



International evaluation and accreditation

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Doctorate of Philosophy in Public Law

University of Sharjah (UoS)
College of Law

United Arab Emirates

July 2024

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High Council for evaluation of research and higher education

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EVALUATION REPORT

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College of Law

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The University of Sharjah (UoS) has mandated Hcéres to perform its Public Law doctoral programme evaluation. The evaluation is based on the “Evaluation Standards for a doctorate/PhD abroad”, adopted by the Hcéres Board on January 31, 2022. These standards are available on the Hcéres website (hceres.fr).

On behalf of the experts committee¹ :

Sandrine Clavel, President of the committee

For the Hcéres¹ :

Stéphane Le Bouller, 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. DOCTORATE IDENTITY SHEET

- University/institution: University of Sharjah
- Component, faculty or department concerned: College of Law
- Programme's title: Doctor of philosophy in Public Law.
- Training/speciality: Public Law
- Year of creation and context: 2011/2012
- Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): Sharjah

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

- Surname, first name: Wael ALLAM
- Profession and grade: Professor of Public Law
- 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 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), plus 10 teaching/research assistants and 6 administrative staff dedicated to the College of Law. Only associate professors and full professors (as opposed to assistant professors) can teach at PhD 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). Generally speaking, 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

Among the students enrolled, 66 students obtained their PhD out of 114 students for the period 2013-2019 (58%). The graduation average time is over 4 years.

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 end of 5th Year	Graduated >= 5 Years	Total Graduated	Graduation Avg Time
2013	12	0 0%	0 0%	1 8%	4 33%	4 33%	2 17%	11 92%	4.64
2014	9	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 11%	4 44%	2 22%	7 78%	5.14
2015	14	0 0%	0 0%	2 14%	3 21%	5 36%	2 14%	12 86%	4.58
2016	12	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	9 75%	2 17%	1 8%	12 100%	4.33
2017	15	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 33%	2 13%	3 20%	10 67%	4.8
2018	25	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	4 16%	3 12%		9 36%	4.11
2019	27	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	4 15%			5 19%	3.8
2020	25	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%					
2021	17	0 0%	0 0%						
2022	28	0 0%							

Nota. Some students enrolled in 2017 and after are still in study

II. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

Chairman of the committee:

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

Academic experts:

- Philippe ACHILLEAS, Full Professor of Public Law at Université Paris Saclay
- Laure CLÉMENT-WILZ, Full Professor of Public Law at Université Paris Est-Créteil
- Derek EL ZEIN, Lecturer of Political science at Université Paris Cité
- Etienne PATAUT, Full Professor of Private Law and Criminal Sciences at Sorbonne Université

Student Expert:

- Nawal DAFFEUR, Postdoctoral Student at University of Poitiers

Hcéres was represented by Evelyne LANDE, Science 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 organized 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 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 PhD programme is part of an expanding plan of the College of Law of the University of Sharjah. The College of Law was established in 2001 to meet the needs of the local and regional community for jurists and law specialists by offering a Bachelor's programme in Law. Subsequently, the College expanded its programmes by introducing a Master's programme in Public Law in the Autumn of 2004/2005, and a Master's programme in Private Law in the Spring of 2005/2006. The College of Law continued to expand its programmes to achieve its goals of graduating professional and specialised personnel by launching the Doctorate programme in law (Public and Private law) in the Autumn of 2011/2012. The PhD Programme is accredited by the Ministry of Education in UAE.

The PhD programme in Public Law encompasses three dimensions: educational, disciplinary, and meaningful research in the field of legal studies. Through this programme, the College of Law aims to keep its faculty and students up to date with the latest comparative legal systems and to benefit from recent developments in legal knowledge and skills. As the College follows a strategic plan, another aim of the course is to train Emirati nationals. Moreover, the programme focuses on training qualified legal, judicial, and higher education professionals to meet the needs of the job market.

The programme involves both legal training, through courses, workshops and seminars, and individual research. Each student must follow six compulsory courses, two elective courses, and successfully complete the thesis and/or essays as specified in the curriculum.

