

International evaluation and accreditation

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Bachelor of Law

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
College of Law

Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia

February 2025

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High Council for evaluation of research and higher education

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International evaluation and accreditation

EVALUATION REPORT

Bachelor of Arts in Law

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
College of Law

AL-KHOBAR
Saudi Arabia

January 2025



The Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its Bachelor of law programme. The evaluation is based on the “External Evaluation Standards” of foreign study programmes, adopted by the Hcéres Board on January 31st, 2022. These standards are available on the Hcéres website (hceres.fr).

In the name of the expert committee¹ :

Patrick JACOB, President of the committee

In the name of Hcéres¹ :

Coralie CHEVALLIER, 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: Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU)
- Component, faculty or department concerned: College of Law (COL)
- Programme's title: Bachelor of Art in Law
- Training/speciality: Law
- Year of creation and context: 2011, under the College of Sciences and Human Studies until the creation of the College of Law in 2019
- Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): main campus (male and female sections), in Al-Khobar (Eastern Province)

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

- Surname, first name: Dr Raad Mazen
- Profession and grade: Assistant professor, Chair of the law department
- Main subject taught: Company law, civil and criminal procedures

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

- Methodology and agency: international accreditation by the Hcéres. National monitoring through the Education and Training Evaluation Commission (last comprehensive report in 2022)
- Results: First international accreditation issued in 2019 by the Hcéres for the period 2020-2025

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAMME

- Human resources

Teaching staff: the teaching staff of the BA in Law is mainly composed of 18 permanent faculty members, subject to yearly adjustments. All permanent faculty members hold a PhD, from various institutions, mainly foreign universities.

Criterion	Professor	Associate Prof.	Assistant Prof.	Adjunct	Saudi	Non-Saudi
Male	-	1	12	1	3	11
Female	-	0	5	0	0	5
Total		1	17	1	3	16

Administrative and technical staff: the BA in law is supported by the administrative and technical staff of PMU and of the College of Law. Main services are provided at the level of the university (registration, career centre, student support...). The College of law has an administrative assistant.

- Material resources

The law programme relies on the material resources provided by PMU and the College of Law. All resources are duplicated on female and male campuses. These resources include:

- Rooms, classrooms and a moot court room (shared between male and female campuses), well-equipped with smart screens
- A library, with both on-shelf and online resources
- Computer labs and lobbies
- Campus facilities such as coffee shops, cafeteria, recreation facilities and a sport centre.

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

		2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Number of applications (excluding change of major)	Total	351	351	239	165
Percentage of admissions	Accepted	42.00%	41.00%	56.00%	55.00%
1st Year Students (Freshman Level)	Female	57	69	95	42
	Male	49	69	58	47
	Nationals	102	136	151	87
	Foreigners	4	2	2	2
	Total	106	138	153	89
2nd Year Students (Sophomore Level)	Female	64	67	65	57
	Male	48	33	54	50
	Nationals	109	97	117	106
	Foreigners	3	3	2	1
	Total	112	100	119	107
3rd Year Students (Junior Level)	Female	65	61	68	64
	Male	35	49	33	47
	Nationals	98	108	98	108
	Foreigners	2	2	3	3
	Total	100	110	101	111
4th Year Students (Senior Level)	Female	123	118	110	125
	Male	69	71	73	81
	Nationals	191	187	181	203
	Foreigners	1	2	2	3
	Total	192	189	183	206
Graduates	Female	67	67	66	35
	Male	36	31	46	27
	Nationals	101	98	110	62
	Foreigners	2	0	2	0
	Total	103	98	112	62

II. COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

Chair:

- Dr Patrick Jacob, full professor of public law, University Paris-Saclay

Experts:

- Dr Anne Donnier, assistant professor of private law, University Rennes 1
- Dr Laurent Grosclaude, assistant professor of private law, University Toulouse Capitole
- Ms Ellie-May Farha, PhD candidate, University Paris Nanterre

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

III. EVALUATION PROCESS

VISIT DESCRIPTION

- **Date of the visit:** 3-4 November 2024
- **Summary of the proceedings:** Prior to the visit, the experts had received the self-evaluation report and many annexes. During the on-site visit, the panel met with more than 30 people over two days according to the schedule below. The report was written by the panel chair based on the experts' feedback and then circulated to all panel members for review.
- **Organisation of the visit:** see schedule below.
- **Cooperation of study programme and institution** to be accredited: PMU provided full access to the campus and documents, and the people met during the site visit answered all the panel's questions.
- **Any problems:** No

PEOPLE MET

Day 1: Sunday November 3, 2024

Time		Session	Audience
9:00 – 9:30	1	Opening session with top management: <i>Presentation of PMU University challenges</i>	Vice President for Business Development Vice President for Students Affairs
9:30 – 10:30	2	Presentation of the Bachelor & Discussion	Dean of College of Law Dean of Quality and Accreditation Chair of Law Department Professors
10 :30 – 11 :00		Coffee break	
11:00 – 12:30	3	Bachelor Teaching staff	Representative panel of professors from the program in terms of position, status, discipline, nationality
12:30 – 2:30 pm		Lunch & Campus tour	
2:30 – 3:30 pm	4	Alumni & Employers of the Bachelor program	Panel representing different sectors of activity (employment or internships), not teaching in the program

Day 2: Monday November 4, 2024

Time		Session	Audience
9:00 – 10:00	5	Quality assurance	Chair and members of the Quality assurance Committee
10 :00 – 11 :00	6	Students	Meeting with a representative panel of students from the programme under evaluation in terms of gender, nationality, year of studies, etc.
11 :00 – 12 :00		Coffee break & preparation of the closing session	
12:00 – 1:00 pm	7	Closing session (last questions /no feedback)	Dean of the COL and Dean of Quality & Accreditation

More than 30 participants were met during the interviews.

