

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Master of Private Law

University of Sharjah (UoS)
College of Law

United Arab Emirates

July 2024

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International evaluation and accreditation

EVALUATION REPORT

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The University of Sharjah (UoS) has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its Master of Private Law programme. The evaluation is based on the "External Evaluation Standards" of foreign study programmes, adopted by the Hcéres Board on January 31st, 2022. These standards are available on the Hcéres website (hceres.fr).

In the name of the expert committee¹:

Sandrine Clavel, President of the committee

In the name of Hcéres¹:

Stéphane Le Bouler, Acting President

¹In accordance with articles R. 114-15 and R. 114-10 of the Research Code, evaluation reports are signed by the chairman of the expert committee and countersigned by the President of Hcéres.

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I. STUDY PROGRAMME IDENTITY SHEET

- University/institution: University of Sharjah
- Component, faculty or department concerned: College of law
- Programme's title: Master of Private Law
- Training/speciality: Law
- Year of creation and context: 2004
- Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): Sharjah – UAE, main campus, Kalba Branch

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

- Surname, first name: Prof. Saleh Luhaibi
- Profession and grade: Professor
- Main subject taught: Civil Law

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

- On a national level: Accredited by the federal Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), Ministry of Education, UAE
- At an international level: N/A

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAMME

- Human resources

The departments of public and private law are composed of 45 Faculty members (full professors, associate professors, and assistant professors), 14 of them are dedicated to private law, plus 10 teaching/research assistants and 6 administrative staff dedicated to the College of Law. Each staff member is required to teach at the Bachelor level; the applicable rule is, but for exception, that Faculty members dedicate around 70% of their teaching load to the bachelor programme (with one single course at the master or PhD level).

- Material resources

The main campus of the College of Law is composed of the M1 Building, designated for male students, and the W1 Building, for female students. Both buildings are alike (but for the theatre hall).

The M1 Building offers 14 smart classrooms, a computer lab, a simulated courtroom resembling real court setups with integrated electronic displays, and a theatre hall for academic discussions and conferences.

Similarly, the W1 Building includes 14 smart classrooms, a computer lab, a simulated courtroom. The theatre hall in the M1 Building is used by both male and female students (mixed events).

Women use indifferently the M1 or the W1 Building: non-mixed classes are the rule at the Bachelor level, but at the master level all classes are mixed. Administrative offices, and teaching staff offices are located in W1 and M2 Buildings, equipped with necessary furniture, computers, and a meeting room. The university has four libraries, two of them (one for male students, one for female students) including extensive law sections.

STUDENT POPULATION: EVOLUTION AND TYPOLOGY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, including number of graduates

Batch	Newly Enrolled 1st Year	Graduated end of 1st Year	Graduated end of 2nd Year	Graduated end of 3rd Year	Graduated end of 4th Year	Graduated >= 4 Years	Total Graduated	Graduation Avg Time
2013	13	0 0%	0 0%	3 23%	3 23%	5 38%	11 85%	4.18
2014	13	0 0%	0 0%	4 31%	5 38%	1 8%	10 77%	3.7
2015	20	0 0%	2 10%	2 10%	9 45%	4 20%	17 85%	3.88
2016	19	0 0%	0 0%	1 5%	5 26%	9 47%	15 79%	4.53
2017	35	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	5 14%	16 46%	22 63%	4.68
2018	43	0 0%	0 0%	3 7%	4 9%	8 19%	15 35%	4.33
2019	55	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	11 20%		13 24%	3.85
2020	37	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%			1 3%	3
2021	42	0 0%	0 0%					
2022	17	0 0%						

The length of study is two years for full time students. However, most students are part-time and in average they succeed in more than 4 years. Students enrolled since 2018 are still in study and the graduate rate is not comparable to those above. For a batch the number of students who cannot successfully complete the master is around 3 students between 2013 and 2016 but it increases up to 13 students in 2017.

The number of students enrolled has been limited by the UAE ministry since 2022 explaining the decrease in the newly enrolled students (numbers of students being linked to the number of professors).

II. VISIT DESCRIPTION

COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

Chairman of the committee:

- Sandrine CLAVEL, Professor of Private Law at Université Paris Saclay, UVSQ

Academic experts:

- Philippe ACHILLEAS, Professor of Public Law at Université Paris Saclay
- Laure CLÉMENT-WILZ, Professor of public law at Université Paris Est-Créteil
- Derek EL ZEIN, Senior lecturer in Political Science at Université Paris Cité
- Etienne PATAUT, Professor of Private Law and Criminal Sciences at Sorbonne Université

Student expert:

- Nawal DAFFEUR, Post-doctoral student at University of Poitiers

Hcéres was represented by Professor Evelyne LANDE, scientific advisor, Europe and International Department.

VISIT DESCRIPTION

- Date of the visit: 2nd of May to 7th of May 2024
- Organisation of the visit: see table
- Cooperation of study programme and institution to be accredited: the university and the college organised the visit so that the committee could meet all the stakeholders and visit the premises. Everything possible has been done to respond to the requests of the committee's experts.

