particularly attractive nor an optimal reflection of the content of the program. What is really at stake here is not the content of the program, but its name and branding, which, although more superficial, are important elements in the visibility and attractiveness of the program. So, a name should be found that simultaneously better contributes to the attractiveness of the program and better reflects its nature.

With respect to the internal structure of the program, while the elective courses allow students to take courses in other domains, this cross-disciplinary approach should be strengthened, systematized and made more visible in the study plan, to better reflect the necessarily interdisciplinary nature of the program, between English and its application to areas such as business, management, marketing, law, etc. Students could also be encouraged to enrich their language repertoire by learning a third language.

Employers have confirmed during the encounter that they pay great attention to the students' participation in extracurricular activities and choice of elective courses, which proves if necessary that these side activities are in fact crucial and fully participate in the students' training. To ensure a fair participation and access to these activities, it could be useful to consider including them more strictly within the curriculum.

STRENGTHS

— An environment conducive to learning, thanks to a diversified pedagogy favoring a learning-by-doing approach, an excellent student-professor ratio and a supportive teaching staff
— Originality of the English Language for Professionals program
— Solid foundation in the core areas of English linguistics
— A long tutored mandatory cooperative professional (7 months) program as a unique opportunity for employability
— Strong student satisfaction
— A dynamic and involved faculty
— Permanent quality assessment that allows agile response to the students' surveys.

WEAKNESSES

— Lack of adequacy between the name of the program and its content and goals
— Ill-defined identity between courses in (general and applied) linguistics and English Language for Professionals
— Few international exchanges directly related to the field of study
— Lack of attractivity with a small number of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

— In order to gain visibility and be more attractive to potential students, it is recommended to adapt the name of the program so that it better reflects its content and goals. A new branding of the program would increase its attractivity.
— The curriculum should offer a more effective and structured multidisciplinary content, in line with the market needs. Areas such as business, marketing, management or law should be more explicitly targeted and made more visible in the study plan. Some of these areas are approached in extra-curricular activities, but these may not be taken by all students.
— In the international context of Saudi Arabia, English is of course an asset and the program as such already offers an international dimension. Yet, the study of a 2nd foreign language should be highly recommended and systematized, to equip the students with a larger language repertoire. Furthermore, the study of additional languages is fully adequate for students in Applied Linguistics, to foster a reflexive approach to language learning put in practice.

VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION

March 05, 2023

To: Dr. Bonnafous-Boucher, M. Director of the Europe & International Department, HCERES

From: Prof. AlMahmoud, M. Dean, College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS)

        Dr. Mitchell, C. Vice Dean, College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS)

CC: Ms. Houppe, M. Head of Project, HCERES

Subject: Response to the Applied Linguistics Program Evaluation Report

Dear Dr. Bonnafous-Boucher,

First of all, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the HCERES for their professionalism throughout the accreditation process. Their cooperation and efficient communication are highly appreciated. We would particularly like to thank the panel of experts whose constructive feedback has been extremely beneficial and whose cooperation has been notably effective.

We would also like to highlight that the visit of the Panel of experts was extremely useful for the following reasons:

1. It allowed the experts to meet the various stakeholders, including students, alumni, employers, faculty members and the management staff.
2. It provided an opportunity for the experts to check the facilities and resources made available for our students and faculty members.
3. It allowed the experts to engage in discussions with our team. These discussions proved extremely helpful in terms of academic value, managerial perspectives and educational content.

The input we received from the visit as well as the following report will be carefully taken into consideration as the whole team of the College of Humanities and Sciences at Prince Sultan University are determined to continuously improve the Applied Linguistics program and enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

We are truly appreciative of the strengths of the program that were mentioned by the Panel of experts: An environment conducive to learning, thanks to a diversified pedagogy favoring a learning-by-doing approach, an excellent student-professor ratio and a supportive teaching staff; originality of the English Language for Professionals program; solid foundation in the core areas of English linguistics; a long tutored mandatory cooperative professional (7 months) program as a unique opportunity for employability; strong student satisfaction; a dynamic and involved faculty; and permanent quality assessment that allows agile response to the students' surveys.

In what follows, we will respond to the recommendations the panel of experts made in their important post-visit report:

1. In order to gain visibility and be more attractive to potential students, it is recommended to adapt the name of the program so that it better reflects its content and goals. A new branding of the program would increase its attractivity.