IV. OVERALL PRESENTATION

1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University (PMU), established in 2007 as a private university and functioning as a non-profit foundation under Saudi law, is situated in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Its main campus is located in Al-Khobar, with an additional campus in Dammam. PMU currently serves approximately 5,700 undergraduate and 120 graduate students across six colleges.

The College of Law was formally established in 2019 to oversee the Bachelor of Arts in Law programme, which was initially launched in 2011 as part of the College of Sciences and Human Studies. The College is staffed by 18 permanent faculty members, representing diverse nationalities and academic backgrounds. Leadership is provided by a Dean, supported by a programme Chair responsible for the undergraduate programme. At present, the Bachelor of Arts in Law is the only degree offered by the College. However, the curriculum is poised for expansion with two proposed Master's programmes: one in International Business Law, pending approval from the Ministry of Education, and another in Legal Practice and Management, awaiting internal university endorsement.

The Bachelor of Arts in Law has an enrolment of approximately 500 students. This four-year programme requires the completion of 138 credit hours. The curriculum is structured to provide a balanced educational foundation, with the first two years dedicated to general education courses. These foundational courses emphasise the development of written, oral, and professional communication skills in English, accounting for approximately 30% of the programme. The final two years focus on specialised law courses, which constitutes 70% of the curriculum and are delivered in both Arabic and English.

Originally established to address the growing demand for law graduates in Saudi Arabia, the PMU law programme is grounded in a comprehensive and sound understanding of the Saudi legal system. From its inception, however, the programme has also sought to prepare students for legal practice in international contexts. It was among the first in Saudi Arabia to offer law courses in both Arabic and English and incorporates substantial components on communication, international law, and comparative law. The College of Law continues to uphold this dual approach, tailoring its programme to meet evolving legal requirements and to remain competitive in an increasingly globalised legal landscape.

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

The Faculty of Law undertook a thorough and meticulous self-evaluation process, overseen by the Quality and Accreditation Committee, in collaboration with the Dean of the College of Law, the Chair of the programme, and supported by the University's Dean of Quality and Accreditation. This self-evaluation was carried out between December 2023 and June 2024, involving regular consultations with faculty members and systematic data collection. This process culminated in a comprehensive self-evaluation report, which is both clear and well written, providing a detailed analysis of each standard and supported by numerous appendices.

3 – FOLLOW-UP OF THE PREVIOUS HCÉRES RECOMMANDATIONS

The previous Hcéres report, published in 2019, praised the quality of PMU's BA in Law but identified two main areas for improvement.

First, it noted that, given the programmes' international scope PMU could benefit from establishing partnerships with foreign universities. The current panel considers that this recommendation to have been largely addressed. The College of Law has successfully developed a limited number of partnerships with foreign institutions, which appear to be effective. Moreover, the College of Law has efficiently prioritised short-period mobility opportunities for students alongside other forms of "soft" internationalisation, such as competitions, training courses, and conferences, all of which are well-suited to the programme's objectives.

Secondly, the previous Hcéres report emphasised PMU's ambition to establish a master's degree in law and the necessity of attracting additional qualified lecturers to sustain the high standard of its programmes. This recommendation remains relevant, as the creation of a master's degree in law is still pending approval from the Ministry and would necessitate further development of the Faculty.

V. EVALUATION REPORT

FIELD 1 - TRAINING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The Bachelor of Arts in Law aligns closely with PMU's educational strategy and has positioned itself as one of the leading law under graduate programmes offered in Saudi Arabia.

The programme adheres to both international standards and national regulations while remaining consistent with PMU's broader educational vision. It aims to equip students with a combination of strong general skills and legal expertise, with a specialisation in Saudi law, while also preparing them to operate effectively in an international context. In addition to fostering an active and vibrant campus life, the programme is distinguished by two key features that set it apart from other law programmes in Saudi Arabia.

- First, the programme places a strong emphasis on general competencies and multidisciplinary. In addition to an elective preparatory year, the first two years are largely devoted to core courses offered across various PMU programmes. These core courses aim to develop students' skills in communication, critical thinking, leadership, adaptability, and technology. While benefiting from courses designed by other departments, the College of Law has also contributed to this core curriculum by introducing a new elective course, *Law, Society and Justice*, which is available to non-law students.
- Second, the programme combines training in Saudi law with international and comparative law, offering a substantial number of law courses taught in English. This balance between Saudi law and International and comparative law is regarded as one of the programme's greatest strengths.

In the Saudi system, a Bachelor's degree enables graduates to enter the legal profession directly. However, a significant number of graduates choose to specialise further by pursuing a master's degree. Since PMU's application for the establishment of a master's degree in law is still awaiting approval, graduates of the Bachelor of Law programme who wish to continue their studies currently have the option to apply for an MBA at PMU or pursue a master's degree at another Saudi or foreign university. The proposed introduction of a master's degree in international Business Law could further strengthen the standing of the Bachelor's programme within the local context.