PEOPLE MET

Thursday the 2nd of May, 2024

Time	Session	Audience
12:00-12:30	Opening session with top management: Presentation of Sharjah University challenges	Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Vice Chancellor for accreditation, and Dean of College of Law (four people met)
12:30-13:00	Campus visit	First part: main building (amphitheatre, cafeteria...), and Law college Male building (classrooms, labs...)
14:00-15:00	Institutional meeting Presentation of the College of Law, its programmes	Dean of the Faculty of Law, Director of Studies, Directors of the six courses assessed (five people met)
15:10–16:10	Quality assurance	Staff involved in quality assurance and management. Evaluation & Academic Accreditation representatives. (Two people met),
16:10–17:30	Academic and non-academic partners	Executive department of Francophonie relations (Government of Sharjah), Director of Alliance française, representatives of the Supreme Legislation Committee, Co-head of dispute resolution at Al Tamimi& Cie law firm and legal consultations, Partner at Al Rasheed & partners law firm and legal consultation (seven people met)

Friday the 3rd of May, 2024

Time	Session	Audience
08:00–09:00	Bachelor's programme managers	Dean of the college of Law, Head of training: three for Private Law and one for Public Law (five people met).
09:00–10:00	Bachelor's Teaching staff	Representative panel of teaching and research staff in the course: tenured, contract and part-time lecturers from various disciplines, not including those responsible for the degree (seven people met)
10:10–11:10	Bachelor's students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the Bachelor in terms of gender, nationality, year of studies, learning arrangements, etc. (eight people met)
Debriefing (Bachelor)		
13:00–14:00	Master Air and Space Law programme managers	Heads of training (two people met).
14:00–15:00	Master Air and Space Law Teaching staff	Representative panel of teaching and research staff in the course (four people met)
15:10–16:10	Master Air and Space Law Students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program (four people met)
Debriefing (Master Air and Space Law)		

Monday the 6th of May, 2024

Time	Session	Audience
08:00–09:30	Master and PhD Public Law programme managers	Heads of training and administrative secretaries (four people met).
09:40–11:00	Master and PhD Public Law Teaching staff	Representative panel of teaching and research staff in the course, not including those responsible for the degree (eight people met)
11:10–12:00	Master Law students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program. (six people met)
12:00–12:45	PhD Public Law students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program (six people met)
14:00–15:00	Campus Visit	Second part. Documentary resources
15:00–16:00	Alumni	Five people met graduated from the different programmes evaluated
Debriefing (Master and PhD Public Law)		

Tuesday the 7th of May, 2024

Time	Session	Audience
08:00–09:30	Master and PhD Private Law programme managers (Q&A, no presentation)	Heads of training and administrative secretaries (five people met).
09:40–11:00	Master and PhD Private Law Teaching staff	Representative panel of teaching and research staff in the course, not including those responsible for the degree (eight people met)
11:10–12:00	Master Private Law students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program (four people met).
12:00–12:45	PhD Private Law students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program (five people met).
Debriefing (Master and PhD Private Law)		
14:00–15:00	Campus Visit	Third part. Law college Female building (classrooms, labs...)
15:00–16:00	Closing session (final questions/answers on the 6 diplomas, no feedback)	Dean of the Faculty of Law + degree directors

III. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The University of Sharjah, established in 1997 as a public institution, offers a wide range of disciplines including Medicine, Engineering, Fine arts & Design, Business & Management, Social sciences & Humanities, Sharia and Islamic Studies, Law, and Communication & Journalism. The College of Law was founded in 2000 and initially launched its Bachelor of Law programme in Arabic in 2001. This was followed by the introduction of master's programmes and subsequently PhD programmes in law, specifically in public and private law, starting in the academic year 2011/2012. The College of Law stands out as the largest law college in the UAE in terms of both student enrolment and the number of programmes offered.

In line with the university's goals "providing a collaborative, innovative, and sustainable learning environment that cultivates twenty-first-century skills amongst its students", the College of Law intends to "serve local and global communities' current and future needs by offering innovative academic and professional programmes" meant to produce graduates prepared for the labour market.

Operated by the Department of Private Law since Autumn 2004/2005, the Master of Private Law is offered primarily in Arabic, with one course (Private International Law) taught in English. This master's degree programme encompasses three key dimensions: educational, disciplinary, and research-focused within the field of legal studies. The academic research necessitates that both faculty and students stay abreast of recent developments in contemporary comparative legal systems and leverage innovations in the legal field, particularly modern technological advancements and their impact on curricula and teaching methods. Additionally, the programme aims to train qualified specialists in the legal field, thereby contributing to the University's mission and enhancing its standing as an intellectual, scientific, and cultural hub in the country. The primary objectives of the Master of Private law programme include developing graduate students' abilities to apply the scientific research methods across various branches of law, meeting the community needs in the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council states, promoting scientific research activities to enrich legal knowledge in all branches of law.

Students have the flexibility to study full-time or part-time. While internship and moot competitions are available, they are not mandatory components of the programme.

2 – PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME'S SELF-EVALUATION APPROACH

The self-evaluation approach is the result of a joint effort between the Academic Accreditation Department of the University of Sharjah and the faculty members of the College of Law. The Academic Accreditation Department collected and provided the relevant data. Based on this data, the College of Law's academic team prepared the self-evaluation report, which was subsequently reviewed by the Academic Accreditation Department. The result is a comprehensive self-assessment report, supplemented by numerous appendices that offer a wealth of objective information.

IV. EVALUATION REPORT

1 – TRAINING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The study programme is consistent with the institution's educational training strategy.