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Thank you for your valuable recommendation. We agree that a new branding for the program will increase its attractiveness. The Curriculum Review Committee is already considering changing the name of the program and communicating this change through the right channels (once approved at the department level it will be raised to the College Council then to the Institutional Curriculum Review Committee, and from there to the University Council for approval). Additionally, the Marketing Committee is working towards rebranding the program through various activities including inviting speakers from reputed universities as guest speakers in the program (see evidence 1) and offering courses by remote visiting professors from the top 30 universities in the world (see evidence 2). The Marketing Committee is also targeting high schools to raise awareness of the job opportunities available for our graduates (see evidence 3 for a school competition including 13 schools to be held on March 13, 2023)

2. The curriculum should offer a more effective and structured multidisciplinary content, in line with the market needs. Areas such as business, marketing, management or law should be more explicitly targeted and made more visible in the study plan. Some of these areas are approached in extra-curricular activities, but these may not be taken by all students.

Thank you for your valuable recommendation. Currently, the program introduces the multidisciplinary aspect in two forms. First, some of the courses introduce students to important concepts from other domains, such as ELP303 English for Administration and Law, ELP304 English for Public Relations and Marketing and ELP405 English for Global Media. Second, several co-curricular activities are offered to boost the multidisciplinary nature of the program. For example, students in ELP304 English for Public Relations and Marketing arrange a complete marketing campaign based on their study of marketing principles. Similarly, the students of ELP408 English for Political Communication engage in online programs in which they represent Saudi Arabia to students from other universities/nationalities (e.g., StonyBrook University and Konkuk University) relying on their understanding of basic principles of diplomacy (see the recording of PSU-Konkuk University event as evidence 4 https://psu.edu.sa/en/CHS/ALLAB-Videos). Third, all students are required to enroll in free elective courses from other colleges, such as the College of Business Administration and the College of Law. Moreover, the HCERES recommendation will be referred to the Curriculum Review Committee to identify ways to further incorporate multidisciplinary into the program.

3. In the international context of Saudi Arabia, English is of course an asset and the program as such already offers an international dimension. Yet, the study of a 2nd foreign language should be highly recommended and systematized, to equip the students with a larger language repertoire. Furthermore, the study of additional languages is fully adequate for students in Applied Linguistics, to foster a reflexive approach to language learning put in practice.

Thank you for your valuable recommendation. Currently, the Applied Linguistics Program encourages students to study the French language as a 2ᵈ foreign language among the program electives. Hence, students who are interested in studying a 2ᵈ foreign language are offered this opportunity. Additionally, the Community Language Center at Prince Sultan University offers several courses in foreign languages with discounted rates for students (please check their website as evidence 5 https://www.psu.edu.sa/en/ce-language). Moreover, the HCERES recommendation has been referred to the Curriculum Review Committee for their implementation.

No: _____ Date: _____ ■ _____ : التاريخ _____ الرقم:
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4. Few international exchanges directly related to the field of study

Thank you for your valuable comment. Currently, Prince Sultan University's International Affairs Office https://www.psu.edu.sa/en/international-affairs offers a study abroad program which allows students to study abroad for an academic semester. Additionally, students are engaged in several online intercultural communication programs with internationally reputed universities (please, see a sample letter for a recent activity with Stony Brook University which was held as part of the ELP408 English for Political Communication as evidence 6). These programs provide students with sufficient orientation to other cultures. Furthermore, several intercultural events and programs are regularly held on campus, reflecting the multicultural nature of PSU. You may see the attached flyer for an Intercultural Dialogue event held on March 1, 2023 (please see a flyer of the event as evidence 7). Moreover, the future will allow more opportunities for international students to study in the country as the processes for obtaining student visas are now available. PSU will attempt to benefit from these changes in line with its continuous internationalization efforts.

5. Lack of attractivity with a small number of students

Thank you for your valuable comment. Currently, the Applied Linguistics program has a small number of students due to several reasons as outlined in the self-evaluation report. However, a year ago, several measures have been taken to increase enrolment. Some measures will continue, such as offering university scholarships and strengthening the department's marketing committee, with a bold marketing campaign, about the Applied Linguistics program. Please, see evidence 3 in relation to the 2nd Young English Linguist Competition as one of the activities that have been established to promote the program. Thus, it is expected to increase enrolment in the semesters to come.