While PMU is committed to sustainability in both its educational and operational activities and places a strong emphasis on multidisciplinary, sustainable development issues are addressed in the programme primarily through specific law courses, such as Environmental Law and Legal Ethics. To enhance this focus, the core curriculum could be updated to include a course specifically dedicated to sustainable development.

The College of Law reaps the benefits of internationalization. However, its primary objective is not to attract international students, but rather to produce professionals for the Saudi job market.

The Bachelor is open to internationalisation in several ways:

- The teaching staff itself comprises individuals from various countries and academic backgrounds;
- The curriculum places a strong emphasis on international and comparative law and is delivered bilingually;
- Students have the opportunity to participate in international moot court competitions, including Jessup, the Brown-Mosten International Client Consultation Competition, the International Olympiad on Financial Security, and the Saudi Centre for Commercial Arbitration Arabic Moot Court. Additionally, students can earn certificates awarded by foreign institutions, such as those in advocacy and legal writing in collaboration with the American Bar Association; or a certification in dispute resolution (theory and practice) from the Straus Institute of Pepperdine University in Switzerland. Students may also attend conferences abroad, such as the conference on futures studies co-organized by the French institution SKEMA and the World Futures Studies Federation.

Students' mobility based on credits is not well developed, and the number of international students enrolled remains low. However, this can be attributed to structural factors, such as the national students' visa policy, as well as the programme's primary aims of training professionals who are specifically prepared to integrate into the Saudi labour market.

Although one of the primary objectives of PMU's policies is to enhance research, there are areas for improvement. On one hand, initiatives have been implemented to encourage student research; on the other hand, PMU could do more to support faculty research.

The BA in Law can benefit from a solid research environment.

Students are encouraged to engage in research in various progressive ways: mandatory courses on writing and

research skills are offered in the first two years; research papers are commonly used as an assessment method; an "Undergraduate Student Research Prize" was launched in 2024; and students are encouraged to publish articles on the PMU Law Blog, which was launched in 2021. The establishment of a postgraduate programme in the future could further contribute to the development of students' research.

Faculty members are committed to research. All faculty members hold a PhD, and their individual publication record are strong, with 18 articles published in a SCOPUS-indexed journal for the 2023/2024 academic year. Faculty are encouraged to share their research through seminars or via the PMU Law Blog. Additionally, the College of Law (COL) organised an international conference on dispute resolution and published a book on legal developments in Saudi Arabia.

However, the COL's annual reports indicate that the research objectives set for faculty members are not always fully met. This may be due to two interrelated reasons. Firstly, the objectives are based on SCOPUS metrics, which is not always fully relevant to legal research, particularly in Arabic, where the expertise of several faculty members lies in Saudi law. Secondly, faculty members' workloads, with heavy teaching and administrative responsibilities, leave little time for research. To enhance faculty research and strengthen the links between the Bachelor of Law and research, PMU should consider allocating more dedicated time for research for faculty members, taking into account the specific nature of legal research and publication.

The COL maintains strong ties with the socio-economic world but could further integrate practitioners in the curriculum.

The BA in law has established solid connections with the socio-economic sphere, which are fostered through:

- the composition of the faculty, which includes members with professional experience, such as a former judge;
- the involvement of professionals in the ongoing improvement of the programme, either through the COL Advisory Board or through surveys directed towards practitioners and alumni;
- partnerships with professional associations at the College level (such as the American Bar and Saudi Bar Associations) and with Saudi companies at the University level;
- the active participation of alumni in the programme, for example through workshops, conferences organised by the Law club, and alumni forums.

However, the involvement of practitioners could be further formalised. For instance, the COL could leverage its alumni network to organise periodic conferences, integrated into the curriculum, that introduce students to legal professions and the current challenges they face.

In conclusion, the BA in Law is in line with PMU's strategy to make an impact not only nationally but also internationally. The programme boasts several advantages, including the commitment of the teaching team, a focus on core competencies, and a very good balance between Saudi law and international and comparative law. However, PMU should consider reducing the teaching and administrative workload of faculty members to allow for more focus on research activities. Additionally, the College of Law should enhance the involvement of socio-economic stakeholders in presenting the job market to students, thereby assisting them in finding their professional path.

FIELD 2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The pedagogical approach is effectively supported by a well-structured 138-credit hour programme, assessed through a variety of exams tailored to the specific academic year (including quizzes, exams, homework, and projects), as well as through diverse teaching methods. The academic objectives are clear, well-defined, and communicated effectively to all stakeholders.

The curriculum design, spanning from the 1st to the 4th one year, contributes to a comprehensive, progressive, and appropriate training for students, both on theoretical and practical levels. Until the end of the sophomore year, students follow a core programme that is common to all.

- In the 1st year (Freshman) while the curriculum includes only a few legal courses (Semester 1: Introduction to Law / Semester 2: Usul Al-Fiqh and Sources of Obligation), students are introduced to humanities (including Introduction to Islamic Culture, a Social Sciences elective, Active Living Lifestyle, The Social System in Islam and Healthy Behaviour and Management), which will prove beneficial for their future careers.
- The 2nd year (Sophomore) gradually introduces more technical law courses (Semester 1: Provisions of Obligation and Global Legal Systems / Semester 2: Constitutional law, Commercial Law, General Criminal Law, and Civil Contracts).

