

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Master of Public 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 Public Law. 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 Public Law
- Training/speciality: Law
- Year of creation and context: 2005
- Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): Sharjah – UAE, main campus

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

- Surname, first name: Professor Wael Allam
- Profession and grade: Professor
- Main subject taught: Public international law

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

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

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAMME

- Human resources:
The department of public law is composed of 17 Faculty members (full professors, associate professors and assistant professors), plus 10 teaching/research assistants and 6 administrative staff dedicated to the whole College of Law. Each staff member is required to teach also 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 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). However, at the master level, all classes are mixed and take place at the M1 building, both for men and women.
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. Administrative offices, and teaching staff offices are located in the W1 and M2 Buildings, equipped with necessary furniture, computers, and a meeting room. The university boasts four libraries, two of them (one for male students and one for female students) include 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%	2 15%	0 0%	5 38%	5 38%	12 92%	4.08
2014	17	0 0%	3 18%	5 29%	0 0%	8 47%	16 94%	3.81
2015	22	0 0%	3 14%	5 23%	8 36%	4 18%	20 91%	3.65
2016	16	0 0%	0 0%	2 13%	5 31%	4 25%	11 69%	4.18
2017	24	0 0%	0 0%	3 13%	9 38%	7 29%	19 79%	4.21
2018	58	0 0%	1 2%	9 16%	10 17%	12 21%	32 55%	4.03
2019	56	0 0%	1 2%	5 9%	11 20%		17 30%	3.59
2020	75	0 0%	2 3%	12 16%			14 19%	2.86
2021	70	0 0%	0 0%					
2022	42	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 1 to 5 students between 2013 and 2017.

The number of students enrolled has been limited par the UAE since 2022 explaining the decrease in the newly enrolled students (numbers of students are 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 DAFEUR, 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 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 meet),
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, a public institution established in 1997, is a multidisciplinary university (Medicine, Engineering, Fine arts & Design, Business & Management, Social sciences & Humanities, Sharia and Islamic studies, Law, Communication & Journalism) gathering nearly 20.000 students. The College of Law, comprising a department of public law and one of private law, was instituted in 2000. The Bachelor of Law (taught in Arabic) began in 2001, followed by the introduction of master's programmes in 2005 and PhD programmes in 2011. The College of Law, which is distinct from the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, is the biggest law college in the UAE in terms of student numbers and program offerings. In line with the university's goals of "providing a collaborative, innovative and sustainable learning environment that cultivates twenty-first-century skills amongst its students", the College of Law intends to "serve (our) local and global communities' current and future needs by offering innovative academic and professional programs" designed to produce graduates well-prepared for the labour market. The Master of Public Law is part of this vision.

Operated by the Department of Public Law since the autumn of 2004-2005, the Master in Public Law has three primarily dimensions: educational, disciplinary, and meaningful research in the field of legal studies. The programme's main objectives include developing the ability of graduate students to apply scientific research methods across different branches of law, addressing the legal needs of the community in the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council States, and promoting scientific research activities to enrich the legal knowledge in all branches of law through in-depth legal studies and research.

The programme is offered in Arabic, with one course of international public law taught in English. It is designed to be completed in two to four years for full time students or three to five years for part-time students, with an average graduation time of four years. The study plan includes 33 credit hours, distributed among compulsory courses (18 credit hours), elective courses (6 credit hours) and a thesis (9 credit hours). Students can choose to participate in international moot competitions and internships on a voluntary basis. Additionally, they are regularly offered opportunities to attend symposiums on various legal issues, involving legal professionals.

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 Master in Public Law is overall consistent with the institution's educational training strategy.

It prepares students for careers in public administration and the criminal law sector, such as the criminal courts or the police, to meet the expectations of the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council States. This programme clearly part of the overall strategy of the University of Sharjah, aiming to meet the needs of the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council States by training competent graduates in the administrative and criminal fields.

The Master in Public Law distinguishes itself from similar programmes offered in the Middle East region by allowing a specific focus on International Criminal Law. Additionally, it addresses the challenges of sustainable development through an optional and innovative course on environmental protection law.

