



# EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

## **Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication**

College of Arts  
King Saud University  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**APRIL 2020**

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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 Mass Communication**

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King Saud University  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

October 2019



The King Saud University has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its BA in Mass Communication programme. The evaluation is based on the “External Evaluation Standards” of foreign study programmes, adopted by the Hcéres Board on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016. These standards are available on the Hcéres website (hceres.fr).

**For the Hcéres<sup>1</sup> :**

Nelly Dupin, Acting President

**On behalf of the experts committee<sup>2</sup> :**

Julien Zarifian,  
President of the committee

In accordance with the decree n°2014-1365, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014,

<sup>1</sup> The president of Hcéres "contresigne les rapports d'évaluation établis par les comités d'experts et signés par leur président." (Article 8, alinéa 5) — "countersigns the assessment reports made by the experts' committees and signed by their president" (article 8, alinea 5).<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The evaluation reports "sont signés par le président du comité". (Article 11, alinéa 2) — "are signed by the president of the committee" (article 11, alinea 2).

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## I. STUDY PROGRAMME IDENTITY SHEET

1. University/institution: King Saud University (KSU)
2. Component, faculty or department concerned: College of Arts – Department of Mass Communication
3. Programme's title: Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication
4. Training/speciality: Public Relations, Audio & Visual Communication, Journalism and Electronic Publishing
5. Year of creation and context: 1972
6. Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): Riyadh, Male and Female Campuses
7. Programme director:
  - a. Surname, first name: Dr AL-ANAZI Ali
  - b. Profession and grade: Associate Professor
  - c. Main subject taught: Public Relations

## METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

8. According to the report documents and appendixes, the BA programme is currently applying for the accreditation of the National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment (NCAAA). It was updated in 01/09/2018 in conformity to a benchmark with similar study programmes of a number of American universities (Minnesota, Northwestern, Wisconsin, Elon, Syracuse) and to recommendations from the Accrediting council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC).
9. There was no previous accreditation. The following evaluation is the first evaluation of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education – HCERES.

## HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAMME

10. The programme teaching team is composed of 98% of department full-time members who teach in male or in female sections and are responsible for teaching, student advising, research activities, service and administrative responsibilities. Professionals form 2% of the team and teach practical courses. The operational professional consultancy provided by many members of the teaching team to media and mass communication institutions in the Saudi Market compensates this relatively poor proportion of professional teachers in a BA programme, which constitutes an entry degree for higher studies. As well as the department's counseling board composed of professionals in mass communication and the numerous vocational courses and internal trainings included in the programme from the second semester. The department teaching team is composed of 4 Saudi Professors and 2 non-Saudi Professors, 5 Saudi Associate Professors, 6 Non-Saudi Associate Professors. The report elements underline the active policy of the university to support the PhD projects of the members of the teaching staff sent in foreign universities before coming back and teaching in the programme, particularly in the female section, in order to allow a necessary comparative equilibrium between the two sections.
11. The Mass Communication Department benefits from the administrative and teaching resources of the College of Arts (digital resources, Learning Management System, smart classrooms, computer rooms and libraries in addition to equipped labs for the students with special needs visually impaired). It has also its own audiovisual laboratories, digital media and research tools, newsrooms and electronic media labs where students work on graduation projects or on practical training under the supervision of a professional team. During the on-site visit on the female campus, some of them expressed a demand for more open use of these resources: this request meets the assessment of the programme (characterization sheet), which recommends longer opening hours for the different media labs.

## STUDENT POPULATION: EVOLUTION AND TYPOLOGY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS

The table below presents data retrieved from the university E-register, and shows the important number of registered, the number of admitted and the graduated students.

Year	Registered SEM 1	Registered SEM 2	Admitted	Graduated
2015 Total	471M/357F 828	536M/348F 884	362M/194F 556	136M/38F 174
2016 Total	591M/394F 958	683M/426F 1109	276M/179F 455	130M/99F 229
2017 Total	861M/483F 1344	632M/552F 1184	325M/208F 533	159M/118F 277
2018 Total	968M/605F 1573	1089M/652F 1741	145M/190F 335	206M/153F 359

The total number of enrolled students has been steadily increasing over the past four years for both the male and female sections ; due to this mass enrollment, students transfer from other departments has been stopped in the female section. The global average of graduated students is between 20 and 24%, and it indicates around 15% for students graduated in time. Many statistical elements show a growing difference between the numbers of registered and graduated students. That is explained -without further analysis of the given rates of success and withdrawing- as the result of the attractiveness of the programme but also as a systemic result of the attractiveness of the university student status.