It is designed to align closely with the institution's broader educational strategy and meet local and regional job market needs. Consequently, it has a solid reputation both locally and regionally, attracting students from the UAE and neighbouring Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The programme integrates seamlessly with other academic cycles, facilitating smooth transitions for students advancing their studies. Overall, it provides a comprehensive education in private law, preparing students for professional success while contributing to societal progress in line with the university's objectives.

The study programme has established several international partnerships with reputable law schools and legal institutions, both domestically and internationally. Yet, the effectiveness of these partnerships is still to be demonstrated.

The programme includes incoming and outgoing student mobility schemes, supported by financial assistance to facilitate these exchanges. In May 2022, the University of Sharjah established the Scholarship Unit to encourage national students at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. levels to study abroad for one to two consecutive semesters. This opportunity is available to students who meet the criteria and conditions set by the Ministry of Education. However, this initiative seems to be widely inapplicable to the students in the Master of Private Law programme, as they are predominantly part-time students. The incoming exchange is also limited by the number of courses offered in non-Arabic languages and a lack of specific specialisation that would draw international students to study private law in the UAE. Expanding the availability of courses in English or French and promoting specialised areas within private law could help increase the programme's global attractiveness.

One key partnership is with the University of Arizona in the United States, focusing on joint academic programmes, faculty and student exchanges, and supporting publications in University of Arizona journals. The agreement with the University of Brussels in Belgium emphasises scientific and research collaboration, facilitating knowledge exchange between the two institutions. Another significant partnership is with the International French Institute of Comparative Laws (IDEF), leading to an international conference on unifying Arab judicial rulings in contract law and the launch of a joint website for ongoing collaboration. Additionally, the College of Law at the University of Kansas partnership involves scientific cooperation, including exchanges, lectures, workshops, and joint conference participation. Recently, a partnership has been established with the University of Luxembourg. However, none of these partnerships have yet resulted in institutional exchanges of professors or students.

The study programme benefits from robust research connections that align with its expected outcomes. It is integrated into a broader research community and is supported by structures such as research units.

Faculty members involved in the programme are actively engaged in research, focusing on topics relevant to the course content and student dissertations. The Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences play a crucial role in supporting research efforts across multiple faculties, providing resources for faculty and students to conduct research, and publish findings in international journals.

The programme aims to build strategic partnerships with the local community to address socio-economic needs. However, the actual impact of these partnerships appears limited.

The programme's learning outcomes related to socio-economic needs are designed to ensure that graduates are prepared to meet these demands. These outcomes focus on comparing legislative, jurisprudential, and judicial trends in private law; critically evaluating theories, jurisprudential opinions, judicial trends, and legal texts; and deriving legal judgments based on facts in the field of private law. To fulfil these objectives, the College of Law has entered into partnership agreements with various organisations, including law firms, government agencies, non-profit entities, professional associations, and providers of legal services, such as Al Tamimi & Partners, Dr. Ibrahim Hassan Al-Mulla Legal Group, Ras Al Khaimah Courts Department, Sharjah Federal Sharia Court, and the Public Prosecution in Dubai. These agreements aim to support the programme's objectives and promote collaboration in relevant areas.

The programme has established mechanisms to monitor the progress of these partnerships and to evaluate their effectiveness. However, there is a need for a more analytical approach to assess the effectiveness of these collaborations and how they are leveraged to benefit the programme and its students. Strengthening these partnerships and ensuring they translate into tangible opportunities, such as internships and practical training,

could significantly enhance the programme's effectiveness and address the lack of practical experience currently noted.

Conclusion

Regarding the links to the University's objectives and the local needs, the demands are met quite consistently. The local partnerships with governmental entities and the private sector are at a high level, but the exploitation of these partnerships could be reinforced and optimised. Every material needs of professors and students, both at research or study level, is met by the College of law and the University in general. Despite larger attempts to forge international partnerships with universities abroad, the College of Law in general, and the Master of Private Law in particular, have not yet achieved significant exchanges of students or professors, lacking sufficient internationalisation.

2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The study programme emphasises pedagogical alignment through a curriculum-based and skill-based approach to ensure its structure and teaching methods are suitable for the target skills.

The adoption of a skill-based approach underscores the programme's commitment to preparing students for real-world scenarios. By aligning the curriculum with practical skill development, the study programme demonstrates its adaptability to the evolving needs of the job market and industry demands. Some legal practitioners with whom students work or intern have confirmed that the teachings and training provided by the university align with their expectations.

The objectives of the Master of Private Law, including the specific knowledge and skills that students need to acquire, are clearly communicated to students and other stakeholders. These details are accessible through various platforms, such as the Graduate Catalogue, the university website, and the College of Law website. The programme specification provides a comprehensive list of the programme's learning outcomes, while course syllabus, which outline the knowledge and skills required for each course, are available to students on the learning management system. The study programme values skills developed both within and outside its framework, offering students opportunities to build and showcase their abilities through various activities.

The study programme includes research training through a course called Legal Research Methodology, which focuses on practical legal research. This course addresses both theoretical and applied aspects, detailing the principles of legal research and standards for conducting studies in this field. It also covers writing scientific dissertations for postgraduate studies and scientific publishing in peer-reviewed journals, which is a requirement for all students in the master's programme. Moreover, most courses require students to prepare research papers on specific topics, which instructors review and provide feedback on.

The college organises various workshops and seminars, at least one per semester, featuring contributions from specialised professors and researchers within the University, as well as experts from outside the institution. These events address topics connected to the programme's curriculum.