The PhD is completed after both oral and written exams, including a public defence of a thesis.

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

The self-evaluation approach is the result of a joint effort by 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. The report was then reviewed by the Academic Accreditation Department, resulting in a comprehensive self-assessment report with numerous appendices providing a wealth of objective information.

IV. EVALUATION REPORT

1. DOCTORAL POLICY

The doctorate's positioning and organisational structure are fully consistent with the institution's strategy.

The PhD programme is a natural continuation of the ever-expanding offerings of the College of Law, starting with the Bachelor's degree established in 2001, followed by the Master's programme in 2004/2006, and culminating in the Doctorate programme in 2011/2012. Graduates of the Master's programmes in Public Law and Air and Space Law at the University of Sharjah can therefore pursue a full doctorate. The PhD programme is a significant part of the national and regional attractiveness of the University of Sharjah.

The PhD in Public Law is particularly successful, even more so than the PhD in Private Law, in terms of the number of students. This success is largely attributed to the specific attractiveness of the criminal law program, which, in the Emirates, is part of public law.

The doctorate's organisational structure appears to be consistent with that of the institution and brings added value to its partnerships. Many are formalised through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with various partners, ensuring its socio-economic impact. While the implementation of these MOUs is not entirely clear, it seems that many PhD students, who are often working professionals, have built personal relationships with socio-economics actors. Some students are employed in significant public institutions, such as Dubai Legislative Committee or various ministries in Sharjah.

The research-based training is a strong point of the PhD programme in Public Law of the University of Sharjah.

The majority of PhD students hold a Master's degree from the University, where they were already required to submit a master thesis. During the PhD programme, several courses and seminars are specifically designed to develop research skills and research-based training, in addition to the thesis itself. In particular, to obtain their diploma, PhD students must publish two papers in law journals, which are usually chapters of their PhD thesis.

The doctorate is not directly based on a policy of professionalisation. While links with the socio-economic world are present, they could be strengthened.

The programme is very research-oriented but also strives to consider the expectations of the socio-economic world.

To this end, the College has established an Advisory Council that includes experts from various community affairs, which should strengthen relations between the College and community entities and to contribute to the strengthening of the programmes. The Advisory College also includes a group of graduates of the doctoral programme in law, who play an effective role in communicating between the College and the external community to achieve the goals and strategy of the College. Relationships between the programme and the socio-economic world benefit from the fact that many PhD students hold positions in the public or private sector; when this is the case, the research topic is usually defined in accordance with the doctoral student's professional interests. Nonetheless, strengthening the links with professional actors by making them more formal and operational could be a positive evolution for the PhD programme.

The PhD programme already has several aspects that appeals to an international audience. However, there is potential to further enhance its internationalisation.

Currently, the programme attracts students from abroad with 98 UAE students and 17 non-UAE students in the PhD in Public Law programme for the academic year 2023-2024. It is notable that while some international students come mostly from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, there is an opportunity to diversify and attract students from a broader range of international backgrounds.

Despite the College of Law's efforts to promote outgoing mobility for PhD students, including establishing agreements with various international law schools and institutions such as the University of Arizona, University of Kansas, University of Brussels, and *Institut de droit compare*, etc., and establishing a Study Abroad Unit in May 2022, there has been limited success in encouraging PhD students to travel abroad during their studies. The Study Abroad Unit specifically supports Emirati students interested in studying abroad for one to two consecutive semesters, with credit earned abroad transferred back to their academic programme at the University of Sharjah. However, the uptake among PhD students has been minimal thus far. It is to be hoped that these programmes will develop in a near future.

Conclusion

The doctoral policy of the College of Law is highly ambitious and research-oriented, aligning with the broader objective of developing local competences and excellence at the university. Since its inception in 2011, this policy has been consistently implemented and proven successful. However, a potential drawback of this policy is a perceived weaker emphasis on fostering relationships with local socio-economic actors and facilitating international relations, particularly in terms of outgoing mobility for students.

2. TRAINING, HOSTING AND SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The doctoral programme is meticulously designed to develop and enhance doctoral students' competencies through clear and implemented training contents and methods.

