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Rapport d'évaluation/accréditation d'une formation étrangère. Bachelor of law. 2016, AI Ain University Of Science et Technology. hceres-02029931

HAL Id: hceres-02029931

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Submitted on 20 Feb 2019

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HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Programs and Degrees
European and International Mission

Report on the Bachelor of Law

Al Ain University
of Science and Technology

2015

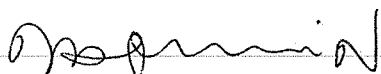
Rapport publié le 07/12/2018

HCERES

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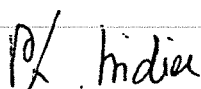
Programs and Degrees
European and International Mission

For the HCERES,¹



Didier Houssin, president

On behalf of the experts' committee²



Philippe Didier, president of the committee

En vertu du décret n°2014-1365 du 14 novembre 2014,

¹ Le président du HCERES "contresigne les rapports d'évaluation établis par les comités d'experts et signés par leur président." (Article 8, alinéa 5)

² Les rapports d'évaluation "sont signés par le président du comité". (Article 11, alinéa 2)

University/institution: Al Ain University of Science and Technology

Component, faculty or department concerned: College of Law

Program's title: Bachelor of Law

Site(s) where the program is taught:

Town(s): Al Ain and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)

Speciality manager:

First and last names: Hussein Ahmed Mohamed El-Moguy

Profession and grade: Professor

Committee Members:

- Prof. Philippe DIDIER, Professor of law, Université Paris Descartes;
- Prof. Jean-Jacques ANSAULT, Professor of Law, Université de Rouen;
- M. Fabien PATRIS, former affiliate Professor of Law, Université du Maine.

HCERES Scientific Advisor :

- Prof. Martin LEBEAU

Training program presentation

The bachelor of law program offered by the College of law of the University of Al Ain is a degree aimed at giving a general legal education.

It has been created in 2007 with an average of 1000 students per year.

It is a four-year program with a circa 380 hours of class which makes it a full time program.

Three goals are pursued. First, the program aims at giving graduate students a good theoretical knowledge and understanding of legal concepts and legal reasoning. Students are taught to think like a lawyer. Second, the program aims at giving graduate students a good knowledge of the UAE laws and institutions in the main areas of legal practice. It covers both private and public law, as well as both domestic and international law. Third, the program aims at giving students a professional training in the field of court related matters (filing a petition before a court, arguing a case...). Graduate students are expected to be able to work as a lawyer directly after graduation.

The knowledge and skills that students get from the Bachelor of law program prepare them to hold any position in the legal field.

The bachelor degree may also be a first step for those students who wish to receive a higher legal education through a Master of Law degree. The Master of Law degree of AAU is not part of the current accreditation process and will not be discussed. Suffice it to say that the Bachelor of Law degree offers a legal education that gives the requisites necessary to join a Master of Law degree.

On-site visit description

Summary of the proceedings:

As agreed between the HCERES and the College of Law of the AAU, the on-site visit was on the Al Ain campus even though the Bachelor of Law is also available on the Abu Dhabi campus of the College of Law of the AAU. The assessment of the program is therefore based on what the committee saw and heard in its visit on the Al Ain Campus, deemed by both the HCERES and the AAU representative of the whole program. The visit lasted two full days. It took place on May 2nd and 3rd, 2015. The visit allowed the committee to meet the main persons involved in the program in the campus itself as well as outside of it (as it is described in the following points). Thanks to the visit and the effort all parties interested, the committee achieved a deeper understanding of the program in an efficient and productive way.

Organization of the visit:

The schedule of the visit was proposed to the committee on its arrival on the campus. It was based on the requests made by the committee and sent in advance to the College of Law. On-site, the committee was offered the opportunity to alter the schedule, if it wished so. However, since the schedule was exactly what the committee had requested, the committee stuck to it.

Cooperation of the training program and of the Institution:

The committee would like to commend in the strongest manner the cooperation of the Dean of the College of Law as well as that of the President of the University and of all interested parties. All requests made either from Paris or on site have been answered promptly and positively. The Dean of the College of Law and all members and staffers of the AAU have been forthcoming and have gone to great lengths to meet the demands of the committee. No request has been denied and more than once the committee was offered the opportunity to check or to probe statements made during the hearings. The committee was denied access to no place, no document or no person. Again the commitment of the Dean and of all who took part in the process must be lauded. The committee is confident that the conclusion it has reached is based on a fair and full disclosure of all relevant information.