Despite a certain weakness in its internationalisation the master is open to international students from Gulf countries and Arabic-speaking countries but less so to students from other regions

There are numerous international memoranda of understanding (MoU) with universities such as St Joseph's University in Lebanon, UAE University, and the University of Arizona in the USA, as well as with Faculties of Law like the Faculty of Law of the University of Brussels, the International French Institute of Comparative Law (IDEF), and the Faculty of Law of the University of Kansas. Additionally, three agreements are currently being negotiated with Chapman University in the USA, the *Institut international de droit français*, and the *Faculté de droit du Luxembourg*. However, these agreements have not yet resulted in any student or teacher mobility, whether incoming or outgoing.

The decision to teach almost all the courses in Arabic, rather than English or French, addresses local needs but limits the degree's international appeal.

The master is very well integrated into the establishment's research strategy, both in terms of training and the scientific production of its faculty.

The University aims, through its research professors, to become a benchmark for research in public law. The programme introduces students to research, notably through a compulsory course in Legal Research Method and the requirement to publish an article in order to validate their Master's degree. The Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, established in 2014, supports scientific research by assisting faculty members and students in conducting research with strong incentives to publish in international journals indexed, offering financial supports for translation, conference participation, and access to law databases. A Research Group on public law dedicated to the International Court of Justice has also been established. These initiatives enhance scientific research and improve the research skills of both students and faculty members.

The master's programme benefits from strong links with the socio-economic world through the College of Law's institutional MoUs, the variety and quality of events organised, and a robust evaluation process.

The programme is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for the job market and is regularly updated to meet the changing industry requirements. Partnerships with law firms, NGOs, government agencies, and businesses provide postgraduates with practical experience and exposure to real-world socio-economic challenges. Partnerships are established with many local national institutions, such as the Institute of Training and Judicial Studies, the International Commercial Arbitration Centre, the Department of Planning and Surveying, and the Community Development Authority. The College of Law has also signed agreements with different local law firms and court departments. Moreover, the Master's programme hosts networking events, career fairs, and seminars approximately twice a month, bringing together postgraduates, alumni, and professionals to facilitate connections and career opportunities. Furthermore, some students participate in competitions and moot courts at regional and international levels, such as the international moot court held annually in Kuwait.

Conclusion

The Master in Public Law aims to meet the local and regional demand for legal professionals, especially in the field of administrative and criminal law. It does so by providing a high-level Master's programme focused on local public law, taught in Arabic, covering essential legal knowledge and research skills in public law relevant to the region. The University of Sharjah strongly supports the research skills of both students and academic staff. There are robust links with socio-economic stakeholders, facilitated through the organisation of regular events involving legal professionals.

Despite international agreements signed by the University of Sharjah and the College of Law, the Master of Public Law is not attractive to foreign students beyond the Gulf Countries due to its primary instruction in Arabic. Moreover, the relatively high fees may also contribute to its limited appeal to a broader international audience.

2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The structure of the study programme and the teaching methods used are fully adapted to the target skills, incorporating both a curriculum-based and skilled-based approach.

The Program Learning Outcomes and Teaching and learning methods are well-defined. Each course specifies its course learning outcome and employs appropriate learning methods and assessment tools aligned with the UoS competencies. These elements are implemented in the Course e-file, accessible to all students on the Learning Management System (Blackboard) at the beginning of each course.

The programme covers essential legal principles and theories, offering a comprehensive understanding of the legal system including Constitutional law, political systems, and public international law. There is flexibility in elective course selection, with six courses (3 credit hours each) available in areas such as environmental, economic, or financial law from which students choose two courses. This allows postgraduates to tailor their education to align with their career goals. The compulsory thesis (9 credit hours) can commence once 50% of the courses are completed, ensuring students engage deeply in administrative law, criminal law, and public international law, while also requiring them to publish a research paper, fostering immersion in legal research.

To enhance specialisation, introducing "tracks" similar to those in many law master's programmes could be beneficial. For instance, a "criminal justice" track could align with the planned PhD programme in criminal justice, enhancing the programme's focus and appeal.

The study programme aims to enhance its teaching practices to promote student success, primarily focusing on theoretical legal knowledge.

Teaching methods are varied, emphasising lectures and research. Exams are designed to reflect the diversity of learning outcomes. In case of exam failure, students can retake the same course up to three times.

The programme ensures a supportive and personalised learning environment. It offers remedial course in local law for foreign students and assigns each student an academic advisor for individual monitoring and personalised guidance, including adjustments to their study plans. Additionally, personal or psychological counselling services are available through the Deanships of Student Affairs. Finally, the programme integrates Flexible Hybrid Learning in select courses to accommodate special circumstances like work commitments or health issues.