- In the 3rd year (Junior), almost all lectures are law-focused, except for one (Semester 1: Labour Law and Social Security, Company Law and Bankruptcy, Private Criminal Law, Family Law, International Public Law, Property and Real Security / Semester 2: International Economic Law, Civil Procedure Law, Administrative Law, Criminal Procedure Law, and Law of Zakat and Taxation). During the summer, an 8-week internship is compulsory for all students. It might be more appropriate to place this internship at the end of the 4th year so students could directly benefit from potential job offers.
- Finally, the 4th year includes a mix of both theoretical and practical courses, either required or elective (Semester 1: Civil Enforcement Law, Wills and Inheritance, Commercial Papers and Banking, Administrative Judiciary, Internal Legal Practice / Semester 2: ADR, Intellectual Property Law, Private International Law, and 3 Law electives). The aim of the 4th year is to help students prepare for professional life, and the courses offered serve as a good bridge to their future careers.

Although the BA in law is designed to be completed in four years, the study programme is flexible, allowing students to start their studies at any time of the year and to complete them in three years if they take courses during the summer or in a maximum of seven years. Similarly, students can re-sit exams, even after being admitted, to improve their skills and grades. This personalised and tailored approach to training, coupled with its flexibility, provides real added value in terms of academic success. The pedagogical organisation, which centres on a core curriculum during the first two years, enables students to switch their major if necessary, although such changes are uncommon. Students are strongly encouraged to develop their skills through various extracurricular models outside the classroom (such as clubs, professional and scholarly events) or alongside the curriculum (through training courses). These activities are supported by the College of Law as well as PMU, offering both financial support and advice, and are integrated into a skills portfolio through certificates of participation.

The Bachelor programme relies on classical yet diverse and effective teaching practices. Combined with its flexibility and the individual support provided, these teaching methods foster student success.

The teaching methods employed are varied and significantly contribute to student achievement, as they are tailored to suit different types of courses. These include interactive and collaborative lectures, group discussions, and student-led presentations. Technological tools are used in a relatively traditional and straightforward manner, such as through the resource learning centre, IT-equipped classrooms, courses on information technology, and an electronic platform. While courses are conducted in person, the College of Law also offers a few online workshops and courses in collaboration with primarily American institutions (such as American Bar Association, University of Houston, and Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law) as well as virtual guest lectures. The programme progressively incorporates practical teaching elements, including dedicated courses and moot courts.

Several specific tools are provided to assist students in progressing through their studies. Great emphasis is placed on listening to students' needs. For instance, students are encouraged to suggest training and support requirements and to meet with their academic advisers whenever they wish to enhance their performance. The College of law has also implemented an informal open-door policy to encourage students to engage with their academics. Furthermore, students themselves have established initiatives to support their peers. A permanent committee, known as the Student and Alumni Affairs Committee, has organised supplementary activities aimed at assisting students in need.

The programme prepares students to work in an international environment.

Due to its international orientation, the BA in law equips students with strong language skills, which are a particular focus for PMU and integrated into various aspects of the programme. From their freshman to senior years, all students engage in English language learning and are introduced to social science and legal training in English. During their senior year, students are required to take two elective courses in English. Additionally, supplementary courses in English offered by foreign partners are available as optional choices. Beyond instruction in English, students must also select a foreign language, either French or Spanish. This comprehensive curriculum is highly valued by students, as it ensures they are well-versed in both Arabic and English law and fluent in English, a skill that will greatly benefit their future careers. Although students do not participate in semester-long mobility programmes, they have opportunities to travel abroad for legal competitions and conferences.

Focused on initial training, the content of the programme aligns with the needs of the socio-economic world.

The academic training offers students numerous opportunities to explore entrepreneurship throughout their studies. In the first year, the lecture on *Leadership and Teamwork* introduces students to essential entrepreneurial concepts, which are further developed in the second year through the course on *Technical Communication*. Mock trials, organised in a moot courtroom by alumni. Additionally, students gain unique skills linked related to job-market integration through the PMU Legal Incubator for Creativity and Entrepreneurship. This student-led

initiative, supervised by academic staff, assists PMU students in launching businesses, offering law students the opportunity to tackle real-world challenges.

At the end of the third year, students undertake an 8-week compulsory internship during the summer, establishing valuable links with the business world. The internship process is clearly structured, ensuring students face no difficulties in securing placements. Alumni networks are available for support, and prominent Saudi organisations, including Aramco and the Saudi Bar Association, offer internships to PMU students. However, it would be more appropriate to place this internship at the end of the fourth year, allowing students to transition directly into employment opportunities. Students also receive support in securing internships and shaping their career plans through PMU's dedicated career service.

To conclude, the pedagogical organisation of the BA is in line with its objectives, and the College of Law demonstrates a strong commitment to students' success. Various links with socio-professional actors, combined with dual training in English and Arabic, significantly enhance the programme's appeal and contribute to its success.

FIELD 3 – STUDENTS' PATHWAY

The programme demonstrates strong appeal despite a recent decline in application numbers.