## II.ON-SITE VISIT DESCRIPTION

After a meeting with the staff representatives at the College of Arts and, a visit was organized at the Common first year campus followed by another meeting with a panel of students in the Humanities field. Directly after, the experts met the dean and the quality staff of the College of Arts, in the male section.

The second day, a meeting with a panel of alumni students from the five assessed programmes brought together, followed by a visits and meetings on male and female campuses.

The third day focused on meetings with a panel of the teaching staff of the BA & MA in Mass Communication, then with a panel of students of the two programmes.

### COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

- Dr Julien ZARIFIAN (President), University of Cergy-Pontoise
- Dr Gloria AWAD (Expert), University of Artois
- Ms Mizgin DEMIR (Expert), University of Rouen
- Dr Annick RIVENS-MOMPEAN (Expert), University of Lille
- Dr Sebastien ROUQUETTE (Expert), University of Clermont-Auvergne

Hcéres was represented by Dr Anne VIAL-LOGEAY, science advisor.

### ON-SITE VISIT DESCRIPTION

- Date of the visit: 29/09/2019 to 01/10/2019
- Summary of the proceedings: Group discussions chaired by the HCERES experts. Discussions with members of the Quality department.
- Organisation of the visit: Two meetings with the Dean and the board of the College of Arts, meetings with the Head and members of the Quality department. Meeting with a panel of students from the first common year. Meeting with a panel of alumni of the five assessed programmes. Visits of the campuses. Meetings with a panel of the teaching staff of the BA & Ma in Mass Communication and with a panel of students of the two programmes.
- Cooperation of study programme and institution to be accredited: Excellent. The Hcéres experts were taken in charge by a few KSU professors on the male and female campuses. The KSU team of professors organized the visit perfectly and did their best to satisfy the requests of the Hcéres team providing extra information when required.
- People met: Pr Naif THUNAIAN AL SAUD, Dr Suliman ALNASSER, Dr Mohammad ALZAIDI  
Ba & MA Mass Communication female section teaching team: Dr Ouhoud AL-SHAHIL, Dr Soraya BADAWI, Dr Hala BEN ALI BERNAT, Dr Shirine SALAMEH, Dr Nora TWEITRI, Mrs Beddoura BOUMEIDAN, Mrs Dora HAMED. Male section teaching staff: Dr Ali AL-ANAZI, Dr Fouad ADULLAH, Dr Habib BELGACEM, Dr Adel AL-MAKINZY. BA & MA Mass Communication female section alumni and students: Rima ADDAWI, Amal OTAIBI, Hala AL-OTEIBI, Dima GERMAWI, Lamia SEIF, Ala, Wafa and Hanane.

### III. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

#### 1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The programme of Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication is proposed by the Mass Communication Department, in the College of Arts (COA) of the King Saud University (KSU), in the male and female campuses in Riyadh. The department was established in 1972, it is one of the firsts in Saudi Arabia. The programme is offered in initial and continuing education and welcomes students with special needs according to the policy of the university.

The BA takes place in the broad area of study Arts, which includes humanities and social sciences. Seven departments in the College of Arts offer, in addition to the BA in Mass Communication, BA diplomas in the fields of Information Sciences, Social Sciences, Geography, History, English and Arabic Languages and Literatures. Another BA in Communication and Media Technology is proposed in the city of Riyadh. And seven BA in Mass Communication, Mass Communication and Media Technology, Media and Journalism are offered at the national level, in King Abdulaziz University (Jeddah), Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (Dammam), King Khalid University (Abha), Jazan University (Jazan), Taibah University (Madina).

The programme was updated in 01/09/2018, after a benchmark with similar study programs (American universities, – mostly) an recommendations of members of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). This compliance with advices from international actors in the field indicates an open-minded position of the university and the programme's management staff.

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

The programme's self-evaluation approach is rooted on the HCERES referential for European and International educational programmes and unities.

The file provided to the experts includes the Characterization sheet, the Self-Evaluation report, the SWOT auto-analysis and numerous appendixes (32) in addition to writing answers produced to respond to the experts' additional questions, following the reading of the file elements.

The different meetings hold during the on-site visit with the different panels of the College of Arts management, the programme's teaching team and students, provided oral complement to the initial written information.