Persons met:

During the visit, the committee met with the following persons:

- Academics from the University:
 - Pr. Ghaleb A. El-Refae, President of the University;
 - Pr. Abdelhafid Belarbi, Vice-President of the University;
 - Pr. Hussein Ahmed Mohamed El-Moguy, Dean of the College of Law;
 - Pr. Ahmad Al-Jobair, Deputy Dean of the College of Law.
- Staffers from the University:
 - Dr. Enas Said AbuLibdeh, Dean for Student Affairs;
 - Mr. Abdoulaye Kaba, Director of the Library;
 - Dr. Raed Ahmad Tawfeeq Said, Director of Quality Assurance & Institutional Research Center;
 - Mr. Moath Hamzi AbuAlRub, General Registrar.

- Partners from outside the University:
 - Mr Khaled Suhail Al Mazrouei, Director of the Eastern Court, Judicial Department of Abu Dhabi;
 - Colonel Rashid Khamis Al Kaabi, Head of Department of forensic evidences, Police Department of Abu Dhabi, Ministry of Interior;
 - On a collective basis, the committee met also with a delegation of Faculty Members of all ranks and a delegation of Students, both current and graduated.

The committee would like to thank all the mentioned above for their candor during the meetings.

Possible problems:

The committee reports no hindrances to its work.

Synthesis of the assessment

Global appreciation:

The bachelor program of the College of Law is aimed at giving a general legal education to students with no prior legal training. After completion, students are able to master the knowledge and the skills expected from a professional lawyer. As such, they have the ability to be hired in the legal department of a Ministerial Department or of company, or to sit for the exams of the judicial system.

The program is designed with 129 Credit Hours, each Credit Hour being representative of 3 hours of effective class per week (which represents a total of 6192 hours for 4 years, or 1548 hours per year). Among them, 33 out of 129, that is approximately 25%, are common to all colleges and not specifically related to law. Among the College courses, 9 CR are elective, the rest is compulsory.

The program covers all the main branch of the law (Private, Public). Special attention is paid to penal law. 9 CR are directly aimed at legal skills ('Research skills', 'Graduation research', 'Practicum')

The result is a well-balanced program. The design is quite similar to what can be seen in major European universities.

No institutional system for international mobility of students is in place.

The Al Ain University is a private University established in 2005, in the city of Al Ain, also seat of the oldest university in the country, the UAE University. While the UAE University covers a broad range of fields, the AAU is focused on 6 selected fields. The College of law is the largest of all the AAU colleges. It accounts for about one half of all students enrolled at AAU.

The University is primarily aimed at the UAE job market in the legal field. However, it is also opened to the world. 15% of the students come from abroad.

The current accreditation process is part of a larger strategic plan to develop the College of law and to put it on the world map of Education Institutions.

To be enrolled in the program, students must have a general secondary certificate with an average of 60%.

On an average year, there are circa 1 000 students on the Al Ain campus of the College of Law.

(For that matter, the year 2015 is a-typical because of the newly enacted Emirati law introducing a mandatory military service for young males. For the College of law, that law has meant a brutal fall in the number of male applications. However, it should be noted that it is a temporary situation link to

the entry into force of the new system. Next year, prospective students will have completed their military obligations and will be able to apply. It can be expected that the student number will go back to its pre-new law level.)

In 2014, an average of 89% passed the different program courses. Approximately, 7% graduated with “excellent” results, 20% with “very good” results, 40% with “good” and 33 with “satisfactory” results.

At the end of the program, students are offered the opportunity to take an “exit exam” to assess their level on a transdisciplinary test. The “exit exam” is a comprehensive tool that also helps the management of the program assess the effectiveness of the teachings and the proficiency of the teachers.

In the past, the results have sometimes been disappointing. It should be mentioned that the “exit exam” was purely voluntary and student would gain or lose nothing from it. Probably this created a bias since students had no “skin in the game” and did not take the exit exam seriously. New incentives for them have been put in place, and it can be hoped that in the future, the results of the “exit exam” will be more reliable.