The Master's programme has made efforts to enhance its international accessibility, but without effective results.

It adheres to the Emirates National Qualifications Framework strands and employs a credit hour system conducive to international exchanges. All students are required to meet an English language proficiency standard, with an English course mandatory in the first semester. One course, international public law, is taught in English, and students have the option to write their thesis and research paper in English. Despite these measures, the Master of Public Law lacks sufficient courses in English (or French) to attract a broader international student body. Nevertheless, the programme does offer refresher courses in Arabic, catering to individuals interested in careers within the Emirates and Gulf States.

The study programme demonstrates a strong commitment to meet the needs of the socio-economic sector and to promote lifelong learning among its students.

A significant portion of its students are professionals enrolled part-time. To enhance practical exposure and skill development, the programme integrates entrepreneurship concepts and offers opportunities such as international moot court competitions. Additionally, it regularly organises events with legal professionals and associations, providing students with real-world insights and networking opportunities. By signing agreements and memorandums of understanding with reputable institutions, the College of Law ensures that its programme remains aligned with industry standards and reflects current legal practices.

Conclusion

The Master's programme provides a comprehensive understanding of expectations through a transparent grading system and clear communication of course content and teacher expectations. It offers strong theoretical foundations supported by effective teaching methods and highly qualified faculty. The curriculum is well-structured with a balanced mix of core and elective courses, allowing for progression while accommodating individual needs. While the programme aligns with professional requirements, it lacks a

specialisation or track system that could offer deeper focus in specific areas of Law. However, it excels in providing supervision through dedicated advisors and thesis supervisors, supported by comprehensive services from the College of Law and the University. Nevertheless, the high standards requested to graduate (the obligation to publish an article in Arabic or English) explain why the number of graduate students is low.

Despite its strengths, the Master faces challenges in attracting foreign and exchange students due to a limited offering of courses in English or French (even though local law is inspired by civil law and part of the teaching staff speaks French). Efforts such as partnerships with the *Alliance Française* and the newly established Centre of Francophonie could potentially enhance the programme attractiveness.

3 – ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The University of Sharjah actively promotes the Master's programme through online platforms accessible to students.

The programme's attractiveness is mainly assessed by monitoring enrolment numbers, which have remained stable overall. However, a recent decline can be attributed to two main factors: first, national directives from the Ministry of Education which define the number of students enrolled in each programme; and second, internal adjustments to ensure the programme's sustainability. Specifically, the increase in thesis students has imposed greater supervisory responsibilities on teaching staff, necessitating a reduction in their teaching load.

The Master's programme at the University of Sharjah enjoys recognition among its own graduates, particularly those holding a Bachelor of law degree. Arabic-speaking students primarily discover the programme through online searches, with specific interest noted from Gulf countries like Kuwait, which highly values the programme's offerings. This regional recognition serves as an incentive for students from these countries to pursue admission. The attractiveness of the programme is further bolstered by the opportunity for students to extend their studies to a PhD level. While the programme commands high tuition fees, it offers Merit-Based Scholarships exclusively to Sharjah citizens, playing a crucial role in attracting and retaining local students. Unfortunately, these scholarships are not extended to foreign students, even those residing in Sharjah. However, many students from the region benefit from scholarships provided by their home countries, underscoring the university's strong regional reputation. Moreover, graduates holding a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Sharjah receive a significant discount (50%) if they enrol in the Master's programme.

The success of students is scrupulously monitored, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Graduation rates are tracked since 2013. 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 (more than 90% until 2016; 69% in 2016 and 79% in 2017). For a batch the number of students who cannot successfully complete the master is around 1 to 5 students between 2013 and 2017. Students are supported to ensure their success through personalised monitoring of their studies. Advisors play a crucial role in guiding students through their studies, facilitating course adjustments as needed.

The programme currently lacks a comprehensive analysis of graduates' integration into the job-market.

While the University of Sharjah's Career Guidance and Student Training Office (CASTO) exists, it does not conduct systematic evaluations of graduates' job market outcomes.

Conclusion

The programme is effectively presented on the university's website and attract Arabic-speaking students. It excels in monitoring student success even if the graduation average time is over four years. Nevertheless, it falls short in evaluating graduates' job market integration.