## IV. EVALUATION REPORT

### 1- AIMS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The aims of the programme are to provide students with the knowledge, the scientific basis, the communicative skills and the practical experiences that make them able to hold professional positions and develop careers in communication and media labor market, or to pursue higher specialization studies.

Jobs sectors of BA graduates in Riyadh and other area of the Kingdom include advertising, public relations and communication companies, telecom companies, radio and television channels, banks, different ministries and the Royal Dewan.

The scientific and professional objectives of the programme are well detailed. Expected knowledge and skills to be developed are clearly exposed and are globally preparing the students to get jobs in communication and media field, in the private and governmental sectors of the local and regional labor markets, or to pursue higher specialization in a Master degree. The professional and academic specializations are clearly presented and are in coherence with the programme's aims and objectives. One regrets that two fundamental topics, writings as a technological paradigm of digital media; knowledge and culture provided by the media messages publicity do not appear in the programme and its description.

### 2 – POSITION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Before its last update on 01/09/2018, the programme was based on a Preparatory Year, then changed to a First Common Year to all the College of Arts students; since then, it has been reduced to one common semester, endowing the students with one more semester for specific courses.

The programme is composed of 128 credit hours, distributed on eight level/semesters and each level is taught in fifteen weeks with in addition two weeks for final exams. During the first six semesters, the programme includes mandatory courses by the university and the department. It also offers elective courses giving students the possibility to study in the same time a minor-secondary supportive discipline in Law and Political Science, Business Administration and Economics, Information and Library Sciences, Language and Literature, Tourism and Cultural Heritage, or Sociology (students from other departments can also study Mass Communication as a minor-supporting discipline). Specialization takes place in the seventh and eight semesters, with an internship in the last semester. Empowerment of the students is fulfilled throughout all these semesters.

The link of the programme with research takes place through applied research: two research chairs, production of textbooks by the department teaching staff, publication of articles in scientific revues. Besides, the department Media Studies Centre adds a cartographical dimension by providing bibliography of Saudi information, media monitoring and analysis, in addition to studies on media. The Saudi Association for Media & Communication allows teachers and students to participate to research conferences. Yet the lack of research laboratory (regardless of the quality of the equipment) dedicated to the programme is a disadvantage for the BA as formation and diploma but also as a level leading to the MA programme and to the PhD.

The research chair Aljazeera Chair for International Journalism and the Riyadh Media Lab for Journalism and Human Communication were created and ruled according to the university Research Chairs Programme. Both chairs operate on the basis of a partnership between the department and media enterprise, but this is fragile as an assessment in the SWOT self-analysis mentions the possibility of a cease of funding of the two chairs.

The Mass Communication Department benefits from the laboratories, seminars and workshops of the College of Arts. The politics of publication and research in the university added numerous scientific publications of the department teaching team, provided courses textbooks for the BA students. The Humanities Studies and Research center of the College supported the publication of textbooks by teachers of the department, and the university rewards the members of the teaching staff who publish in peer-reviewed scholarly journals.

The link with the socioeconomic world, either for training or employing, takes place under the label of a community service plan and on the logistic backup of partnerships between the University, the College of Arts and the Mass Communication Department and organizations of the private and public sectors. Many members of the department teaching staff are involved in national institutions and in consultancy missions for national media and organizations. The department has training agreement with 42 governmental and private institutions. According to their specialization and interests, students make a choice in a list of available training facilities. All of this develops job training and opportunities and produces a positive impact on the department and its students.

The department Training Committee takes in charge the internships, in cooperation with the Department Council. Employers feedback is collected through survey programmes. Most of the graduates are employed in the private and public sectors or pursue higher specialization studies. The mobility is promoted by the international Cooperation & Scientific Twinning Department, which concerns the teaching and administrative staff. The University Distinguished and Talented Students programme offers selective visits to international universities; unfortunately, the report doesn't present another form of BA students outgoing or going in mobility. The low number of courses in English language may be an explanation.

### 3 – STUDY PROGRAMME TEACHING STRUCTURE

The programme plan corresponds to the BA objectives in the Mass Communication scientific field and professional market.