The master's programme employs a range of teaching methods to foster student success. Despite the strong theoretical foundation, there is room for more practical training.

Traditional lectures provide foundational knowledge, but the programme goes beyond them by encouraging collaborative learning where students work together to solve problems and discuss concepts. This approach aims to enhance practical understanding and critical thinking.

While the majority of courses are in-person, the university has begun incorporating Flexible Hybrid Learning into some courses, to meet different audiences' needs. Students and professors interact smoothly through various digital tools and submit requests through a common platform that seems satisfactory to all parties involved. Students who become alumni can benefit from their student email address years after leaving the campus. This is an advantage that should be exploited to maintain contact and create a professional network among former and present students of the UoS.

The law programme incorporates a range of teaching environments to ensure students are equipped with the skills and knowledge for their future careers. For example, legal clinics are part of the curriculum, providing students with real-world legal experience as they work on cases and offer legal advice under supervision. However, some students have expressed a desire for more practical classes, indicating that the scope of these is currently limited.

Students are also encouraged to publish their work in legal journals, demonstrating their research and writing skills. Participation in events such as workshops, seminars, and conferences is highly encouraged, allowing students to engage with professionals and peers, gain valuable insights, and build professional networks.

The programme is focused on international legal trends and attract Arabic speakers.

It focuses on international legal trends, which helps students collaborate with others from different nationalities. For programs taught in Arabic, such as the Master of Private Law, students must pass an English language course unless they achieve a score of 950 on the EmSAT, 450 on the TOEFL, or 4.5 on the IELTS. These requirements and learning approaches ensure that students gain valuable language skills for their future careers or further studies. Nevertheless, expanding the availability of English-taught courses could significantly broaden the programme's international reach. This initiative would not only attract students from diverse linguistic backgrounds but also prepare graduates for global legal environments.

The study programme content is consistent with the needs of the socio-economic sector and emphasises lifelong learning. However, it could benefit from a clearer emphasis on specialisation.

In the Master of Private Law programme, students are encouraged to select innovative topics for their master's theses, which helps develop their creative and analytical skills, thereby improving their job prospects. Nevertheless, introducing specialised tracks in dynamic sectors such as financial law, banking law, and digital law, including e-commerce, could provide students with specialised insights and skills tailored to the demands of modern legal practice. This enhancement would make the programme more attractive to both students and employers seeking specialised legal expertise.

To support entrepreneurship within the Master, the College of Law has established memorandums of understanding with both local and international legal institutions. These agreements offer internship and training opportunities, although their utilisation remains limited. While such agreements have the potential to provide students with practical experience and valuable networking opportunities, internships are currently not formally integrated into the master's curriculum. They are optional and infrequently pursued by students. Given that the majority of Master of Private Law students are either self-employed or employed in the private or public sector, the practical value of internships and moot competitions may not be as apparent compared to full time on campus students. However, some students have expressed that even short-term internships could be beneficial in helping them understand practical aspects of legal theory.

Establishing stronger ties with alumni, particularly from the Master of Private Law, would facilitate valuable networking opportunities and foster career advancement. Engaging alumni in mentorship programs, guest lectures, or networking events could enhance students' professional development and provide valuable insights into industry trends.

Conclusion

The Master of Private Law aims to simultaneously meet job market needs and student interests, although improvements can be made, such as focussing on new specific areas like financial law, banking law, and digital law, including e-commerce. Offering more courses in English or French would expand opportunities for students willing to study outside the Arabic speaking world. Strengthening the practical approach, particularly through a genuine internship policy, is essential. Establishing more focussed and specific link to the alumni of the College of Law, and possibly even to the Master of Private Law, could be beneficial for all parties involved.

3 – ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The programme develops and monitors its attractiveness to its different audiences A deliberate reduction in new student admissions, prompted by Ministry of Education guidelines, underscores the programme's commitment to maintaining optimal student-to-faculty ratios.

The College of Law has demonstrated proactive enrolment management practices in response to external directives. This strategic adjustment reflects the programme's responsiveness to external factors influencing enrolment trends and its commitment to delivering a high-quality educational experience.

The College of Law tracks student success rates through a variety of indicators

These indicators include retention rates and the achievement levels of course learning outcomes (CLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs). These indicators are assessed by the Deanship of Quality Assurance, Institutional Effectiveness, and Accreditation (DQAIEA). This system allows for ongoing analysis of trends and helps determine how support programmes and curriculum changes affect student success. Few students (on average three per year) do not validate their master's degree, but the number of years to graduate is relatively high (more than four years). This is explained by the fact that most students are enrolled part-time and also by the obligation to publish an article in a journal to be able to validate the diploma.

The College of Law collects and analyses data on the job-market integration of its graduates and their participation in further studies.

This is achieved through graduate surveys and other reports that track employment trends and educational progress. Regarding the Master of Private Law programme, retention and graduation rates are very sustainable.

Conclusion

The data analysis of the master programme in Private Law is continuous and consistent, playing a crucial role in tracking potential changes or adaptations necessary to ensure its relevance and alignment with the needs of students and local job market. The recent decrease in enrolment number is attributed to new ministerial directives that limit student intake based on faculty capacity rather than a decline in the programme's appeal. Despite the lower enrolment figures, success rates remain high. However, the average graduation time exceeding four years, primarily due to part-time enrolment by working professionals, is notable. This extended duration does not significantly impact professional integration since many students are already employed.