As far as students are concerned, the program exhibits a specific feature that has a non trivial influence on its working: most of the students are already working. They are employed either by the Ministry of Interior or by the Ministry of Justice. In most cases, students have been recruited by the ministries at the end of their school education and after a few years in their job, their employer has offered them the opportunity to take the bachelor program. The completion of the program entitles them to get promoted in their job.

To meet the needs of these students, the College of law gives its classes in the evening and that allows student to attend them after their job hours, to the satisfaction of both employers and students/employees.

As a result, students are more mature and have a clearer view of the professional future than students from other Bachelor programs. They seem also to have a narrower and more focused expectation regarding what the program can give them. They are very keen on the practical skills that they can use in their respective jobs. International mobility and/or advancement of their general education is the concern of only a small minority of them.

That peculiarity of the student population reflects on what they do after completing the program: most of them stay with their current employer and do not plan to change. Very few seem interested in a Master program, at least immediately after completion of the Bachelor Program.

Employers are happy with the situation and intend to keep students that have completed the program.

The management is composed of a College Dean, two Deputy Deans and two departments’ chairs. The College Council is in charge of the programs coordination and oversees the scientific research.

Quality assessment is a paramount concern for the Presidential team as well as for the Dean’s team. On the institutional side, the College can rely on the University Quality Assurance & Institutional Research Center to get comprehensive and detailed information on the Program performance. The QA&IRC collects and analyze data on students’ performance over the years with special attention to assimilation of learning outcomes. It monitors teachers’ performance as well. A thorough feedback process is in place, involving the College and the Faculty Members, to discuss the results and to address issues.

At the College level, a “Counseling Council”, where distinguished members of the legal profession seat, advises the College on any change the curriculum may need to stay in line with legal profession needs.

Strengths:

- The design of the program is quite similar to what can be seen in major European universities.
- The Dean, the Vice-Dean and the Faculty Members are all strongly committed to offering the best education to the students. The self-assessment report and the on site visit have convinced the committee of a genuine involvement of all interested parties in the pursuit of the best education for AAU students. The dedication of all should be mentioned and lauded
- The College, in line with University policy, has a strong culture of self-assessment and of adjustment therefrom.
- The College of law has strong links with the main employers of its students.
- The College has a diversified Faculty, in terms of age, place of legal education and field of expertise.

Weaknesses:

- The mentoring students' rate is one of the lowest of the University.
- Even if the classes are in Arabic, which is in line with the fact that the practice of law is statutorily in Arabic, the students should probably be more incentivized to master the English language as well.
- The accreditation request is only for the Bachelor Program, however its link with the Master program can be mentioned. Very few students feel attracted to follow on the Master Program.

Recommendations for the university

- The College should continue to invest in its Faculty and expand it while maintaining high academic and pedagogical standards.
- The library should continue its investment and expand its collections. In particular, if the College wants to develop its Master Program, students should be able to rely on a strong library giving access to legal literature in Arabic but also in English and French.
- The efforts of the Dean and of the Faculty to improve the students' proficiency in English should be consolidated.
- Since UAE law is a member of the Latin law family, through the influence of Egyptian Law at the time of establishment of the current legal system, room could be made for a better knowledge and better access to Latin legal thinking. This is already done for the Arabic legal literature but it could be improved for the legal thinking and literature in other languages (French, German...)
- It seems to the committee that the College of Law will be facing a challenge in the coming years.

Firstly, the Bachelor Program, as it stands today, meets the current demands of students and employers. Those demands can be described as demands for practical and professional skills that can be applied directly on the job. Along the same line, the main employers are in the judicial and penal field. This creates a pressure on the Program to become always more practical and to focus always more on topics related to the Judicial and Penal system.

Secondly, the Emiratisation policy in place in the UAE may change the job market in the future. Future generation may need to find their way in the private sector, specially the business sector. As a result, other fields of law should not be neglected.

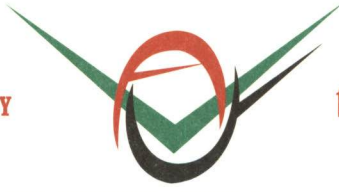
Thirdly, the intellectual ambition of the Bachelor program is and should be broader. The Bachelor program is the first step towards a Master program. As such, it must offer room to confront students with more theoretical and speculative thinking. Students must be made aware that law may be more than rules and practical solutions. In other words, they must be introduced to legal research.