The programme structure is progressive, with a combination of common core curriculum and specialization courses, from the second semester till the end of the sixth one. In addition to English language courses during the first common semester, a course titled Media Readings in English is proposed in the second semester and there are some courses based on the latest English academic resources in the field. But the students met during the on-site visit ask for more courses in English. The programme plan of the first three years presents few differentiations between what comes under the common core and what concerns the field of specialization. Applied courses in Public Relations, Audio & Visual Communication or Journalism and Electronic Publishing, form the major parts of the seventh semester, having been proposed since the third level with links between theoretical knowledge and practical application. As mentioned above, specialized internship takes place in the eighth semester (twelve hours per week, during sixteen weeks). Students receive supervision during their internship semester; the trainees present their learning and conclusions in a meeting at the end of the semester, under the supervision of the teaching team.

The department provides an orientation structure with academic advisors and online guide. An academic advising committee, with an academic advisor allocated to each enrolled student, provides students with support and guidance in registering for classes within the department and teaching team members upload courses materials through the Learning Management System.

In addition to the training conventions and the relationships with socioeconomic stakeholders, students benefit from different training units in the department and the university, as the Digital media lab, the audiovisual weekly news bulletin, the University Mission print and Mobile Service, the electronic website of the university magazines and the broadcasting studio. They can also participate to local, regional and international communication events and this is indeed an added value to their education.

Once more, one regrets the insufficient training in English (or other foreign) language(s).

### 4 – PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The head of the department is responsible for decision-making about the study programme in addition to being in charge of the strategic management of the Mass Communication department. He is assisted by the responsible of the female section (who reports to the head of the department and to the College Vice Deanship for the Female branch) and the department council and committees, in compliance with the governance rules of the College of Arts and the university. The separation in male and female sections is structural and organizational rather than pedagogical and the differences in equipment between the two sections is a diachronic effect of their different establishment time. All the members of the teaching team are *de facto* members of the department council and vote its decisions, in addition to their participation to the department committees. These committees are renewable every year and they are required to update, with the head of the department, the programme's self-study report. In addition, a Counselling/Advising board provides advices of professionals in mass communication interested in the programme, keeping in this way the link with the job market. All these are useful tools to confirm the pertinence of the programme's community service plan for training and employing.

At the beginning of each academic semester, an orientation programme is provided to students, courses syllabi are transmitted to the programme management and teachers give their students the course's study calendar, aims, outcomes, references, topics and requirements. Students are evaluated consistently until they graduate - (monthly exams, presentations, student's participation -60%- and final exam -40%-).

The programme learning outcomes are clearly stated, according to the College Strategic Plan and the Students Qualification and Outcomes Framework. Admission requirements including credit for previous studies, programme requirement and programme transfer procedures are specified on the university admission and registration website.

The assessment of the programme's quality and performance is made in compliance with the standards followed by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) and according to

the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) adopted by the university and assessed every year. The surveys are established through the College Vice Deanship for Quality and Development and the support of the functional Quality Unit of the department. Unfortunately, the given rates of success and withdrawal are not analyzed for the different years and levels, but are limited to the rates between enrolled and graduated, and presented employers statistics concern only the year 2018. These statistics show 80% of satisfaction from the department graduates, but concern only 10 employers, what is indeed a low number. Similarly, statistics about the future of the programme successful students concern one year (1437-1438H / 2016-2017) and are not continuous: on 81 graduates contacted after about six months from the time they graduated, the number of students who responded to the department's request is 59 graduates. 25 of 59 students found a job after graduation and 17 are pursuing higher studies in the department's MA in Mass Communication. This limited survey provides a limited diagnosis.

## V. CONCLUSION

The attractiveness of the programme is corroborated by the constant increasing number of enrolled students since four years, for both the male and female sections. The discussions between the experts and the teaching team during the on-site visit confirm an increasing demand for competent graduates from the public and the private sectors but indicate also a current competition from different other programmes, in and out the field of Mass Communication, besides massive changes in the field itself generated by the digital disruption. Such factors urge reconsidering the programme pedagogical structure, where there is a need for a strong differentiation between what comes under the common core and what concerns the field of specialization in one side, and in another one for the extension of the teaching of the English as a second language in the programme. The management and teaching team of the programme are aware of this challenge, and study how it is possible to reinforce its identity and the high-standards it pursues.

### STRENGTHS

- The attractiveness of the programme.
- The successfully-fulfilled empowerment of the students.
- The many training devices.
- The monitored external internship.
- The strong relationships with the private and governmental institutions.

