

ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Institutional and programme accreditation
at Holy Spirit University of Kaslik,
Jounieh, Lebanon**

RE-ACCREDITED 06/2023 – 06/2029
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1. The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK)

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) is a Catholic university founded in 1938 by the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM)¹. The university was one of the first seven universities recognised by the first Lebanese law of Higher Education promulgated in 1961, as a private Higher Education Institution delivering diplomas in Lebanon. The main campus of the university is located in Kaslik, approximately 15 km north of Beirut. Additionally, the university operates three smaller regional centres in Chekka, Rmeich and Zahle.

Currently, around 7,300 students are enrolled at USEK. The university offers two Freshman programmes, 59 undergraduate programmes, 13 teaching diplomas, 70 Master's programmes, and 46 doctoral programmes, all accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

Table 1 shows an overview of USEK in numbers.

| Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Founding year | | 1938 |
| Number of students: | New enrolments | Total |
| • Business School | 506 | 1,542 |
| • Faculty of Arts and Sciences | 735 | 2,139 |
| • Pontifical School of Theology | 28 | 152 |
| • School of Architecture and Design | 327 | 1,058 |
| • School of Engineering | 207 | 877 |
| • School of Law and Political Sciences | 146 | 633 |
| • School of Medicine and Medical Sciences | 196 | 570 |
| • USEK Continuing Learning Center | 5 | 7 |
| • Centers for Language, Music, Religious Studies and Theology | 81 | 339 |
| • Free listeners | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 2,232 | 7,321 |

¹ The Lebanese Maronite Order, is a monastic order among the Levantine Catholic Maronite Church, which from the beginning has been especially a monastic Church. The order was founded in 1694.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Number of staff | 1,083 |
| • Full-time academic staff | 213 |
| • Part-time academic staff (heads and FTE) | 549 |
| • Administrative and technical staff | 321 |
| • Percentage of female staff | 33% |
| • Percentage of international staff | 19% |
| Graduates (2021-2022 academic year) | 1,396 |
| Tuition costs (per credit) | Between 137 US-\$ and 442 US-\$ |

Table 1 – USEK in numbers (Academic year 2022-2023, Source: USEK)²

The academic year starts in September and ends in August of the following year. It consists of two semesters (autumn & spring, each of a 16-week duration including the examination period) and a Summer Session (eight weeks).

USEK uses the North American credit system as measuring unit of the number of hours per semester. One credit represents one teaching hour (50 minutes course) per week during a 15 weeks semester (including exams and tests). For each credit, the student should dedicate around two hours for self-learning outside the classroom to complete his assignments and prepare for his examinations.

A typical Bachelor's programme (six semester) of 96 credits consists of a total of 1,320 class attendance hours, 2,700 self-learning hours, and 90 hours of internship. The average workload per week is about 39 hours.

As a private university, USEK does not receive any public funding. Thus, the university relies on student fees as its main source of income.

2. The accreditation procedure

Subject of the proceedings is the assessment of both the institution and the study programmes "Education – Basic Education (B.A.)", "Journalism and Communication (B.A.)", "Language and Literature (B.A.) Emphasizes: Arabic, English, French", "Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.)", "Philosophy (B.A.)", "Psychology (B.A.)", and "Social Sciences (B.A.)".

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik – USEK) in Lebanon was institutionally accredited by **evalag** first in 2012, then re-accredited in 2017. Also in 2017, the above-mentioned Bachelor's programmes were assessed and accredited. Since the present procedure is a re-accreditation, a combined procedure of institutional and programme assessment seemed appropriate, which **evalag** has already carried out several times with higher education institutions in Kosovo.

² The budget of USEK was also considered in the assessment. For reasons of data protection, no figures are given in the public report.