In the doctoral programme in Public Law, lectures are central to the educational approach. Course assessments allocate a portion of marks (40%) to class activities, particularly to students' responsibility to present lectures. Each PhD student is required to prepare a topic related to the course in collaboration with the course instructor. They present this topic to their classmates under the instructor's supervision. Following the presentation, all students engage in a discussion, asking questions, and sharing perspectives under the instructor's guidance.

The lectures in the PhD programme are structured to adhere to both local and international standards, underscoring the programme's commitment to meeting global benchmarks. It includes harmonisation efforts between qualifications and certifications systems in the UAE and those of other countries, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the emerging Arab Qualifications Framework, and the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) commonly known as the 'Bologna' Framework.

While the quality of doctoral training in the PhD in Public Law is widely recognised, some students have expressed a desire for more specialised courses aligned with their particular areas of expertise at the PhD level. It is noteworthy, however, that a new version of the PhD programme is scheduled to start in 2025 to address this concern. The proposed update aims to introduce specific tracks within the PhD programme in Public Law, such as Administrative law, Public international law, and Criminal law. These initiatives would enable students to participate in courses and seminars more closely tailored to their chosen specialties. Additionally, discussions are underway regarding the establishment of a dedicated PhD programme in Criminal Law.

Regarding research, the requirement for students to write two papers before embarking on their PhD is seen as an effective method to gradually familiarise students with the demands of long-term research.

Doctoral students benefit from a standardised and high-quality recruitment process, ensuring that the program maintains rigorous academic standards.

Enrolment in the PhD programme is contingent upon meeting two primary requirements: (1) The student must possess a master's degree in law with a minimum grade of "Very Good" (3.0 out of 4.0) and a bachelor's degree in law with a minimum grade of 2.5 out of 4.0 or its equivalent from a university, college, or institute recognised by the Ministry of Education of the UAE. The PhD is designed to build upon the content and methodologies of the master's programme, thereby ensuring coherence and continuity in the students' academic progression. (2) The student must also satisfy the English language proficiency requirement, typically demonstrated through tests like TOEFL.

The Marketing and Student Recruitment Department (MSR) at the University of Sharjah oversees the enrolment processes for both undergraduate and graduate studies. Aligned with the university's strategic plan, MSR develops policies and procedures to streamline and coordinate enrolment management efforts across the University community. The department collaborates closely with other university units, sharing valuable information to support institutional goals.

Several PhD students in the Public Law programme benefit from funding opportunities by serving as research assistants or teaching assistants, compensated at an hourly rate of AED 50 under the supervision of faculty members. This financial support includes full paid tuition, providing significant financial assistance to the recipients.

Moreover, a considerable number of PhD students, particularly UAE nationals, receive scholarships despite the high tuition fees.

One of the major upsides of the PhD programme at the University of Sharjah is the high-quality supervision that support doctoral students in their research activities.

Students benefit from the supervision of both an academic advisor and an academic supervisor. The academic advisor's role is particularly noteworthy for its originality. During the initial phase of the programme, the advisor

assists PhD students with lectures and seminars. Once the thesis topic is chosen, the advisor guides them through the process of publishing the requisite papers before their thesis. This support is especially valuable for students who are not yet familiar with the College of Law's procedures and requirements. Interviews with PhD students have highlighted the significant impact of this advising body.

Regarding the academic supervisor, their role is more traditional yet invaluable within the PhD programme at the University of Sharjah. The selection of a supervisor is based on both the students' preferences and the professor's area of expertise. Typically, the academic supervisor must hold the rank of full professor. However, in cases where an associate professor demonstrates significant research expertise relevant to the thesis topic, the Dean may approve their supervision of the student's thesis.

Actual supervision begins with the student prepares the thesis plan submits it to the department head. Within two weeks of submission, a date is set for the student to discuss that plan in the presence of members of the graduate studies committee, the supervisor, members of the academic body, and fellow graduate students. During this discussion, the committee reviews the plan, and any necessary amendments are identified. After the required changes are made, the plan is submitted to the Deanship of Graduate Studies. The dean then has two weeks to approve, reject, or propose further amendments to the plan. Throughout the student's research journey, the supervisor plays an active role in monitoring progress. Each semester, the supervisor submits a detailed report on the student's performance to the department head, with a copy sent to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. If necessary, the thesis plan or its title may be altered by the decision of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, provided that sufficient justification is presented.