4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The programme is managed by a formally identified team that implements it with rigorous organisation, which is well-known to the students.

Teach faculty member's responsibilities are clearly defined based on their role (teacher, advisor, department chair). All Faculty members are actively involved in teaching: they teach two courses in the Bachelor programme and one course in the Master's and PhD programmes. Although the list of courses on the website does not specify the responsible Faculty member, students can access this information through the Learning

Management System and their academic advisor. Currently, there are no external lecturers, whether professionals or academics, permanently attached to the programme. However, the department occasionally invites professionals or colleagues from abroad to deliver guest lectures to students.

The study programme has the resources required to achieve its objectives, both in terms of quantity and quality of staff as well as material resources.

With a total of 45 Faculty members and 17 teaching staff dedicated to the department of public law, the programme ensures a satisfactory supervision rate for its students. The recruitment policy is dynamic and carried out with a focus on reasoned resource management. Faculty members benefit from continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and training sessions. These sessions cover various aspects of teaching, including pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment strategies, classroom management, and the integration of technology in education. Career progression for Faculty members follows clear rules, ensuring members transparency and fairness. Faculty members are supported in their professional growth, including opportunities for research or teaching visits abroad. The strong pressure put on Faculty members when it comes to publication ensures a continuous involvement in research activities.

The administrative structure of the College of Law includes six dedicated staff members, which is deemed sufficient due to the division of tasks among various university departments and services. In addition to administrative support, the College benefits from five teaching assistants and one research assistant who assist Faculty members in their academic duties. The premises of the College are extremely vast, modern and well-equipped, both for men and women (separate or partly separate campuses). This includes IT-equipped classrooms. Courses materials are easily accessible through intranet tools.

The libraries' premises are perfectly adapted. The libraries offer ample opening hours and satisfactory check-out policies. An excellent online catalogue and comprehensive document collection are available, meeting the needs of both the faculty members and the students. The acquisition policy is very dynamic. The library staff is noted for their availability and supportiveness, and the library website facilitates direct contact with staff and the organisation of meetings.

The programme undergoes rigorous evaluation processes on multiple fronts, both institutional and informal, internal and external, ensuring continuous improvement.

Firstly, the programme is accredited by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates. In addition to accreditation, the programme undergoes thorough external evaluation every five years to further enhance its quality and effectiveness.

Secondly, the programme systematically analyses various survey reports, including the Course Experience Survey, Senior Exit Survey, Alumni Survey, Student Satisfaction Survey, Fresh Student Survey, and Faculty Satisfaction Survey. These surveys aim to gather insights from students at different stages of their academic journey--from new students to alumni--and from faculty members, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of experiences and expectations. Among these surveys, the Student Course Experience Survey holds particular significance as a critical tool. Furthermore, teaching staff are required to develop a plan for the upcoming semester that addresses any challenges identified in the student evaluations, aiming to achieve improved outcomes based on previous feedback. Since 2014, the intranet has incorporated a "Closing the loop" component in each course or program assessment report. This feature facilitates tracking the implementation of recommendations for improvement derived from survey findings and performance evaluations. Each course's professor submits a report detailing the attainment of learning outcomes, which enables the college to assess its progress towards achieving higher education standards. Faculty members are actively encouraged by the university administration to complete these evaluations.

Thirdly and finally, the programme also conducts regular assessments involving legal professionals, employers, alumni, and other stakeholders to continuously identify the evolving needs of the legal sector. Furthermore, the College of Law benefits from an active Advisory Council specifically dedicated to evaluating all programmes offered by the College. It has a diverse group of members, representatives from faculty, students, and external stakeholders, to the program, nominated every three years. Minutes from Advisory Council meetings and the feedback received are meticulously archived in the programme's e-file, and are used for the continuous programme improvement.

The study programme maintains a robust quality and ethics-based approach, particularly in its grading system and in measures against fraud and plagiarism.

Admission requirements for Master Programmes are clearly articulated on the programme's website and in the Programme Specifications: prospective students must possess a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in law from a recognised university, with a minimum grade point average of 3.00 out of 4.00. Applicants with a grade point average between 2.5 and 2.99 may be admitted conditionally. Language proficiency requirements are also

specified, although clarity is needed regarding whether these requirements suffice for taking the course in public international law taught in English. The recruitment process is carried out by the College of Graduate Studies with no interviews conducted by the College of Law itself.