The assessment procedure was carried out with an informed peer review on the basis of a self-evaluation report provided by USEK, a two-day site visit with meetings of an international expert panel with different stakeholder groups, the experts' assessment report and the accreditation decision taken by the **evalag** Accreditation Commission. The procedure applies the fit-for-purpose approach, which assesses the institution's ability to achieve its self-imposed goals and whether the programmes reviewed are coherent in terms of objective, design and structure. Points of reference are **evalag**'s criteria for international institutional accreditation³ and for programme accreditation.⁴ Both documents follow the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area dated 15 May 2015.⁵ These criteria focus on the profile and the strategies of the institution as well as on the programmes and their curricula. The governance structures which are used to implement strategies, the fields of activities of the institution and crosscutting issues which influence the implementation and the success of the institutional strategies are also examined. Further, the criteria cover all aspects of the implementation of the study programmes, their quality assurance and the university's resources. By assessing compliance with the criteria, the experts check whether the institution has objectives with regard to each criterion, whether it implements activities which serve to reach the defined objectives, and whether it uses mechanisms to assess the results of its activities. Additionally, the experts assess if the institution and the programmes meet academic standards that are internationally accepted.

The following criteria are used:

Institutional level:

- Institutional profile and strategy
- Governance
- Resources
- Research
- Institution and society
- Quality assurance

Programme level:

- Programme profiles
- Curriculum
- Student assessment
- Organisation of the study programmes

³ https://www.evalag.de/fileadmin/dateien/pdf/akk_international/standards_kriterien/inst_acc_process_criteria_171201.pdf (accessed 3 May 2023)

⁴ https://www.evalag.de/fileadmin/dateien/pdf/akk_international/standards_kriterien/prog_acc_process_criteria_171201.pdf (accessed 3 May 2023)

⁵ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf (accessed 3 May 2023). The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a group of 49 countries that cooperate to achieve comparable and compatible higher education systems throughout Europe. Member countries of the EHEA follow the directives of the so-called Bologna Process to achieve these goals.

The experts express the extent of compliance of the criteria with the following assessments: “passed”, “passed subject to conditions”, “suspension of the accreditation procedure” or “failed”. Depending on the degree to which the institution and/or a programme meets the criteria, the institution/the programme will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited.

As a first step of the procedure and in preparation for the site visit, USEK produced a combined self-evaluation report based on guidelines provided by **evalag**. At the same time, **evalag** formed an international expert panel consisting of six experts, five academics and one student expert:

Academic experts:

- Prof. (FH) Dr. Tanja Eiselen, Rector of Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences, Dornbirn, Austria (Member of the **evalag** expert panel for the institutional assessment of USEK in 2017)
- Prof. July Hall, Professor of Sociology and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of London Metropolitan University, UK (Member of the **evalag** expert panel for the programme assessment at USEK in 2017)
- Ass. Prof. Mag. Dr. Doris Hattenberger, Vice-Rector for Education at Klagenfurt University, Austria
- Prof. Dr. Jochen Mecke, Professor of Romance Literature and Culture, University of Regensburg, Germany (Member of the **evalag** expert panel for the programme assessment at USEK in 2017)
- Prof. Dr. Dr. Godehard Ruppert, President of the Bavarian Virtual University (vhb), former President of Bamberg University, Germany (Member of the **evalag** expert panel for the institutional assessment of USEK in 2017)

Student expert:

- Gaga Gvenetadze, Ph.D. student in Applied Social Psychology at Tbilisi State University, Georgia, and member of the European Students' Union Quality Pool)

All experts had declared to be free of any conflict of interest.

From **evalag**'s side, Georg Seppmann coordinated and carried out the project.

The site visit took place on 13 and 14 March 2023 with several meetings on Kaslik campus. During the site visit the expert team met with the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Provost, with deans and the heads of departments, with academic and administrative staff, students and alumni, and visited selected facilities of the university.

The expert team produced this assessment report which was submitted to the university for correction of potential factual errors on 1 June 2023.

The report is structured along the assessment criteria which are the basis of **evalag**'s accreditation procedure. After a short description of the criterion, each chapter starts with a presentation of the current status regarding the criterion which is based on the information in the self-assessment report of the university and the information gathered during the site visit meetings. On this basis, the expert team assesses the criterion. Finally, the experts list their recommendations for further improvement.

3. Institutional assessment

3.1. Institutional profile and strategy

The institutional profile and strategy define the main activities of a higher education institution and therefore are at the centre of the institutional accreditation procedure. Applying the fitness for purpose approach, the experts mainly check whether an institution has a clearly defined strategy that fits the institutional profile and whether the strategies and profile of the institution comply with internationally accepted standards. The experts also review the processes for the definition of strategies. Furthermore, they look whether the strategies are adequate to reach the institutional objectives.