The supervisor ensures that the student adhere to all the suggestions aimed at enhancing the quality of the thesis. This is facilitated through regular meetings between the student and the supervisor. Additionally, the College of Graduate Studies informs doctoral students of these procedures, outlining the mutual obligations between the supervisor and the student. An advisory committee conducts annual reviews and monitors the progress of PhD students.

The defence process, though traditional, is demanding. Initially, an anonymous external rapporteur reviews the thesis and provide a report on its quality. The defence can only proceed if the rapporteur approves the thesis.

The doctoral training mechanisms are adapted to international doctoral students, although attracting international students is not the strongest aspect of the PhD programme.

The programme includes mechanisms tailored to facilitate the preparation and enhancement of doctoral students' mobility schemes, both incoming and outgoing (see above under field 1). However, as previously mentioned, outgoing mobility is quite rare in practice.

A greater focus on language skills could be beneficial. While language proficiency is a requirement for programme entry, students are currently only required to take one class in English: "Legal Studies in Foreign Language", a compulsory course worth 3 credit hours. Developing more courses in foreign languages, such as English or French — especially considering that many faculty members are French speakers -- would enhance PhD students' language skills. This improvement would support outgoing mobility and future international careers, and it would also increase the programme's attractiveness to international students.

Conclusion

The PhD programme is very well tailored and coherent with the courses followed at the Master's level. Students benefit from well-developed supervision, enabling them to carry out their research activities under optimal conditions. However, greater specialisation of courses at this level, along with a more developed offering of courses in foreign languages, could further foster internationalisation.

3. ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE DOCTORATE

The visibility of the programme is substantial, and monitoring tools have been implemented to measure the doctorate's attractiveness.

As one of the very few doctoral programmes in Law in the region, the visibility of the PhD programme in Public Law is evident and reinforced by the efforts of the programme managers. A centralised platform for disseminating pertinent information about the programme is proposed. This platform will include details on research opportunities, faculty expertise, funding systems, including scholarships, and other essential aspects that potential candidates consider when making informed decisions about pursuing a doctorate. The number of enrolled students remains steady (28 new enrolled students in 2022).

The doctoral programme's performance can be measured and improved by mechanisms designed to support and develop the doctoral student's training pathway.

Clearly defined procedures at both the College and University levels provide a structured framework that aids doctoral students and thesis supervisors throughout the academic journey.

At College level, lectures, seminars, and regular meetings between supervisors and students ensure consistent monitoring of each doctoral student's progress.

At University level, the College of Graduate Studies organises extensive, regular training programmes for students covering all aspects related to study programmes, thesis writing, and defence procedures. The executive regulations precisely define the path to be followed in the PhD Program, with a particular emphasis on the imperative role of supervisors in the continuous assessment of doctoral candidates.

Nevertheless, to date, the rate of graduation remains low (58% on the period 2013-2019) as the average graduation time is over 4.5 years.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation (OVCIEA) oversees the implementation and maintenance of an e-file system that is essential for monitoring the programme and its constituent courses. The e-file system is a vital tool in comprehensively documenting and monitoring the attainment of programme learning outcomes and the corresponding outcomes for each individual course. Both professors and students have praised the e-file system for its quality, ease of use, and intuitive nature. This system provides documentation and monitoring mechanisms, which support the programme's pursuit of continuous improvement. To OVCIEA's role in supporting the programme includes routine evaluation activities. These activities involve the development and utilisation of both the course e-file and the programme e-file. These e-files serve as essential resources for assessing and improving the effectiveness of the programme and its constituent courses.

The monitoring of the career development of PhD holders intended to measure and improve the doctorate's relevance to its objectives and the labour market, could benefit from improvement.