Since the last Hcéres accreditation, several initiatives have been introduced to enhance the attractiveness of the Bachelor's programme. These include presenting the campus to secondary schools and involving alumni in teaching activities and conferences. The College of Law's website section provides clear and relevant information for prospective applicants, including faculty profiles. Additionally, PMU's administration actively engages with prospective students through newsletter and social networks. Despite these efforts, the number of applications has declined significantly, dropping from 351 in 2020 to 165 in 2023 (a reduction of over 50%). Meanwhile, the selection rate has risen from 42 to 55 %. Three primary factors may explain this decline:

- Increased external competition: in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, several universities now offer law degrees, at both Bachelor's and Master's levels.
- Increased internal competition within PMU: following the preparatory year, students now have a broader range of Bachelors' programmes to choose from, including newly introduced ones that attract significant interest. However, this novelty effect is expected to diminish within two to three years.
- The bilingual nature of PMU's Bachelor of Law: while this unique feature enhances the programme's appeal, it may also reduce the pool of applicants due to its language requirements.

For the time being, the number of applicants still allows for a robust selection process, aligning with the programme's capacity and the goals of PMU College of Law. The anticipated launch of the PMU Master of Law programme is expected to further bolster the attractiveness of the Bachelor's programme, particularly given the high proportion of students aspiring to continue their law studies upon completing their undergraduate degree.

Success rate is at a good level, fostered by a rather flexible and student-centred study plan

The data provided indicate that the success rate (75% of students completing the programme within four years or less) is satisfactory and has significantly improved for recent cohorts compared to earlier ones. A notable proportion of students, particularly female students, graduate within the minimum time frame. Withdrawals are minimal, and the retention rate (over 91% after the first year) is exceptionally high, reflecting both the programme's quality and of the effectiveness of policies designed to support students throughout their Bachelor's studies. Relevant measures, such as the appointment of an academic advisor for every student, play a significant role in fostering student success. The statistics also demonstrate a consistent individual course passing rate of approximately 90%, with near-equal performance between male and female students.

PMU's Bachelor of Law offers significant flexibility, allowing students to complete the degree within a range of three years (fast track) to a maximum of seven years. Students are permitted to retake subjects to improve their grade point average (GPA). The College of Law's student-centred approach includes initiatives such as early detection and reporting of academic difficulties, mentorship programmes pairing freshmen with sophomore, junior, or senior students, and full accessibility of faculty to students. This flexible and supportive study plan undoubtedly enhances the programme's success rate, making it a significant asset of the Bachelor's degree.

Post-graduation employment rate remains stable, with a significantly narrowed gender gap.

There is a general trend indicating an increasing demand for law-qualified professionals, driven by the region's growth and the establishment of numerous law firms. The recent opening of the job market to women (2012) and their ability to join or establish law firms (2018) further enhance the relevance and attractiveness of law programmes in Saudi Arabia. The College of Law has strengthened graduate employability through local partnerships, such as the recent MoU with the Saudi Bar Association. Additionally, students benefit from extensive internship opportunities, which significantly contribute to post-graduation employment, alongside the support provided by PMU's Career Office and networking events.

Surveys conducted among employers in 2022 and 2024 reveal overall satisfaction with PMU College of Law graduates. Employers particularly value the bilingual nature of the programme, while also suggesting the introduction of new courses in the third and fourth years to align with emerging business trends, such as governance and compliance.

The employment rate for graduates remains robust, ranging from 65% to 84 % over the past two years. Career outcomes include roles in advocacy and legal consultancy (60 %), as well as administrative and management positions. Most graduates secure employment within their first-year post-graduation. Incidentally, it would be interesting to have information relating to the average salaries after hiring. While the gender employment gap has narrowed significantly, it still stands at approximately 10%.

In conclusion, in a relatively volatile economic climate, the PMU Bachelor of Law remains attractive, supported by effective measures to enhance its appeal. Rigorous student selection contributes to high success rates, while the quality of teaching underpins strong post-graduation employment outcomes. The programme's robust connections with employers in both the public and private sectors further reinforce its value.

FIELD 4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The BA in Law benefits from a robust and well-defined organisational structure. It is overseen by a Chair supported by governing bodies and relies on a clearly identified teaching team. This structure promotes the coherence and the relevance of the programme, while ensuring faculty involvement in governance

The College of Law features a detailed governance structure, particularly notable for its relatively small size. The College is headed by a Dean, with the Bachelor's programme supervised by a Chair who reports to the Dean. In accordance with PMU policy, the Chair may be supported by an Associate Chair for the women's campus. However, such duplication was deemed unnecessary for the BA in Law, given the manageable enrolment numbers and the size of the teaching staff. The governance structure includes the College Council, comprising the Dean, the Chair, and two faculty members. This body oversees various standing committees dedicated to specific operational areas, such as examinations, quality assurance, accreditation, curriculum development, professional growth, research, experiential learning, learning resources, textbooks, and alumni and student affairs. All faculty members are actively encouraged to contribute to these committees. Additionally, the teaching staff convene bi-monthly in the Departmental Council to support the Dean in organising the programme. Faculty members also play a key role in programme development through course reports and faculty surveys. This structured and participatory approach ensures coherence and relevance in the BA in Law, while promoting active faculty involvement in its governance and development.