### WEAKNESSES

- The few differentiation between the common core and the specialization.
- The limited analysis of the given rates of success and withdrawing and the limited monitoring of the graduate's employability.
- The insufficiency of the teaching of English language.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- An actualization and a strengthening of the Mass Communication common core should be necessary to reinforce the programme identity, to provide teachers and students with relevant, actualized and distinctive conceptual tools and to build a strong specialized department. Such an actualization would need the help of a scientific laboratory dedicated to the Communication field as well as the development of field synergy with the Department of Information Sciences.
- A continuous monitoring of the graduates' employability would provide data and help survey the meeting between the programme community service plan and the needs of the local job market.
- The development of the teaching of English language would meet the students' as well as the market's demands and allow the programme and its graduates to face the current competition.

## VI.COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION

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كلية الآداب  
مكتب العميد

January 1, 2020

**Dear Ms. Nelly Dupin,**

We appreciate your efforts in the evaluation of the College of Arts' five academic programmes (1- *BA in English Language*, 2- *MA in English Literature*, 3- *MA in Applied Linguistics*, 4- *BA in Mass Communication*, and 5- *MA in Mass Communication*). We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Expert Committee that visited and provided insight into the stance of our evaluated programmes. In response to the committee's evaluation reports, we believe that most of the highlights and recommendations provided will contribute to improving the programmes' quality, and thus improve the overall quality and efficiency of our graduates. The programmes will consider the content of the reports for future improvements.

Nevertheless, there are other points mentioned in the reports that we may have different views about or require clarification. These are as follows:

### ***1- BA in English Language***

Although the programme does not currently offer a Western culture focused course, Western critical thought and ideologies are studied in the ENG 362 Criticism course. This course is designed to introduce students to major schools of thought from Classical Greek criticism to the Modern and Postmodern. In the course, students are introduced to these schools chronologically, and are required to apply the frameworks to literary texts to cement their understanding of the differences and changes that occurred through history. The programme also offers an elective course about the history of the English language, ENG 421, which provides an overview of how historical events in England led to changes in the language throughout different periods. It brings focus to the political, social and intellectual factors that determine these changes.

## 2- MA in English Literature

The report points out concerns over the small number of students joining the programme. It is true that the number of students is low, however, the number has gradually increased over time. The programme also has both male and female students, even though the majority on the programme are female. It is believed that this reality reflects the fact that humanities in general is less attractive to students and that the number of male literature students is less than females in most universities.

The report suggests to include history courses in the study plan. Indeed, history is important for literature students. Although the programme does not have any dedicated history courses, students are given enough historical context to each literature course throughout the programme.

As for job opportunities and partnerships, the Saudi 2030 Vision is anticipating more opportunities for the graduates in different national and cultural domains. Our graduates are well-rounded in cultural issues and qualified to work in areas outside of teaching and translation. Under the umbrella of King Abdullah Institute for Research and Consulting, our staff and students have the opportunity to partner with various business entities in the country (<https://kai.ksu.edu.sa/en>).

Another point in the report is the job market and competition with the College of Translation. We believe our graduates maintain special characteristics to make them different than graduates from the College of Translation. Translation is one skill our students can perform besides their strong background in Western literature and cultures and humanities. Therefore, we do not see ourselves in direct competition with the College of Translation, whose curriculum focuses on the techniques, theory and practice of translation. Our graduates gain employment with foreign organisations working inside the country and with international organisations in a number of different fields (as highlighted in the report).

## 3- MA in Applied Linguistics

The report discusses the nature of the study plan as being too general and that graduates may not become "specialized enough". In response, it can be said that applied linguistics is by nature an interdisciplinary field focused on a range of topics, all of which serve the purpose of investigating real-life language issues. Courses offered in the programme seek to provide students with an abundance of information about the field of applied linguistics, but this is not



to the detriment of choosing an area of specialty. Students on both tracks can thus focus on a specific area of applied linguistics in courses like ENG 579 (Seminar), ENG 501 (Trends in Applied Linguistics), ENG 599 (Research Project), and ENG 600 (Thesis). In addition, the programme aims to prepare students to join Ph.D. programmes nationally and internationally. Therefore, having studied a wide range of areas in more depth will help to facilitate any decision making on what Ph.D. programme they will join. That said, the experts' argument is worth considering during the next programme modification.