The evaluation of knowledge and the validation of skills are clearly outlined in the Program specifications. At the outset of each course, instructors typically furnish students with a detailed syllabus outlining the course objectives, topics covered, assignments, exams, grading criteria, and other pertinent information.

Cheating is regarded as a grave offense by the University of Sharjah, with severe penalties including failing the course, cancelation of attendance in other courses, dismissal from the university for one full semester, and disqualification of credits earned elsewhere. The rules of conduct and measures for preventing cheating are stipulated in the student handbook. The University promotes a culture of honesty and respect, fostering an environment conducive to free exchange of ideas. All research works scrutiny via advanced technical programs to detect citations and ensure academic honesty. Recently, the university has reinforced sanctions for plagiarism in its updated code of conduct.

Conclusion

The Master's programme has numerous monitoring and evaluation tools through mandatory course evaluations by students to which teachers must respond, and through external evaluations. The evaluation is also done at the level of the College of Law in support of the Advisory Council and every five years for governmental accreditation. The programme relies on teaching staff able to respond to students' requests for teaching and supervision and on IT services, documentary resources and services dedicated to their support.

V. CONCLUSION

The Master of Public Law programme, administered by the Department of Public Law, aligns closely with the Emiratisation policy of the University of Sharjah. It is supported by a specialised teaching team focused on three main branches: Public international law, Criminal law and Administrative law. Faculty are actively engaged in rigorous research activities, providing students with substantial exposure to legal research and analysis. This immersion includes extensive thesis writing and defence requirements, alongside the mandatory publication of an article in recognised journals, co-authored with their thesis advisor, in either English or Arabic. The programme effectively addresses local needs, particularly in the field of local administration and justice.

Despite the presence of numerous international academics from Arabic-speaking countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, the Maghreb countries, or certain Gulf countries, the Master's programme has not fully leveraged the linguistic skills of some teachers who are proficient in English and notably in French. While the programme includes a remedial course in local law and offers one course taught in English, its international openness remains relatively undeveloped. To enhance its standing in the Arabic-speaking world and promote excellence in legal education, the programme could expand its offering in English to facilitate international students and faculty exchanges. Additionally, it could capitalise on the French-speaking capabilities of its teachers, especially through collaboration with the recently established Centre of the Francophonie. Given the increasing number of law programmes in the Emirates, there is ample opportunity for innovation in these areas.

The curriculum is clear and offers a progression from compulsory basic courses to specialised elective courses. At the master level, a more specialised track system and more specific course titles could be considered to allow students to demonstrate real expertise in the job market. While the training provides a solid theoretical foundation in the different branches of public law, it lacks practical application. That could be addressed by incorporating scenarios into the course program, inviting practitioners to teach courses, or offering internship. Although most students are already employed, they seek career advancement, making practical exercises essential.

Students benefit from supervision and personalised monitoring regarding the choice of courses and progression towards their degree. The pace of obtaining the master's degree is adapted to their professional and personal constraints. The Master also benefits from the existence of a PhD programme in Public Law.

The University's numerous and operational services guarantee students real comfort in completing their master's degree. They are regularly consulted on the quality of their courses and the programme offered to them. However, the Master degree could gain visibility and consider additional specialisations, as is commonly practiced at the master level. The proposed specialisation in Criminal law and justice seems particularly suitable, especially since it is already planned to create a PhD programme in Criminal justice.

STRENGTHS

- Relevant response to local legal needs in public law (criminal Court, police and public administration).
- High quality of the teaching staff, supported by a rigorous recruitment policy, effective support and an incentive and research-based promotion policy.
- Curriculum guaranteeing a form of progression, adapted to the particularities of each person.
- Good integration of the legal research into the programme, supported by supervision and various work required of students.
- Important human and material resources, to the benefit both of academic staff and students.
- Diversified and regular evaluation and improvement processes.

WEAKNESSES

- Two-year programme that takes an average of 4.5 years to complete
- Insufficient follow-up of the graduates in the socio-economic world.
- Specialisation to be strengthened.
- Internationalisation still too limited.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The requirements for graduating, including publishing an article, provide students with excellent research preparation and prepare them for doctoral work. However, this requirement might be too demanding for professional students who do not intend to pursue in a PhD programme.