4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Faculty members have specific roles and responsibilities.

Faculty members ensure students understand and meet course requirements through clear communication and they are actively involved in assessing student performance. This includes grading assignments, exams, and other forms of evaluation to gauge Students' understanding and progress in the subject matter.

For master's students pursuing thesis work, faculty supervisors play a pivotal role. They provide guidance, support, and mentorship throughout the thesis development process. This involves assisting students in selecting appropriate research methodologies, meeting academic standards, and providing constructive feedback throughout to refine their work.

The study programme has the resources required to achieve its objectives both in terms of staffing and material resources.

All faculty members are all full-time employees and with a team of 14 faculty members, the programme maintains a satisfactory level of supervision. This staffing level is complemented by a dynamic recruitment policy that ensures efficient resource management and aligns with the programme's goals. To foster continuous faculty development, the College of Law regularly organises workshops, seminars, and training sessions. These events cover various teaching aspects such as pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment strategies, classroom management, and technology integration. Publication is a key focus for faculty members, with a requirement to publish at least two papers a year in indexed journals.

The facilities are modern, spacious, and well-equipped, with separate or partially separate campuses for men and women. Classrooms are outfitted with the latest IT infrastructure. Course materials are readily available through the university's intranet tools. The library facilities, which are also gender-separated, are extensive and up to date. The library's opening hours and check-out policies are considered satisfactory, and the online catalogue is highly regarded. The library's active acquisition policy ensures a wide range of resources. Library staff are accessible to students.

The College of Law benefits from a dedicated team of six administrative staff members who contribute to various aspects of the college's operations. Their roles encompass providing support not only to the Master Programme in Private Law but also to other programmes within the college. These administrative professionals ensure the smooth functioning of administrative tasks, including but not limited to managing schedules, coordinating resources, and facilitating communication within the college. Additionally, many tasks such as recruitment, computing support, and data monitoring are handled by the university's shared services, further streamlining operations.

The programme has a structured evaluation process that incorporates student feedback to foster continuous improvement.

Students formally assess the courses they take, providing feedback on various aspects such as course content, teaching quality, and overall satisfaction. This feedback is reviewed by course instructors, programme coordinators, and other relevant staff to identify areas for improvement. The effectiveness of this process was confirmed by a panel of students interviewed during on site visit to the UoS.

The study programme has established a consultative body, known as the Development (Advisory) Council, to facilitate internal evaluation within the college. This council includes a diverse group of participants, such as faculty members, students, and external stakeholders. It meets periodically to examine the programme's outcomes and assess its effectiveness. The inclusion of both internal and external members ensures a broader perspective, enhancing the quality and scope of the programme's evaluation process.

The programme undergoes regular and periodic external evaluation to maintain quality and compliance with academic standards. The University of Sharjah holds full licensure, and its programmes are accredited by the

Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) under the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates. This external evaluation ensures that the programme meets the necessary benchmarks for academic excellence, reinforcing its commitment to accountability and ongoing improvement through transparent decision-making processes. The renewal of accreditation is a process which started in 2024 for the Master in Private Law.

The study programme relies on a quality and ethics-based approach.

Admission into the College of Law at the University of Sharjah follows transparent and clearly defined recruitment procedures. Prospective students must fulfil specific admission requirements, which are outlined by the university to ensure a clear and fair process for all applicants.

The evaluation of knowledge and the validation of skills are conducted according to precisely established procedures that are clearly communicated to students. At the start of each course, instructors distribute a detailed syllabus containing course objectives, topics, assignments, exams, and grading criteria. Additionally, the university has mechanisms for students to request a review of their final exam grades, ensuring transparency in the assessment process. Students also receive ongoing feedback from instructors and teaching assistants, contributing to a clear understanding of the evaluation criteria.

The study programme at the University of Sharjah prioritises research integrity and academic ethics, aligning with the institution's core values and strategic emphasis on integrity and ethics. Ethical standards are deeply ingrained in the university's culture, reflected in its stringent conduct rules and anti-cheating policies outlined in the student handbook. Penalties for violations are severe, ranging from course failure to suspension for serious infractions. Additionally, the College of Graduate Studies conducts workshops throughout the year, offered in both Arabic and English, aimed at reinforcing ethical conduct in scientific research and academic work. Furthermore, the programme has implemented rigorous anti-plagiarism, anti-fraud, and anti-corruption measures to uphold academic integrity. Cheating is considered a grave offense, with severe penalties imposed, as mandated by federal regulations in the UAE. Students caught cheating during examinations face immediate consequences, including course failure, cancellation of enrolled courses for the semester, and suspension from the university for one full semester. These measures underscore the university's commitment to maintaining academic honesty and integrity. These measures reflect the programme's commitment to academic honesty and serve as a deterrent against fraudulent activities.

Conclusion

The faculty team is well-sized. The scientific quality of faculty members is rigorously assessed through their scholarly output, with an obligation to publish at least two articles annually. Pedagogically, faculty members regularly participate in training sessions. Both faculty and students have access to a wide range of resources that support research and class preparation. Regular assessments are conducted, and a very strict anti-cheating policy is enforced. Student satisfaction is consistently monitored. In order to be accredited, the Master of Private Law goes through a regular evaluation process and seeks for constant improvement.