Although several robust tools are in place, their effectiveness is often compromised by low responses rates from former students. The University of Sharjah employs occupational follow-up and cohort surveys designed to capture both quantitative data and qualitative feedback. However, these surveys often fall short due to meagre response rate.

University also coordinates the PhD programme in Public Law with the Alumni Association. This coordination involves establishing effective communication channels between the programme's administration and the Alumni Association, facilitating the exchange of information and support.

The Alumni office organises executive committee activities, graduate job opportunities, and other graduate events, serving as a testament to the enduring relationships forged during doctoral studies, and creating a supportive and collaborative community. Involving both current doctoral students and PhD holders in these activities fosters a sense of continuity and provides a platform for mentorship, knowledge exchange, and professional development. However, these activities are not specifically designed for the College of Law but concern the University as a whole. It could be more efficient to organise events at the faculty level, rather than the University level. They also have a specific and dedicated web site, although this website does not seem very active.

The Career Advising and Student Training Office (CASTO) handles issues related to career counselling and advice for students. CASTO is considered an integral part of the educational process at the University and provides comprehensive career services and assistance to students and alumni in the process of self-assessment, decision-making, and job searching.

Conclusion

Monitoring of the current PhD students seems to be functioning very well and gives very good results. On the other hand, tracking the careers of PhD holders is much more challenging. The fact that all the surveys and Alumni Association events are organised at the University level might hinder the efficiency of the surveys and the impact of the events. An alumni organisation at the College level could potentially be more efficient in maintaining strong links with PhD holders from the College of Law.

4. MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE DOCTORATE

The doctorate is clearly supported and boosted by the institution's human resources and financial policies.

The College of Law has devoted important resources to the PhD programme. Only associate professors and full professors (as opposed to assistant professors) can teach at PhD level, ensuring that the students receive instruction from the most advanced academics. As a general rule, academic staff are under intense pressure

to publish, teach, and participate in collective service. At the end of the academic year, each faculty member is required to submit an electronic academic report that includes teaching, community service, and scientific research. The report is evaluated by the head of the department and the dean of the College. Scientific research activities represent a significant percentage of this evaluation, which depends on the number of research activities and the quality of the scientific journals in which they are published. Each faculty member is asked to complete two research papers every year, published or accepted for publication in international journals classified or approved by the university at level A.

The University library is also of high quality, with rooms specifically devoted to post graduate students, ensuring the availability of numerous books and reviews in three languages (Arabic, English, and French) as well as access to most of the world's legal databases.

Internal evaluation and continuous improvement processes contribute to strengthening the doctorate.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation (OVCIEA) implements and maintains an e-file system for the programme and each course. The goal of the e-file is to document and monitor the achievements of the programme learning outcomes and its constituent courses.

The course instructors/coordinator reflect on the course-level data, such as grade distribution, student feedback, faculty feedback, and performance of teaching and learning, to make improvement recommendations for the course. In addition, the instructors/coordinator align the student assessment.

The Chairperson/program coordinator examines program-level data, such as cohort analyses, grade distribution, student and faculty feedback, advisory board and external evaluator input, and capstone experiences. Students also provide course evaluations and feedback to professors

Conclusion

The PhD programme is subject to regular analysis and evaluation. Each course or seminar is assessed at the end of every semester. Academic staff has strong incentives to publish, teach, and participate in collective tasks, while students are closely monitored, enabling them to perform their various tasks efficiently. The material conditions for research are excellent.

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the doctoral policy of the College of Law of the University of Sharjah is very ambitious and research-oriented, aligning with the University's larger objective to develop local competences and excellence. This policy has been consistently and successfully followed since the creation of the PhD program in 2011.

The PhD programme is very well tailored and coherent with the courses followed at master's level. Students benefit from a well-developed supervision, enabling them to carry out their research activities effectively. The University of Sharjah demonstrates strong dedication to the success of the PhD programme in its College of Law. Lectures and Seminars are well-designed, and students receive substantial support from their supervisors during the research process. The university library is of high quality, with rooms specifically devoted to postgraduate students. However, some students expressed that courses could be more specialised. The ongoing projects of creating tracks within the programme, particularly in the highly attractive field of criminal law, are to be encouraged.