Recommendation 2

Efforts on the follow-up of the students after their graduation could be intensified, for example, by promoting the creation of an alumni association in law, or more specifically in public law. This would help improve professional integration and facilitate career advancement for those already employed. Including a “practice of law” module in the programme, provided by legal professionals, would enhance the professionalisation of the curriculum. Additionally, integrating participation in international Moot Courts in the curriculum would add significant value to the high-level training in the practice of law.

Recommendation 3

The specialisation in the curriculum should be sharpened, with more explicitly specialised course titles and specialised tracks within the master's programme. Offering more elective courses, such as those in criminal procedure, would provide students with additional choices and depth. A deeper specialisation in energy law, environmental law, or criminal law could be envisaged.

Recommendation 4

Efforts to internationalise the programme should be continued. This can be achieved by increasing the level of language requirements at the time of recruitment, by offering courses to learn Arabic, by creating new courses in English or French to benefit from the linguistic skills of some of the teachers. Additionally, marketing the programme abroad, and encouraging students' incoming mobility, as well as developing current academic international partnerships to benefit the master's programme are crucial steps. The resources of the new Centre of Francophonie could also play a significant role in improving this internationalisation.

VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
College of Law

Response to Recommendations for Accreditation of the Master in Public 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 Public Law

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The requirements for graduating, including publishing an article, provide students with excellent research preparation and prepare them for doctoral work. However, this requirement might be too demanding for professional students who do not intend to pursue in a PhD programme.

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 Public 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

Efforts on the follow-up of the students after their graduation could be intensified, for example, by promoting the creation of an alumni association in law, or more specifically in public law. This would help improve professional integration and facilitate career advancement for those already employed. Including a "practice of law" module in the programme, provided by legal professionals, would enhance the specialization ratio of the curriculum. Additionally, integrating participation in international Moot Courts in the curriculum would add significant value to the high-level training in the practice of law.

UoS Response:

The university has established a specialized office to follow up on graduates' affairs, through which the college periodically and continuously follows up on the affairs of its graduates and their employment. The Alumni Office cooperates with the College of Law to update alumni data and follow them up. Alumni office enhance communication with graduates to provide a platform to raise their opinions, concerns, and aspirations and to work collectively to give back to the society of which we all belong and to fulfill the UoS mission. Among those services that the university is keen to provide to the alumnus are:

- Connecting alumnus with employers, companies, and institutions to provide suitable jobs in line with the graduates' qualifications.
- Monthly meetings with the various colleges and seminars to exchange experiences and social networking.
- Recommendations and advice regarding the skills and experiences required to be enhanced in line with the requirements of the job market.

- Free training courses and workshops.
- Opportunities for community service through the association's clubs. A space to benefit from the alumnus experiences gained in the field of their work to participate in the enhancement of the curriculum.
- Keeping the alumnus in constant contact with the academic and scientific climate to exchange opinions and update their scientific knowledge by following up on the latest scientific developments through the channels of communication provided by the university.
- Establishing the concepts of democratic practices, the spirit of dialogue and respect for the other opinion among the alumni.

More information about the Alumni Office can be found on the below links:

<https://www.shariah.ac.ae/en/Administration/aao/Pages/ov.aspx>

Moreover, the dean of the college has begun forming a committee at the college level consisting of a distinguished number of faculty members tasked with periodic communication with graduates and following up on their affairs. Among their tasks is organizing quarterly meetings with them to ensure continued knowledge of their professional and career paths and benefit from their professional experiences in supporting the college and its students, and their participation in various events and activities held by the college. In implementation of the above recommendation, an independent database will be created for graduate students at the college to better follow up on its graduates and facilitate communication with them.

Several master's students participated in this year's moot court held in Moscow, and students will be encouraged to continue their participation in mock trials held in the future by prestigious international universities. The college is currently in the process of hosting the second edition of the Moot Court Competition in Air Law in cooperation with Moscow State University, in which master's students in public law will participate.

Recommendation 3

The specialization in the curriculum should be sharpened, with more explicitly specialized courses titles and specialized tracks within the master's programme. Offering more elective courses, such as those in criminal procedure, would provide students with additional choices and depth. A deeper specialization in energy law, environmental law, or criminal law could be envisaged.