It seems to the committee that in the coming year the College of Law will have to find a way to reconcile these diverging aspirations.

The job of the committee is not to impose a definitive solution. It is up to the College to find the best way to meet the challenge in the context of its own constraints. However, the committee suggests that the College consider creating options inside the Program. The fourth year, and may be even the third year, of the Program could be a time for students to specialize. The College could offer them to choose between several “bundles” of elective credit hours. Each bundle would be focused on one of the demands identified earlier.

By offering the opportunity to have ‘majors’ in the Bachelor Program, the College could be in position to meet the challenge of its diverging goals.

Again, the committee stresses that it is up to the College to assess the opportunity and feasibility of that proposal. As mentioned, the subject does not require an immediate answer. But it should be discussed in any strategic planning for the future of the College.

Ref _____
18/06/2015

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Date _____

التاريخ

**Prof. François Pernot,
HCERES
Head Advisor of the “European and International Mission” (EIM)**

Dear Prof. Pernot,

Thank you for your message dated June 11, 2015.

We appreciate very much the efforts and expertise of the distinguished members of the experts' committee. We agree with the provisional report on the Bachelor of Law, Al Ain University of Science and Technology, and we are delighted with the proposition of accreditation. Hence, we have no remarks concerning the report.

We would like to stress that the “Recommendations for the University”, included in the report, are seriously considered to develop the program.

We are looking to receive the definitive report as well as the decision of accreditation of the HCERES, as agreed in the agreement.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to some new developments which might be useful for preparing the final report.

- a) Concerning the weaknesses identified by the report (P.6): a new students' monitoring system has been established by the College of Law allowing the Deanship and Faculty to deal with the case of each student individually, with special attention for students with academic warning to enhance their academic performance.

The improvement of students' proficiency in English is under consideration in coordination with the Dean of the College of Education. The solutions proposed include the increase of the total number of courses taught in English and the revision of existing courses.

The number of students attending the Master of Law Program is statutory limited by the Ministry of Higher Education to 30 new students per year.

- b) Concerning the “Recommendations for the University” included in the report (pp.6-7), we would like to mention that the University appointed (4) new faculty members (with special emphasis on their research activities



and expertise). They will join the College in September, 2015, and the University will continue hiring new faculty as needed.

Efforts to expand our collection of law books are already in process, with special attention to access the French literature. We expect the use of such new references by faculty members graduating from French Universities.

The Deanship of the College of Law is fully aware of the importance of legal research. Thus, new incentives have already been adopted by the Board of Trustees (decision No. 3, dated 7/6/2015).

The College of Law is aware of the challenges it might face in the future. First of all, the introduction of students to genuine legal research is of paramount importance, and, indeed, it is an important outcome of the program. Thus, students will be well prepared for higher studies.

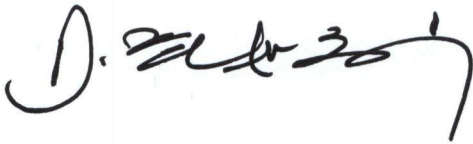
Secondly the College of Law is striving to find ways and means to reconcile the current demands for practical and professional skills needed, mainly, to join the public sector with prospective changes in the job market emphasizing the needs of the private sector.

To this end, the proposition to create options inside the program is, prima facie, interesting specially with respect to commercial law or civil law concentrations, or, even, in the same vein, with issues of international concern. The strategic plan of the College of Law will be adapted to face such challenges.

Best Regards

Professor Ghaleb Awad El Refae

P/ AAU President



جامعة العين للعلوم والتكنولوجيا AL AIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		
The Presidency Office		
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HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Paris le 19 juin 2015

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Décision relative à l'accréditation

The Bachelor of Law of the College of Law - Al Ain University of Science and Technology (United Arab Emirates) is accredited for 5 years (July, 2015 – July, 2020) without condition.

La Licence de Droit de la Faculté de Droit de Al Ain University of Science and Technology (Émirats arabes unis) est accrédité pour 5 ans (juillet 2015 - juillet 2020) sans condition.



Didier HOUSSIN

President

HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Paris le 19 juin 2015

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