V. CONCLUSION

The Master of Private Law programme at the University of Sharjah maintains enough students, albeit declining, as stipulated by Ministry of Education guidelines. While the local job market needs are adequately met at the bachelor's level, there is potential for enhancement within the existing Master of Private Law programme. Introducing specialised tracks could better cater to students' needs and align with local job market demands. This approach regarding multidisciplinary could also facilitate such a move towards specialisation at master level.

The Master of Private Law programme requires every student to publish a research paper to graduate. This requirement demonstrates the strong support provided by professors and research assistants in guiding students through the research process. However, this requirement, coupled with the fact that most students follow the programme part-time, means that the duration of studies is extended beyond 2 years (4.5 years on average). Moreover, there is room to strengthen practical teachings and enhance internships opportunities.

Another weakness in the Master of Private Law programme is its limited internationalisation. Despite numerous MoUs signed with universities abroad, very few students seem to benefit from these agreements.

Moreover, the College of Law could benefit from a stronger alumni policy. Currently, there is a notable disparity between law graduates and those from other colleges within the same university. While there are some transdisciplinary projects or conferences, the engagement and networking opportunities for law graduates lag behind.

STRENGTHS

- Good attractiveness of the programme in the UAE and the Middle East region.
- Stable teaching team, involved in the management of the program and scientifically up-to-date.
- Large transparency of the curriculum based on collective decision making.
- Good student monitoring, support and assessment.

WEAKNESSES

- Two-year programme that takes an average of 4.5 years to complete
- Lack of specialisation or specialised track within the master programme.
- Lack of international openness
- Weak internship policy.
- No effective Alumni policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

With the dual objective of an introduction to research through the publication of an article in a ranked journal and professional integration, the programme is both very comprehensive and very difficult to complete in two years. A clearer positioning of the master's degree (research or professional) could enable students to validate their master's degree by requiring them to produce an applied research dissertation and reserving the obligation to publish an article at doctoral level.

Recommendation 2

Specialising the Master in Private Law could effectively orient future PhD students into more specific fields while meeting the job market's demand for specialisation in areas such as Intellectual Property or Financial Law, and Banking Law. Introducing these specialised tracks would not only enhance the preparedness of master's graduates for doctoral studies but also better equip them for the job market.

Recommendation 3

Creating more robust links with universities outside the Arabic-speaking world could lead to sustainable and consistent faculty and student exchange programmes. Currently, the programme lacks significant Internationalisation, with no exchange programmes. A primary step would be to offer a significantly larger panel of courses in English, which would attract many visiting professors from beyond the Arabic-speaking world.

Improving students' English proficiency and exposing them to diverse methods and content through hosting foreign, non-Arabic speaking professors would stimulate interest in studying abroad.

The College of Law's Centre for "Francophonie" aligns with the significant number of French speakers in the UAE and could serve as a vital tool for better internationalisation. Offering programmes or even just law courses in French would broaden the perspectives for students in the Master of Private Law. The recent agreement with the University of Luxemburg, where many professors are French and English speakers, presents a valuable opportunity. Developing common tracks, as well as organising joint research and teaching initiatives, could lead to consistent and sustainable internationalisation.

Recommendation 4

Developing more internships for master students is highly relevant. Even though many students already work and might not have much time, engaging in an active internship, where they achieve assigned tasks rather than just passively observing, could significantly enhance their understanding of various jobs related to private law. If these internships could be arranged abroad, the benefits would be even greater.

Recommendation 5

It would be highly useful for the College of Law and its alumni to have a specific and independent group distinct from the rest of the university. Additionally, creating a dedicated group for alumni of Master in Private Law would be beneficial due to the common professional approaches and sectors in which these graduates typically work. A more focused contact with alumni would foster a stronger and more effective network. Tailoring communications to the specific interests and needs of these graduates, rather than sending random emails or general information, would significantly enhance the value of the alumni network.

VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
College of Law

Response to Recommendations for Accreditation of the Master in Private Law

Submitted to
Europe and International Department
French High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES)

05-09-2024


Document History

Date	Action
2 to 7 May 2024	HCERES Site Visit to UoS Campus
31 July 2024	HCERES Evaluation Report Sent to UoS
5 September 2024	UoS Response sent to HCERES

In the Name of the College of Law, University of Sharjah

College Dean:

Name: Professor Adnan Sirhan

Signature: 

Stamp:



Introduction

The College of Law at the University of Sharjah would like to thank the HCRES members for their great efforts, continuous support, and their valuable recommendations provided to the College regarding the accreditation request of its six academic programmes. The college has the honor to submit its response to these recommendations.

The concerned six programmes:

1. Bachelor of Law in English
2. Master in Air and Space Law
3. Master in Private Law
4. Master in Public Law
5. Doctor of Philosophy in Private Law
6. Doctor of Philosophy in Public Law

Master in Private Law

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

With the dual objective of an introduction to research through the publication of an article in a ranked journal and professional integration, the programme is both very comprehensive and very difficult to complete in two years. A clearer positioning of the master's degree (research or professional) could enable students to validate their master's degree by requiring them to produce an applied research dissertation and reserving the obligation to publish an article at doctoral level.