UoS Response:

According to the proposed study plan submitted by the college to the Academic Accreditation Office for renewal of accreditation, several specialized courses in public law have been introduced to meet this recommendation. Additionally, the titles of some courses have been revised to be more precise and specialized. The new plan will be implemented following its official approval, in accordance with the necessary procedures.

Recommendation 4

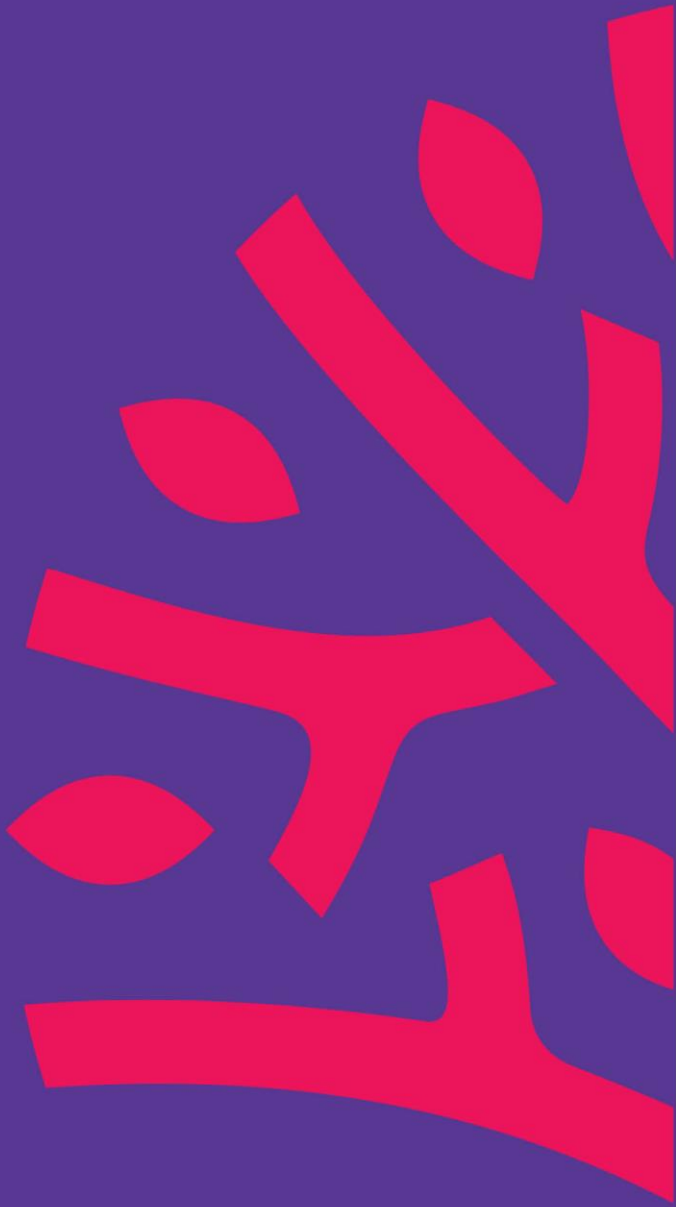
Efforts to internationalise the programme should be continued. This can be achieved by increasing the level of language requirements at the time of recruitment, by offering courses to learn Arabic, by creating new courses in English or French to benefit from the linguistic skills of some of the teachers. Additionally, marketing the programme abroad, and encouraging students' incoming mobility, as well as developing current academic international partnerships to benefit the master's programme are crucial steps. The resources of the new Centre of Francophonie could also play a significant role in improving this specialization.

UoS Response:

Proficiency in English is a mandatory requirement for admission to the programme, with students required to pass specialized English exams (TOEFL or IELTS) before admission, rather than as a graduation requirement. As part of the college's new strategic plan for the next five years, the college will pursue and finalize several research and academic agreements with prestigious international universities. These agreements will facilitate scientific exchange among professors and students, as well as teaching and research collaboration. Consultations have already begun, with a focus on agreements such as the research and teaching cooperation 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 further these efforts, the college plans to implement a student exchange programme with the partner universities, enabling students to gain both scientific and practical benefits from these institutions.