Current status

Strategic profile

Faithful to human and spiritual values as well as to cultural and religious pluralism, USEK is devoted to offering its students a high-quality education and preparing them to be future leaders for innovation and progress in Lebanon and the region. The mission statement of USEK has evolved over the years due to several factors, mainly the adoption of the North American credit system in 1997, which was essential for facilitating credit transfer and recognition of its students. In 2009 and 2014, the university's Academic and Research Council and the OLM reviewed USEK's mission statement to better reflect the university's orientation and commitment to an American-style governance and education, while remaining respectful of the traditions underlying the institution's history and evolution.

The university's current mission statement reads as follows:

*"Since its founding, USEK seeks, in accordance with the Article 92 of the Constitutions of the OLM (ed. 2012) and the social teaching of the Catholic Church on universities, to contribute to the development of all its students through quality educational programmes and research in various fields of study. By providing a high-quality American-style education to its students, USEK intends to prepare future leaders for innovation, professional growth and life-long learning, in Lebanon, within the Middle East and throughout the world. USEK is committed to a faith-based educational development of its students rooted in the Catholic tradition whereby spiritual values and ethics as well as respect for cultural and religious pluralism are promoted."*⁶

USEK identifies with the following core values:

- Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Excellence in Quality Service
- Creativity and Continuous Improvement
- Integrity and Accountability
- Cooperation and Diversity
- Stewardship and Service to Society

Mission statement as well as core values are the drivers of the strategic planning: according to the self-evaluation report, USEK is continuously engaged in planning and

⁶ Self-evaluation report, p. 8

evaluation efforts and places a high emphasis on improving institutional effectiveness through data-informed decision making. The Office of the Provost in collaboration with the Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) Office centralises and provides oversight to the assessment, institutional research and strategic planning activities of the university. Planning at USEK aims to align the university vision with global advancements and trends in higher education, and to translate them into university priorities and tangible actions, while taking into consideration the university context and available resources. Assessment measures to which extent USEK has been meeting its objectives set forth in its strategic planning and identifies needed improvements or adjustments.

Definition and planning processes

According to the self-evaluation report and the interviews on site, planning is seen as an integral element of governance, policy development, and institutional development and is regularly undertaken in many forms across the university. Over the years, USEK adopted a continuous and annual system of evaluation where the Office of the Provost and the IRA Office review annual unit evaluation reports elaborated by deans and heads of administrative units and monitor institutional policies, procedures, student indicators, and teaching evaluations. This evaluation process serves as the foundation for the elaboration of the strategic planning. As a matter of fact, based on the ongoing evaluation of the internal factors (needs, available resources, competencies, success stories, obstacles, etc.) as well as the external factors (such as global trends, crises, needs, advancements, etc.) and based on the aspirations of the university formulated in its vision, USEK identifies key areas that would be its main focus for the years to come and, consequently, elaborates its strategic planning. The latter is shared with the different academic and administrative units, which align it with their departmental needs and break it down into tangible actions.

In 2015, the university centralised its planning and evaluation based on a well-defined strategic plan with several strategic orientations, all reflective of the institutional mission. Since then, the plan has been updated several times: first for the period 2015-2018, then 2018-2022, most recently (and currently) for 2022-2027. Strategic planning involves the University Academic and Research Council, the Board of Trustees and all schools/faculty and units. The agile planning approach was highlighted in the discussions. For example, with the outbreak of the crisis in Lebanon in 2019, it was possible to move relatively quickly to contingency planning that works in shorter timeframes and is more often adjusted and updated. All planning responds to the fluctuating situation in the country.

Assessment

Strategic profile

According to the experts, USEK has a clear institutional profile, in keeping with the character of a Catholic university. The strategies pursued by the university are closely and consistently linked to its mission and are in line with the expectations and needs of Lebanese society. Particularly in the current crisis, the university community has shown a strong cohesion, both internally and externally. The experts appreciate the strong emphasis on social responsibility and progress at the university and the very high commitment of the teaching and administration staff in giving hope for the future of Lebanon to their students.