UoS Response:

According to the regulations and instructions for obtaining a master's degree at the University of Sharjah, which apply to all master's programmes at the university, including the master's programme in Private Law, and in accordance with the requirements of the Academic Accreditation Commission at the Ministry of Education, students must meet several requirements. These include completing and successfully passing the academic courses, as well as writing a research thesis in one of the sub-specialties they have studied. Additionally, students are required, under the same instructions, to publish or obtain acceptance for publishing one research paper in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, which may be derived from their thesis. The college does not have the authority to implement alternative requirements, such as choosing an independent teaching or research track for the programme. More details can be found in ([Appendix 01](#). Master Executive Regulations, [Article 64](#)).

Recommendation 2

Specializing the Master in Private Law could effectively orient future PhD students into more specific fields while meeting the job market's demand for 3 specialization in areas such as Intellectual Property or Financial Law, and Banking Law. Introducing these special tracks would not only enhance the preparedness of master's graduates for doctoral studies but also better equip them for the job market.

UoS Response:

According to the college's upcoming five-year strategic plan, two specialized master's programmes will be offered in cooperation with the College of Business Administration: A Master of Law and Business Administration, and another programme focusing on Artificial Intelligence and Law in collaboration with the College of Computing and Informatics at the university.

In the proposed 2025 study plan, which the college has submitted for accreditation by the Accreditation Commission at the Ministry of Education, more specialized courses - both compulsory and elective - have been introduced to the programme to enhance the students' expertise in their chosen fields.

Recommendation 3

Creating more robust links with universities outside the Arabic-speaking world could lead to sustainable and consistent faculty and student exchange programmes. Currently, the programme lacks significant Internationalization, with no exchange programmes. A primary step would be to offer a significantly larger panel of courses in English, which would attract many visiting professors from beyond the Arabic-speaking world.

Improving students' English proficiency and exposing them to diverse methods and content through hosting foreign, non-Arabic speaking professors would stimulate interest in studying abroad.

The College of Law's Centre for "Francophonie" aligns with the significant number of French speakers in the UAE and could serve as a vital tool for better specialization. Offering programmes or even just law courses in French would broaden the perspectives for students in the Master of Private Law. The recent agreement with the University of Luxemburg, where many professors are French and English speakers, presents a valuable opportunity. Developing common tracks, as well as specialization joint research and teaching initiatives, could lead to consistent and sustainable specialization.

UoS Response:

Proficiency in English has become a mandatory requirement for admission to the programme, with students now required to pass specialized English language exams (TOEFL or IELTS) prior to admission, rather than as a requirement for graduation.

As part of the college's new five-year strategic plan, the college will actively pursue and finalize several research and academic agreements with prestigious international universities. These agreements will focus on scientific exchange for professors and students, as well as teaching and research cooperation. Consultations have already begun in preparation for these agreements, including a research and teaching cooperation agreement with Paris-Assas 2 University and a research agreement with the University of Sousse in Tunisia. Additionally, the college remains committed to activating existing agreements with other prestigious international universities to leverage their scientific and training expertise. To facilitate these collaborations, the college plans to implement a student exchange programme with partner universities, allowing students to benefit both scientifically and practically from these institutions.

The Francophonie Center at the university has initiated contact with several prestigious Francophone universities to establish research and scientific cooperation agreements. These efforts have already resulted in agreements with the University of Luxembourg ([Appendix 02](#)), the University of Sousse in Tunisia for research cooperation, and the University of Duhok in Iraq for scientific and research cooperation. Several of these agreements have already facilitated faculty exchanges this year, and the college aspires to further utilize them to establish a student exchange programme. Additionally, the Francophonie Center offers both free and paid French language courses for the college's students. Soon, legal courses in French will be offered to teach students general legal principles in the language.

Francophonie Center Website:

<https://www.sharjah.ac.ae/en/academics/Colleges/Law/CF/fr/Pages/default.aspx>

Recommendation 4

Developing more internships for master students is highly relevant. Even though many students already work and might not have much time, engaging in an active internship, where they achieve assigned tasks rather than just passively observing, could significantly enhance their understanding of various jobs related to private law. If these internships could be arranged abroad, the benefits would be even greater.

UoS Response:

The Master in Private Law programme is an academic research programme designed to qualify students for further studies in a doctoral programme or to develop new specialized knowledge, along with writing and research skills. The programme's objectives do not include external training, particularly since most students are already practicing legal professionals in various official and unofficial organizations. However, the college ensures that students receive necessary training by organizing numerous workshops in collaboration with specialists from the legal sector.

Recommendation 5

It would be highly useful for the College of Law and its alumni to have a specific and independent group distinct from the rest of the university. Additionally, creating a dedicated group for alumni of Master in Private Law would be beneficial due to the common professional approaches and sectors in which these graduates typically work. A more focused contact with alumni would foster a stronger and more effective network. Tailoring communications to the specific interests and needs of these graduates, rather than sending random emails or general information, would significantly enhance the value of the alumni network.

UoS Response:

The Dean of the College has initiated the formation of a committee at the college level, composed of a distinguished group of faculty members, tasked with maintaining regular communication with graduates and monitoring their progress. One of the committee's responsibilities is to organize quarterly meetings with alumni to stay informed about their professional and career paths, and to leverage their professional experiences to support the college and its students. Additionally, the committee will encourage alumni participation in various events and activities organized by the college. To facilitate this, an independent database will be created for graduate programme students to better track alumni and streamline communication with them.