We thank you once more for your invaluable expertise and notable cooperation. We look forward to continued collaboration with your renowned institution.

Sincerely,

Prof. Mahmoud AlMahmoud, Dean
College of Humanities and Sciences
Prince Sultan University

Dr. Connie Mitchell, Vice-Dean
College of Humanities and Sciences
Prince Sultan University

No: ————— Date: ————— ■ الرقم: ———— التاريخ: —————
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ACCREDITATION DECISION

Bachelor of Art in Applied Linguistics

College of Humanities and Sciences

Prince Sultan University

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

March 28th 2023

SCOPE OF THE ACCREDITATION GRANTED BY HCÉRES

HCÉRES has based its evaluation process on a set of objectives that higher education institution study programs must pursue to ensure recognised quality within France and Europe. These objectives are divided up into four fields among which are the accreditation criteria.

The Accreditation Commission issues an opinion about the accreditation of the program after examining the file. The Hcéres President takes the decision based on the Commission's opinion and the final evaluation report of the program. This accreditation decision, taken in plenary session, is the result of a collegial and reasoned process.

The decision issued by Hcéres regarding the accreditation of the program corresponds to the awarding of a label to the evaluated entity.

This decision is independent of the accreditations carried out by the French State and therefore does not entail recognition in France of the Institution's diplomas.

Decision No.2023- 18 on the accreditation of the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics delivered by Prince Sultan University - College of Humanities and Sciences - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education,

Considering the Research Code, in particular Articles L. 114-3-1 to L. 114-3-6;

Considering the Decree No. 2021-1536 of November 29th 2021 on the organisation and operation of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the Board's deliberation No. 2022-5-02 of September 29th 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (Except for doctorates/PhDs);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of March 16th 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement No.20220223 – Prince Sultan University – College of Humanities & Sciences with the Prince Sultan University for the evaluation/accreditation of the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission of March 20th 2023,

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics delivered by Prince Sultan University meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on September 29th 2022, as follows:

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The Applied Linguistics program is developed in line with the University's missions, visions and values. Students are well-prepared to meet the market demands and teaching staff members are encouraged to conduct research. Students are also introduced to research techniques (methodology, bibliography) in addition to the development of their skills in Applied Linguistics. The program provides graduates with a thorough understanding of the linguistic features of English, the knowledge of which is an asset in today's context. The co-op training undertaken by the students guarantees ties with the socio-economic world, allowing them to have a first work experience, with tight links between the University and the future employers.

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The study program in Applied Linguistics is well structured in its balanced interaction between courses on general English, English linguistics, English language for professionals, and generic skills. It is complemented by a 7-month cooperative professional experience and a strong offer of extra-curricular activities. Students receive the necessary academic guidance and they benefit from an open and dynamic approach to teaching. However, the cross-disciplinary nature of the discipline should be better reflected in the design of the program and the electives should be included somehow in the curriculum to facilitate their access.

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 3: ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The BA program in Applied Linguistics is quite effective in maintaining various indicators of the program's and students' success, during the program and after graduation. Students and alumni appeared equally satisfied with the program, with respect to its content, to the variety of teaching methods, and to the
sustained academic support they received. However, the name of the program does not quite do justice to the quality of its content and it should be better aligned with its objectives.

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The program is following an efficient continuous improvement scheme, in alignment with standard quality assurance measures at PSU. The achievement of program learning outcomes in the BA in Applied Linguistics program is assessed through direct and indirect measures. These measures are reported and analyzed in the program assessment plan, program report as well as individual course reports. Feedback from the students and alumni are taken into account, as they themselves have mentioned during the meetings and appreciate.

Article 2

The Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics delivered by the College of Humanities and Sciences of Prince Sultan University is fully accredited for a period of 5 years as from the present decision.

Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations and comments :

- It is obvious that the title of the training program and its content must be clearly aligned beyond the question of branding.
- The program should strengthen its efforts to ensure a better transdisciplinarity.
- The study of additional languages is fully adequate for students in Applied Linguistics to foster a reflexive approach to language learning put in practice. English is of course an asset but the study of a 2nd foreign language should be highly recommended and systematized, to equip the students with a larger language repertoire.

Article 4

The Director of the Europe and International Department is responsible for the execution of this decision, which will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, March 28th 2023

The President

Thierry COULHON

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