Furthermore, the report argues that the name of the programme does not refer to English studies since it is taught in English and under the umbrella of the Department of English Language and Literature. Here, the name does not refer to English studies because English is only the medium of instruction, which is apparent in the title of the courses offered that do not refer to any language. The issues discussed in the courses refer to linguistic phenomena, which apply to all languages. For example, in the Language Policy and Planning course students are introduced to theories and frameworks governing language policy creation, interpretation and appropriation. These theories apply to all language policies worldwide. Another example is the Lexicography course that teaches and trains students into building mono- as well as *bilingual* corpora and dictionaries. Therefore, one of the gained learning outcomes is the ability to build dictionaries in Arabic, English, French or in any other language spoken (or learned in the future). In addition, it is common practice to offer Applied Linguistics programmes with similar titles without reference to any language while studying the linguistic phenomena of various languages.

It is further mentioned that "the thesis track attracts only a few students". It should be noted that students are admitted to the non-thesis track and only distinguished students are allowed to switch to the thesis track. This is due to the nature of this track, which requires proficiency in academic writing and strong determination.

#### 4- *BA in Mass Communication*

The "lack" of a "scientific laboratory" has been stated as a concern by the experts. In response, the Aljazeera Research Chair for International Journalism is associated with the department and serve in offering opportunities for conducting research individually and collaboratively. In addition, the university encourages and funds research groups in Mass Communication as well as in other fields. These research groups promote the participation of student researchers with the aim to encourage knowledge and research expertise from professors to be passed on



to students. These groups, along with the research chair and the quality facilities offered by the department, college and university, can offer the advantage of scientific experience at both the student and staff levels. Therefore, all of this may compensate for the “lack” of a scientific laboratory at the department.

**5- MA in Mass Communication**

The report similarly highlights “the lack” of a scientific laboratory that can benefit the department. The response provided above (section 4) applies here and should suffice.

Finally, based on the five evaluation reports pertaining to the five academic programmes mentioned at the beginning of this letter, the College of Arts respectfully requests that the French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES) proceeds with the accreditation process and informs us of their decisions.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Naif bin Thunaian Al Saud**

*Professor of Mass Communication*

*Dean of the College of Arts, KSU*

**Dr. Suliman Mohammed Alnasser**

*Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics*

*College of Arts Vice Dean for Development & Quality*



International evaluation and accreditation

## ACCREDITATION DECISION

### **Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication**

College of Arts  
King Saud University  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**April 2020**

## SCOPE OF THE ACCREDITATION GRANTED BY HCERES

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

As for the “External Evaluation Standards”, the accreditation criteria have been specifically designed for foreign programmes. The accreditation criteria were adopted by the Board on June 2016 and are available on the HCERES website ([hceres.fr](http://hceres.fr)).

The accreditation committee, meeting his accreditation decision, has wholly taken into account the final evaluation report of the study programme. This accreditation decision is the result of a collegial and reasoned process.

The accreditation decision issued by HCERES shall not grant any rights whatsoever, whether in France or abroad. The decision on training programme accreditation confers an accreditation label and does not infer recognition of the accredited qualifications. The HCERES accreditation process therefore has no impact on the qualifications recognition process in France.

## FULFILLMENT OF ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

### FIELD 1: AIMS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

#### Accreditation criterion

The objectives of the study programme with regard to knowledge and skills to be acquired are clearly defined and communicated. Students and other stakeholders are aware of outcomes in terms of job opportunities and further studies.

#### Assessment of criterion

The academic goals of the BA in Mass Communication are well established and consistent with what one can expect from this type of programme. Main objective is to provide students with the knowledge, the scientific basis, the communicative skills, and the practical experience to make them able to occupy professional positions and to develop careers in the communication sector and the media sector, or to pursue their studies with a MA and then possibly a PhD in the field. The outcomes in terms of jobs are well stated, and the sectors are perfectly targeted. Among them, Public Relations, Audio and Visual Communication, Journalism, and Electronic Publishing.

- **The academic objectives of the programme are well designed and coherent with the nature of the programme**
- **The link between the academic thread of the programme and the outcomes in terms of job opportunities is particularly visible**

### FIELD 2: POSITION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

#### Accreditation criterion

The study programme has set a comprehensive positioning suited to its objectives and including a clear link with research, scholarly partnerships and/or with the economic and social world, national and/or international partnerships.