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International evaluation and accreditation

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Master in Private Law

University of Sharjah
College of Law

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

September 2024

SCOPE OF THE ACCREDITATION GRANTED BY HCÉRES

HCÉRES has based its evaluation process on a set of objectives that study programmes must pursue to ensure recognised quality within France and Europe. These objectives are divided up into four accreditation criteria.

The Accreditation Commission issues an opinion about the accreditation of the study programme after examining the file. The Hcéres President takes the decision based on the Commission's opinion and the final evaluation report of the programme. 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 study programme 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 or the diplomas issued by it.

Decision No. EI-2024-42 on the accreditation of the Master in Private Law delivered by the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

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 Board's deliberation of 29th September 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (except doctorates/PhDs);

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

Considering the agreement DEI_2023_CONV27 of 21st December 2023 for the evaluation/accreditation of the Master in Private Law delivered by the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on 27th September 2024;

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the Master in Private Law delivered by the University of Sharjah meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on 29th September 2022, as follows:

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

In terms of the links between the university's objectives and local needs, the requirements are met fairly consistently. Local partnerships with government agencies and the private sector are at a high level, but the use of these partnerships could be strengthened and optimised. All the material needs of professors and students, both in terms of research and study, are met by the College of Law and the University in general. Despite increased efforts to establish international partnerships with foreign universities, the College of Law in general and the Master of Private Law in particular have not yet achieved significant exchanges of students or professors due to a lack of sufficient internationalisation.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The Master of Private Law aims to meet both the needs of the labour market and the interests of students, although improvements could be made, in particular by focusing on new specific areas such as financial law, banking law and digital law, including e-commerce. Offering more courses in English or French would increase opportunities for students wishing to study outside the Arabic-speaking world. It is essential to strengthen the practical approach, in particular through a genuine internship policy. Establishing a more targeted and specific link with alumni of the College of Law or even the Master of Private Law could be beneficial for all concerned.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 3: ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The data analysis of the Master's Degree in Private Law is continuous and consistent and plays a crucial role in monitoring any changes or adjustments that may be necessary to ensure its relevance and alignment with the needs of students and the local labour market. The recent decline in enrolments has been attributed to new ministerial guidelines that limit student numbers according to faculty capacity, rather than to a decline in the attractiveness of the programme. Despite the decline in enrolments, success rates remain high. It should be noted, however, that the average length of study is over four years, mainly due to the fact that working people enrol on a part-time basis. This longer duration does not have a significant impact on professional integration, as many students already have a job.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The size of the teaching staff is good. The academic quality of faculty members is rigorously assessed through their academic output, with a requirement to publish at least two articles per year. In terms of teaching, faculty members participate in regular training sessions. Professors and students have access to a wide range of resources to support research and course preparation. There are regular assessments and a strict policy against cheating. Student satisfaction is constantly monitored. In order to be accredited, the Master in Private Law is subject to a regular evaluation process and is constantly striving to improve.

Article 2

The Master in Private Law delivered by the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, is accredited for a period of 5 years from the date of this decision.

Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations and comments:

- With the dual objective of an introduction to research through the publication of an article in a ranked journal and professional integration, the programme is both very comprehensive and very difficult to complete in two years. A clearer positioning of the master's degree (research or professional) could enable students to validate their master's degree by requiring them to produce an applied research dissertation and reserving the obligation to publish an article at doctoral level.
- Specialising the Master in Private Law could effectively orient future PhD students into more specific fields while meeting the job market's demand for specialisation in areas such as Intellectual Property or Financial Law, and Banking Law. Introducing these specialised tracks would not only enhance the preparedness of master's graduates for doctoral studies but also better equip them for the job market.
- Creating more robust links with universities outside the Arabic-speaking world could lead to sustainable and consistent faculty and student exchange programmes. Currently, the programme lacks significant Internationalisation, with no exchange programmes. A primary step would be to offer a significantly larger panel of courses in English, which would attract many visiting professors from beyond the Arabic-speaking world.
Improving students' English proficiency and exposing them to diverse methods and content through hosting foreign, non-Arabic speaking professors would stimulate interest in studying abroad. The College of Law's Centre for "Francophonie" aligns with the significant number of French speakers in the UAE and could serve as a vital tool for better internationalisation. Offering programmes or even just law courses in French would broaden the perspectives for students in the Master of Private Law. The recent agreement with the University of Luxemburg, where many professors are French and English speakers, presents a valuable opportunity. Developing common tracks, as well as organising joint research and teaching initiatives, could lead to consistent and sustainable internationalisation.
- Developing more internships for master students is highly relevant. Even though many students already work and might not have much time, engaging in an active internship, where they achieve assigned tasks rather than just passively observing, could significantly enhance their understanding of various jobs related to private law. If these internships could be arranged abroad, the benefits would be even greater.
- It would be highly useful for the College of Law and its alumni to have a specific and independent group distinct from the rest of the university. Additionally, creating a dedicated group for alumni of Master in Private Law would be beneficial due to the common professional approaches and sectors in which these graduates typically work. A more focused contact with alumni would foster a stronger and more effective network. Tailoring communications to the specific interests and needs of these graduates, rather than sending random emails or general information, would significantly enhance the value of the alumni network.



Article 4

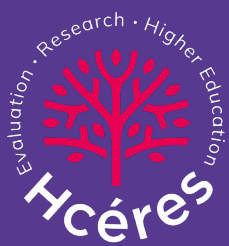
This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, 17th October 2024.

The acting President

signed

Stéphane Le Bouler



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