Like all ambitious programmes, the PhD programme in Public Law is very demanding for students. However, they are well taken care of, as the monitoring of their activities is functioning effectively, allowing them to perform their many tasks efficiently. This diligent monitoring likely contributes to the PhD programme's success, with 66 graduates since its inception.

The PhD programme undergoes regular analysis and evaluation. Each course or seminar is assessed at the end of every semester. Academic staff has strong incentives to publish, teach, and participate to collective tasks, while students are under close supervision.

The downside of this policy might be a somewhat weaker focus on relations with local socio-economic actors and international relations. Although the foundations for a future development of the internationalisation of the programme are in place, this internationalisation is still modest.

Following the career of the PhD holders appears difficult and yields modest results. The fact that all surveys and alumni association events are organised at the University level might hinder their efficiency and impact. An alumni organisation at the College level could be more effective in maintain strong links with PhD holders from the College of Law.

STRENGTHS

- Truly research-oriented training, based on a double commitment of successfully defending a PhD thesis and publishing at least two articles.
- Coherent programme based on progressive specialisation in relation to the Master's degree.
- Sustainable programme that enjoys strong support from the university, not only in terms of academic policy but also in terms of human and material resources.
- Specialisation in progress, the future creation of a PhD in criminal justice being decided.

WEAKNESSES

- Limited specialisation of the courses.
- Limited Internationalisation of the programme.
- Limited formal links with professionals (ministries, public administration, courts).
- Alumni policy to be developed to ensure that the diploma has a truly international and professional profile.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The courses and seminars for the PhD in Public Law programme should be adapted with a view to greater specialisation. This issue will be resolved if the new programme enters into force in 2025. The creation of a specific PhD in Criminal Justice is also a very good sign. However, the distinction between the PhD programmes in Public and Private Law could be reinforced.

Recommendation 2

The internationalisation of the PhD programme should be strengthened. For example, the development of joint PhDs could be a very good incentive for the student to create relations with universities from other countries, as well as the extension of courses offered in foreign languages.

Recommendation 3

The relationships with major actors in the legal field should be improved and formalised. Development of MOUs with public actors at the College of Law level could be an effective way of formalising relationships with the public sector.

Recommendation 4

The monitoring of the Alumni should be improved, in particular by designing monitoring programmes at the College of Law level.

VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
College of Law

Response to Recommendations for Accreditation of the Doctor of Philosophy 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

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Law

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The courses and seminars for the PhD in Public Law programme should be adapted with a view to greater specialization. This issue will be resolved if the new programme enters into force in 2025. The creation of a specific PhD in Criminal Justice is also a very good sign. However, the distinction between the PhD programmes in Public and Private Law could be reinforced.

UoS Response:

The College's new academic plan introduces a range of specializations, including Administrative Law, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, and Public International Law with more specialized courses' titles, starting in 2025. These specializations are designed to provide students with in-depth expertise. The teaching and research courses for these specializations have been prepared and are currently awaiting approval by the Academic Accreditation Commission of the UAE Ministry of Education and they are set to be implemented accordingly

Recommendation 2

The internationalisation of the PhD programme should be strengthened. For example, the development of joint PhDs could be a very good incentive for the student to create relations with universities from other countries, as well as the extension of courses offered in foreign languages.

UoS Response:

The college is actively involved in the internationalisation of its programmes through several initiatives. These include participating in international university exhibitions to market the university's programmes, including those of the Faculty of Law, and having professors represent the college at global events. The college also maintains strong relationships with diplomatic corps in the country, where academic programmes, including those of the College of Law, will be offered. Additionally, the college has formed academic cooperation agreements with international universities in various countries, fostering collaboration between the College of Law and law faculty worldwide.

As part of the college's upcoming five-year strategic plan, a doctoral programme in Air and Space Law will be introduced in English. This programme will include several courses in private and public law, and we are currently seeking to collaborate with a prestigious university to offer it as a joint programme. This partnership will allow students to benefit from the expertise of professors from both institutions. If this initiative proves successful, the college plans to expand this model to the doctoral programme in Public Law.