The Francophonie Center at the university has initiated contact with several prominent Francophone universities to establish research and scientific cooperation agreements. These efforts have already led to agreements with the University of Luxembourg, the University of Sousse in Tunisia for research cooperation, and the University of Duhok in Iraq for scientific and research collaboration. This year, some of these agreements have facilitated faculty exchanges, and the college aims to expand their efforts to implement a student exchange programme with these universities. Additionally, the Francophonie Center offers free and paid French language courses to the college's students, with plans to introduce legal courses in French to teach general legal principles.



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International evaluation and accreditation

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Master in Public 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-2024-43 on the accreditation of the Master in Public 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 Public 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 Public Law delivered by the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates 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

The Master in Public Law aims to meet the local and regional demand for legal professionals, particularly in the field of administrative and criminal law. It does this by offering a high-level Master's programme with a focus on local public law, taught in Arabic, which provides essential legal knowledge and research skills in the field of public law relevant to the region. The University of Sharjah strongly encourages research skills among its students and academic staff. There are strong links with socio-economic stakeholders, facilitated by the organisation of regular events involving legal professionals.

Despite the international agreements signed by the University of Sharjah and the College of Law, the Master of Public Law is not attractive to foreign students from outside the Gulf States because it is mainly taught in Arabic. In addition, the relatively high tuition fees may also limit its appeal to a wider international audience.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The Master's programme provides a clear understanding of expectations through a transparent grading system and clear communication of course content and teaching expectations. It provides a solid theoretical foundation supported by effective teaching methods and highly qualified teaching staff. The curriculum is well structured with a balanced mix of core and elective courses, allowing for progression while meeting individual needs. Although the programme is geared to the needs of the profession, it lacks a system of specialisation or pathways that would allow greater focus on specific areas of law. However, it excels in the mentoring provided by specialist tutors and supervisors, supported by the full services of the College of Law and the University. Nevertheless, the high standards required for graduation (the requirement to publish an article in Arabic or English) explain why the number of graduates is low. Despite its strengths, the College of Law faces difficulties in attracting foreign and exchange students due to a limited range of courses in English or French (although the local law is based on civil law and some of the teaching staff speak French). Efforts such as partnerships with the *Alliance Française* and the newly established Centre de la Francophonie could potentially improve the attractiveness of the programme.

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

The programme is effectively promoted on the university's website and attracts Arabic-speaking students. It excels at tracking student success, although the average time to graduation is over four years. However, it fails to assess the integration of graduates into the labour market.

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

The Master's programme has a number of monitoring and evaluation tools, including mandatory course evaluations by students, to which lecturers must respond, and external evaluations. Evaluation is also carried out at College of Law level to assist the Advisory Board and every five years for government accreditation. The programme is supported by teaching staff who are able to meet the teaching and supervision needs of students, as well as by IT services, documentary resources and dedicated support services.

Article 2

The Master in Public 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:

- The requirements for graduating, including publishing an article, provide students with excellent research preparation and prepare them for doctoral work. However, this requirement might be too demanding for professional students who do not intend to pursue in a PhD programme.
- Efforts on the follow-up of the students after their graduation could be intensified, for example, by promoting the creation of an alumni association in law, or more specifically in public law. This would help improve professional integration and facilitate career advancement for those already employed. Including a "practice of law" module in the programme, provided by legal professionals, would enhance the professionalisation of the curriculum. Additionally, integrating participation in international Moot Courts in the curriculum would add significant value to the high-level training in the practice of law.
- The specialisation in the curriculum should be sharpened, with more explicitly specialised course titles and specialised tracks within the master's programme. Offering more elective courses, such as those in criminal procedure, would provide students with additional choices and depth. A deeper specialisation in energy law, environmental law, or criminal law could be envisaged.
- Efforts to internationalise the programme should be continued. This can be achieved by increasing the level of language requirements at the time of recruitment, by offering courses to learn Arabic, by creating new courses in English or French to benefit from the linguistic skills of some of the teachers. Additionally, marketing the programme abroad, and encouraging students' incoming mobility, as well as developing current academic international partnerships to benefit the master's programme are crucial steps. The resources of the new Centre of Francophonie could also play a significant role in improving this internationalisation.

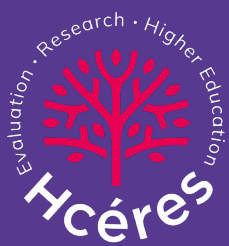


Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, 17th October 2024.

The acting President
signed
Stéphane Le Bouler



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