The majority of law courses are delivered by the permanent faculty of the College. This core team is occasionally supplemented by adjunct professors, with two contributing in the 2023/2024 academic year, and one in 2024/2025. Additionally, guest lectures are a regular feature, adding diverse perspectives and expertise to the programme. During the first two years, core curriculum courses, which form a significant portion of the programme, are offered by the College of Science and Human Studies or the Department of Computer Science. While the Bachelor's programme effectively focuses on basic legal principles, leveraging the dual academic and practical expertise of its permanent faculty, there remains scope to enhance the involvement of practitioners. In particular, a stronger integration of alumni into teaching and mentoring roles could further enrich the students' learning experience, bridging academic theory with real-world practice.

The Bachelor programme benefits from robust resources, both human and material, which allow the implementation of the policy of excellence advocated by PMU and the College of Law. However, retaining a strong faculty remains a challenge.

The programme is underpinned by a highly qualified, internationally trained teaching staff. All permanent faculty members hold PhDs from prestigious institutions in the Arab world (Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan) and globally (UK, France, USA). This diversity enriches the programme's international dimension, facilitating teaching in both Arabic and English, and equips the faculty with a broad range of legal expertise aligned with the programme's

global vision. With two operational campuses (male and female), all courses are duplicated. Classes are delivered face-to-face, either by the same professor or by two professors working in coordination. In accordance with local customs, female professors teach exclusively female students, while male professors may teach both male and female students through a “green zone” within the female campus. The administrative support dedicated specifically to the College of Law and the BA in Law is modest, comprising one permanent staff member. However, university-level administration plays a significant role in managing the programme. This includes student enrolment processes as well as broader support for students' personal, health, and professional development needs.

The College of Law provides identical facilities on both the men's and women's campuses, ensuing equitable access to resources. Students benefit from a moot courtroom, which offers a stimulating environment for practical legal training. The campus library is well resourced, offering both physical and digital materials, and the College provides students with the necessary textbooks. Additional amenities include a sports centre with a swimming pool, various restaurants and cafés, and a day care facility on the women's campus. As students typically reside off-campus with their families, PMU offers a shuttle service to accommodate its location outside the city centre.

Faculty development is actively supported through several initiatives, including a standing committee on professional development, professional development workshops, law faculty forums, and a peer-review process for teaching introduced in 2024. PMU also funds faculty members to attend international conferences annually. Moreover, a faculty exchange programme with the University of Gdansk, launched in 2023, provides valuable opportunities for outreach and international collaboration. However, faculty recruitment and advancement remains challenging in a competitive environment. Current criteria for academic promotion and teaching load reductions —predominantly tied to publications in Scopus or Web of Science-indexed journals—do not align well with the specificities of legal research and editing. As a result, the Faculty of Law has no full professors, only one associate professor, and 17 assistant professors. PMU should reconsider its promotion criteria to better accommodate the unique nature of legal research. Tailoring these criteria could improve academic progression opportunities while addressing the administrative and teaching burdens faced by faculty members. Finally, with the planned launch of a new Master's programme, the College must recruit additional faculty to sustain the high standards of its Bachelor's programme and ensure the effective delivery of both degrees.

The program's evaluation process is robust, involving multiple layers at the international, national, university, and College of Law levels.

In addition to international accreditation by Hcéres and annual national monitoring by the Education and Training Evaluation Commission, PMU has developed its own evaluation procedures. At the College level, the quality of the programme is monitored by the Accreditation and Assurance Committee, under the supervision of the Dean of Quality and Evaluation at the University level. Course and programme evaluations are initially carried out internally through student and teacher surveys conducted every semester. External perspectives are obtained through surveys of alumni and employers, as well as through an Advisory Board composed of professionals, external academics and alumni. The results of these evaluations are reported to the relevant committees, particularly the Curriculum Committee, which takes them into account in the development and continuous improvement of the programme. The programme evaluation process is robust and thorough, incorporating both quantitative data and qualitative feedback. However, given the sophistication of the evaluation process, the panel was surprised that the consolidated success rate of a given cohort (the final percentage of graduates, regardless of the duration of their studies) was not communicated as such.

The College of Law is committed to a quality- and ethics-based approach, from the recruitment of students to their graduation.

BA in Law students are recruited either through the PMU preparatory programme or directly, depending on their English language proficiency. In either case, recruitment is based on admission criteria that mainly take into account academic level, confirmed by a general aptitude test and an interview. Grading and validation policies are carefully drafted, under the oversight of the Examination Committee. These policies are clearly set out in the course syllabi, and their proper implementation is ensured by independent verification of grades overseen by the Chair, with the possibility for students to appeal against their grades to a committee supervised by the Chair.

The College of Law has an ethics policy at both faculty and student levels. Faculty members are subject to a code of conduct that applies to all PMU staff, while students are subject to the non-academic misconduct policy. PMU appears to be sensitive to plagiarism: sessions on research and ethics are organised, while students' written work is submitted to anti-plagiarism software. Like any academic institution, the College of Law has to

deal with artificial intelligence, both in terms of evaluation methods and use of AI in legal practice. The relevant committees (Examination, Curriculum) are working on it.