The college has approached the Academic Accreditation Commission in the Ministry of Education to obtain accreditation for a specialized doctoral programme titled "Criminal Justice," which will be offered in cooperation between the College of Law and the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Recommendation 3

The relationships with major actors in the legal field should be improved and formalised. Development of MOUs with public actors at the College of Law level could be an effective way of formalising relationships with the public sector.

UoS Response:

The college has established numerous research and training cooperation agreements with various official and unofficial organizations, companies, courts, and law firms both within and outside the country. These agreements are designed to leverage the practical expertise of these partners for the benefit of our professors and students. The college is continually working to maximize the advantages offered by these partnerships.

As part of the college's training plan, the Seminars and Conferences Committee will host numerous professionals and legal experts to share their practical experiences with students. Dates for several of these seminars and training workshops have already been scheduled, and the participating professional organizations have been identified.

As part of the college's new five-year strategic plan, we will focus on activating and establishing several research and academic agreements with various professional organizations in the legal sector. These partnerships are aimed at providing students with valuable professional and training experiences.

Recommendation 4

The monitoring of the Alumni should be improved, in particular by designing monitoring programmes at the College of Law level.

UoS Response:

The university has established a specialized office to oversee graduate affairs, enabling the college to track the progress and employment status of its graduates regularly and consistently. 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 initiated the formation of a committee at the college level, comprised of a selected group of distinguished faculty members. This committee is responsible for maintaining regular communication with graduates and monitoring their progress. Their duties include organizing quarterly meetings with graduates to stay informed about their professional and career development, as well as leveraging their expertise to support the college and its students. Additionally, graduates are encouraged to participate in various events and activities organized by the college.



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International evaluation and accreditation

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Doctor of Philosophy 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-2024-45 on the accreditation of the Doctor of Philosophy 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;

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 Doctor of Philosophy 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 Doctor of Philosophy 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: DOCTORAL POLICY

The College of Law's doctoral policy is highly ambitious and research-led, in line with the wider aim of developing local expertise and excellence within the University. Since its launch in 2011, the policy has been implemented consistently and has proven to be successful. However, a potential drawback of the policy is that it appears to place less emphasis on fostering relationships with local socio-economic actors and facilitating international relations, particularly in terms of outgoing student mobility.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: TRAINING, HOSTING AND SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The doctoral programme in Public Law is very well adapted and consistent with the courses taken at Master's level. Students benefit from well-developed supervision, which allows them to carry out their research activities in optimal conditions. However, more specialised courses at this level and more foreign language courses could further promote internationalisation.

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

The follow-up of current doctoral students seems to work very well, with very good results. On the other hand, it is much more difficult to follow the careers of doctoral graduates. The fact that all the surveys and events of the Alumni Association are organised at university level could be detrimental to the effectiveness of the surveys and the impact of the events. An alumni organisation at the College level might be more effective in maintaining strong links with doctoral students in the College of Law.

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

The doctoral programme in Public Law is subject to regular analysis and evaluation. Each course or seminar is evaluated at the end of each semester. Academic staff are strongly encouraged to publish, teach and participate in collective tasks, while students are closely supervised to enable them to carry out their various tasks effectively. The material conditions for research are excellent.

Article 2

The Doctor of Philosophy 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 courses and seminars for the PhD in Public Law programme should be adapted with a view to greater specialisation. This issue will be resolved if the new programme enters into force in 2025. The creation of a specific PhD in Criminal Justice is also a very good sign. However, the distinction between the PhD programmes in Public and Private Law could be reinforced.
- The internationalisation of the PhD programme should be strengthened. For example, the development of joint PhDs could be a very good incentive for the student to create relations with universities from other countries, as well as the extension of courses offered in foreign languages.
- The relationships with major actors in the legal field should be improved and formalised. Development of MOUs with public actors at the College of Law level could be an effective way of formalising relationships with the public sector.
- The monitoring of the Alumni should be improved, in particular by designing monitoring programmes at the College of Law level.

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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