#### Assessment of criterion

The BA in Mass Communication programme was benchmarked against study programs of several prestigious U.S. universities, is revised on a regular basis, and has benefited from advices given by Professor from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). The link between the programme and research is positively influenced by the two research chairs of the Mass Communication Department (Aljazeera Chair for International Journalism and the Riyadh Media Lab for Journalism and Human Communication), the production of textbooks by the department's professors who also increasingly publish articles in academic journals. The Media Studies Centre contributes in the dynamic and provides books, data, and other resources to the students. And the Saudi Association for Media & Communication, with which the department is associated, allows professors and students to participate in research conferences, which a positive point. The link with the socioeconomic world (both the private and the public sectors) is strong too. Many department professors are also involved in national institutions and in consultancy missions for national media and organizations. This has helped develop internships and job opportunities for students, which has a positive impact on the department and the students. The department has concluded 42 agreements with governmental and private institutions, with a special focus on internship opportunities for students. In contrast no specific international partnership, between the programme and international institutions (universities, companies, or other organizations) exists.

- **The programme is well established and benchmarked against several prestigious American universities**
- **The articulation between the programme and the research field is strong**
- **The level of the relations with the socioeconomic world is very satisfying**

## FIELD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME TEACHING STRUCTURE

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### Accreditation criterion

— The study programme includes a set of teaching units that are coherent, gradual and adapted to all kind of students. The study programme allows students to acquire additional skills that are useful for employment or further study.

— Internships and projects are included in the study programme curriculum. So are Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICTE) and education innovations. The study programme prepares students for the international environment.

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### Assessment of criterion

The program structure of the BA in Mass Communication very well-thought. It is progressive, with a combination of common core curriculum and specialization courses, from the third semester until the end of the eight and last one. After the common first year, the program plan of the first three years presents few differentiations between what comes under the common core and what concerns the field of specialization. The second and part of the third years are mostly dedicated to general and theoretical courses in communication, whereas applied courses in Public Relations, Audio and Visual Communication, Journalism, and Electronic Publishing form very appropriately the major part of the second half of the third year and the fourth one, preparing students to their four-month internship that takes place in the second part of the fourth year (and to which students are well prepared and supervised). The department provides an orientation structure for students, with academic advisors and online guides. The teaching team members upload courses materials through the Learning management system.

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- **The structure of the programmes is progressive and very well-thought**
- **The programme is well professionalized**
- **The four-month internship is an asset of the programme**

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## FIELD 4: STUDY PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

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### Accreditation criterion

— The study programme is implemented by a formally identified and operational teaching team including stakeholder and student participation. It is carried out by an educational team which benefits from clear and up-to-date data. Methods for checking knowledge are explicitly stated and communicated to students. Teaching and practical professional units are expressed in terms of skills.

— Anti-fraud measures have been implemented.

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### Assessment of criterion

The head of the Department of Communication is the main responsible for the decision-making concerning the BA in Mass Communication. He is assisted by the responsible of the female section (who is also in charge of the direction functions regarding the female students), as well as by the department council and committees. However, one regrets that no specific dedicated team is in charge of the programme. All the members of the teaching team, in the male and female sections, that is to say 104 teachers (including 41 for the female campus), are *de facto* members of the department council and vote its decisions. The students are well supervised and supported by an Advising Board, which provides the students with advices of renowned professionals in mass communication who have academic interests in the programme, and at the beginning of each academic semester, an orientation program is provided to students. Courses syllabi are transmitted to the students at the beginning of every semester and students are evaluated consistently until they graduate. Students are required to evaluate, anonymously, their courses, every semester.

- **The teaching teams is strong and diversified, and well organized to supervise the programme**
- **The students are well supervised and supported, and benefit from the contact with professionals in Mass Communication**

## FINAL DECISION

Considering the accreditation criteria analysis detailed above, the accreditation committee issues the following decision:

### “Five-year unreserved accreditation decision”

and draws attention to the following points:

- An actualization and a strengthening of the Mass Communication common core should be necessary to reinforce the programme identity, to provide teachers and students with relevant, actualized and distinctive conceptual tools and to build a strong specialized department. Such an actualization would need the help of a scientific laboratory dedicated to the Communication field as well as the development of field synergy with the Department of Information Sciences.
- A continuous monitoring of the graduates' employability would provide data and help survey the meeting between the programme community service plan and the needs of the local job market.
- The development of the teaching of English language would meet the students' as well as the market's demands and allow the programme and its graduates to face the current competition.

## SIGNATURE

For HCERES and on behalf of



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Date: Paris, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020



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