In conclusion, the BA in Law benefits from a well-structured organisation and from the human and material resources necessary to achieve its objectives, both in terms of quality and ethics. The programme relies on a high-quality team, dedicated to both teaching and research. In order to maintain this level of quality, PMU should provide opportunities for advancement based on criteria of excellence, but adapted to the field of law. Tailoring these criteria could improve academic progression opportunities while addressing the administrative and teaching burdens faced by faculty members.

VI. CONCLUSION

The objective of the PMU BA in Law is to equip students with the knowledge and expertise required to become qualified lawyers specialising in Saudi law, while also enabling them to operate effectively in an increasingly globalised legal environment. The programme strikes an optimal balance between a comprehensive specialisation in Saudi law and the capacity of its graduates to work in Arabic, coupled with an adaptability to international and comparative law and proficiency in English. This equilibrium sets it apart from other programmes in Saudi Arabia and abroad. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the College of Law to preserve this balance and to continue training students in Saudi law and Arabic, as well as in international law and English.

The learning environment at PMU is conducive to excellence in education. The facilities available to students facilitate a pleasant and efficient learning environment. The teaching staff are exemplary, demonstrating not only active involvement in research but also a profound commitment to student success. The programme management is robust and inclusive, ensuring continuous improvement and coherence of the programme.

Although the programme is well structured, there is scope for flexibility. This flexibility pertains to both the curriculum itself, with elective courses that allow for specialisation in the final year of the programme, and the organisation of studies, with the possibility of adapting the pace. Additionally, opportunities outside the curriculum, such as training courses and international competitions, further contribute to this flexibility.

PMU and the College of Law also benefit from a broad and relevant socio-professional network, which ensures both the adaptation of the programme to socio-economic needs and supports students in their professional lives. This network contributes to a good employment rate after graduation. To further enhance the professional training of students, the involvement of professionals in the programme should be continued. This could be institutionalised through a module included in the curriculum.

The challenge for PMU and the College of Law will be to maintain this level of quality while expanding its training offerings in the field of law. The creation of a new Master's programme could increase the attractiveness of the BA in Law, as most students wish to pursue such a programme, while also fostering the research environment of the programme. However, such development of teaching and research requires a high-quality faculty. To attract new talent and retain current staff, PMU should reconsider its policies on both teaching staff workload and academic promotion.

STRENGTHS

- Positioning of the programme, with a good mix of Saudi law and International/Comparative law
- Management of the programme and cohesion of the teaching team
- Flexibility and personalised student support

WEAKNESSES

- Imbalances in the workload of faculty, which may jeopardise the research activity necessary for quality teaching
- Instability of the teaching team

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adapt the criteria used to modulate the workload of the faculty members and to determine academic promotions to the specific nature of legal research and publishing
- Formally integrate alumni in the curriculum to introduce students to the diversity of legal professions
- Finalise the creation of a Master's degree to enhance the attractiveness of the Bachelor's degree

VII. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



جامعة الأمير محمد بن فهد
PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN FAHD UNIVERSITY

Mdm. Michelle Houppe

Head of the Evaluation Unit Department (DEI)
High Council for Evaluation and Higher Education (HCÉRES)
Paris, France

February 2nd, 2025

Subject: PMU's Response to the Law Program Evaluation Outcome

Dear Mdm. Michelle Houppe

Greetings from PMU!

We are pleased to inform you that PMU College of Law has considered the provisional evaluation report on our BA Law Program. The report contains many positive and constructive recommendations on the program moving forward. We are particularly pleased that provisional report recognizes several aspects regarding the Program in 2019 and the changes that have been implemented since then including work still in progress particularly regarding the implementation of the MA Program in International Business Law. In general, we are of the view that the provisional report is comprehensive and reflects the strengths of the program with clear and constructive recommendations for further improvement moving forward.

In this reply to the provisional report, we would like to clarify certain points addressed in the report, including the three recommendations at the end.

In this reply to the provisional report, we would like to clarify certain points addressed in the report, including the three recommendations at the end.

Training Policy and Evaluation

Panel's recommendations on 'sustainability' within program offering, that, '... the core curriculum could be updated to include a course specifically dedicated to sustainable development.' (Provisional report p. 7).

Indeed, sustainability occupies an important agenda at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, across colleges, including its program offering. So much so that, in addition to law courses specifically addressing this issue (p. 7, provisional report), the University has since 2021-2022 offered social sciences titled *SUST1311 Introduction to Sustainability* ([Program Plan](#), list of social sciences electives, p. 3; and the [Course Specification.docx](#)). Social sciences electives are a part of the Core-curriculum course offering and the course open to all undergraduate students at the University including the law student

Certainly, this is an elective paper, and PMU College of Law is open to the possibility of further enhancing its curriculum in sustainability issues in its continuous curriculum review and development.

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Consolidated Success Rate

The panel noted that 'the consolidated success rate of a given cohort (the final percentage of graduates, regardless of the duration of their studies) was not communicated as such (provisional report, p. 12). We would to reiterate the additional information provided to the panel vide email dated 4th November 2024 ([Email dated 4 November 2024, with attachment.pdf](#)) regarding students' completion rate (data 2023-2024) including the following:

- an explanation for the differences between the number of total senior students and the number of actual graduates (referring to the data provided in the table from the Characterization Sheet for the Law Program)
- Average GPA of Law Graduates for the last 3 academic years
- Maximum number years to complete the law program for full time students.

The University takes note of the issue concerning 'consolidated success rate' and will consider to implement a better calculation methodology and description moving forward.

Recommendations.

PMU College of Law welcomes all of them with a view to enhancing the program. To clarify certain points in the recommendations, however, we would like to add the following information:

(a) workload and Criteria for academic promotion

PMU took note of the need to establish 'criteria... workload... [and] to determine academic promotions to the specific nature of the legal research and publishing'. There are two aspects in the recommendation.

(i) workload consideration

Our institution recognizes the importance of maintaining an optimal faculty workload balance while ensuring team stability. At present however, the Ministry of Education imposes teaching workloads at private universities as follows:

Professor (12 hours weekly)
Associate Professor (14 hours weekly)
Assistant Professor (16 hours weekly)

However, to further address this issue, the University will study feasibility of a comprehensive workload strategy soon.

(ii) academic promotion

In general, PMU has established certain criteria for academic promotion vide 'Promotion Process and Guidelines (2015)' ([Promotion Guidelines 2015.pdf](#)). The Guidelines provides specific criteria for the promotion to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professorship utilizing point-scale system (1-100) to evaluate candidates' strength in; (i) research and scholarly activities, (ii) teaching and, (iii) university and community services (Process and Promotions Guidelines, 2015, pp. 4-8). A minimum 35 points must be from research and scholarly activities. (Guidelines, p. 11).

In addition, in evaluating a candidate's professional activities for example, the University recognizes that 'the activities and accomplishments may vary widely from discipline to discipline' (p. Process and Promotions Guidelines, 2015, p. 11). In this way, specific contributions coming from the law academics can be fairly and objectively evaluated under the Guidelines.

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(b) Alumni integration

PMU recognizes the role and contributions of its alumni to the program, the University as well as the community and seeks to establish more programs and activities to enhance University-Alumni and industry relations. At present, it is not a requirement in terms of University policy to engage alumni in core-curriculum delivery (teaching). Nevertheless, the University stresses that the alumni actively engage in the university extra-curricular programs as well as curriculum development as a stakeholder. In any event, the University will monitor and consider additional ways to integrate alumni into our program development and delivery.

(c) Establishment of the Master's degree program in International Business Law

We are pleased to note that final review and approval of our program by Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) in August 2024 (See: [TIEC letter dated August 2024.pdf](#)) submitted to the Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia in the same month ([Documents submitted to the Ministry.pdf](#)). In fact, soon after the evaluation and accreditation visit by HCERES (3rd – 4th November 2024), on 7 November 2024 PMU Law received a final visit by a consultant/representative from the Ministry of Education representative ([Dr Ahmed Al-Kuwaiti's visit agenda.pdf](#)) providing further clarifications to the design and course offerings in the proposed program as well as program facilities. Currently, the University awaits final approval of the program. Meanwhile, the University is addressing market positioning and recruitment strategy for the program.

Conclusion

Our commitment to continuous improvement remains steadfast, and we look forward to demonstrating the positive impact of these initiatives in strengthening our institution's academic excellence and professional relevance.

The institution remains at the disposal of HCERES for any additional information or clarification regarding this reply

Regards,



Dr. Muamar Salameh

Dean of College of Law

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ACCREDITATION DECISION

Bachelor of Law

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
College of Law

Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia

February 2025

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-2025-02 on the accreditation of the Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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

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

Considering the 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_2024_CONV9_PMU of 11th August 2024 for the evaluation/accreditation of the Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on 26th February 2025;

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 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 BA in Law is in line with PMU's strategy to make an impact not only nationally but also internationally. The programme boasts several advantages, including the commitment of the teaching team, a focus on core competencies, and a very good balance between Saudi law and international and comparative law. However, PMU should consider reducing the teaching and administrative workload of faculty members to allow for more focus on research activities. Additionally, the College of Law should enhance the involvement of socio-economic stakeholders in presenting the job market to students, thereby assisting them in finding their professional path.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The pedagogical organisation of the BA is in line with its objectives, and the College of Law demonstrates a strong commitment to students' success. Effective links with socio-professional actors, combined with dual training in English and Arabic, significantly enhance the programme's appeal and contribute to its success.

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

In a relatively volatile economic climate, the PMU Bachelor of Law remains attractive, supported by effective measures to enhance its appeal. Rigorous student selection contributes to high success rates, while the quality of teaching underpins strong post-graduation employment outcomes. The programme's robust connections with employers in both the public and private sectors further reinforce its value.

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

The BA in Law benefits from a well-structured organisation and from the human and material resources necessary to achieve its objectives, both in terms of quality and ethics. The programme relies on a high-quality team, dedicated to both teaching and research. In order to maintain this level of quality, PMU should provide opportunities for advancement based on criteria of excellence, but adapted to the field of law.

Article 2

The Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 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:

- Adapt the criteria used to modulate the workload of the faculty members and to determine academic promotions to the specific nature of legal research and publishing
- Formally integrate alum in the curriculum to introduce students to the diversity of legal professions
- Finalise the creation of a Master's degree to enhance the attractiveness of the Bachelor's degree

Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, 10th March 2025.

The President
signed
Coralie CHEVALLIER



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