Excellence in teaching, research, entrepreneurship and social engagement is the overarching goal of the university. For the university, excellence should not be exclusive, but inclusive: as many people as possible should have access to excellent higher education! For those who do not have the financial means, support is provided.

USEK makes great efforts to enable its students to study and to retain its staff. For example, all staff, students and alumni with whom the experts met demonstrated strong loyalty to USEK's value-based, humanistic mission and its ongoing development.

As noted in previous accreditations, the teaching of humanistic values plays a central role for the university: humanism taught from a Christian context but explicitly addressed to society at large. The members of the expert panel are impressed that the university, its teachers and its students remain committed to this, even in the current crisis, when the cohesion of Lebanese society threatens to break down.

According to the experts, the university's strategy is clearly derived from its mission and is approached in a highly professional manner. The way in which the university uses its mission and vision to derive its strategies is to be commended.

The strategic goals reflect how USEK strives for institutional effectiveness and efficiency in order to continuously improve teaching and learning. All staff are familiar with these objectives and they appear to be widely accepted, even internalised. There appears to be a high level of commitment from staff and other stakeholders to continue to improve. Overall, it can be said that the institution not only proclaims a mission and goals, but also acts in accordance with them. There is no doubt that USEK's strategies and activities meet internationally accepted standards for higher education institutions.

Definition and planning processes

In 2017, the experts had recommended that in developing the new USEK strategic plan, the university should develop a process that facilitates discussion at faculty level and with external and internal stakeholders from the outset. In recent years, USEK has made considerable progress. Regular processes to reflect and adjust the strategies are implemented. They appear well thought out, based on indicators, and dynamic. The planning processes involve the university's key stakeholders and attempt to plan on a broader basis. They take place on several levels and are well organised and transparent.

Strategic planning goes ahead together with budget planning on annual basis, considering input and participation from all relevant faculties and departments. The annual plans follow an overarching strategy that was initially set for four years, now for five. Outside of these periods, the university can certainly react to crises and adjust its planning at short notice. The current crisis in Lebanon in particular demonstrates the university's ability to respond in an agile and confident manner.

All of the planning processes that the experts were able to look at follow practices that are common in universities internationally.

Adequacy

Overall, the experts' assessment is that the strategies of USEK are consistent with its mission and profile and appear fit for purpose. USEK's high reputation give evidence that the chosen strategies and activities are adequate for achieving the intended objectives. In the experts' view the strategies both on university and on school level appear to conform to the university mission.

Areas for improvement

Students could become a more active part in the planning processes. In particular, suggestions from the student body as well as from alumni could also be explicitly taken into account when setting the overarching goals and monitoring progress against the strategic goals. The experts would like to note that the involvement of students, graduates and alumni in the strategic further development of the university would offer great opportunities and strengthen the institution.

Recommendation

Strategic planning processes should be further professionalised and underpinned with clear data on demographic changes, the Lebanese labour market, national and international professional requirements, student achievement trends, student recruitment trends. The university should make greater use of expertise from the relevant departments (sociology, economics) for this purpose.

3.2. Governance

The criterion focuses on the internal governance and decision-making processes of the institution. The experts check the clarity and transparency of the organisational provisions and governance structure. They examine whether governance structures are adequate to support the institutional strategies and how decision-making processes are organised. Furthermore, the experts check how stakeholder groups are involved in governance, whether the institution provides relevant information about its activities for the internal and external public and whether academic freedom is assured.

Current situation

Governance structure and decision-making processes

The university is governed by the Supreme Council of the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM), which nominates the university officers and members of the Board of Trustees. The OLM Supreme Council is composed of five members, including the Superior General of the Order and Chancellor of USEK, all of whom are elected by more than 300 OLM members in Lebanon and abroad for a duration of six years. The OLM Supreme Council guarantees the sustainability and the conformity of the institutional mission. However, it does not interfere in the university's current management and academic issues. Only strategic decisions need the approval of the OLM (e.g., buying lands, buildings, creating new academic units, changing bylaws, etc.).

The organisational structure consists of the Board of Trustees, the University President, the Executive Committee, the Academic and Research Council, and other committees at institutional and school levels. This structure, along with the duties and responsibilities of each of these entities, are clearly described in the USEK Bylaws.

The Board of Trustees

As outlined in the USEK Bylaws, the OLM Supreme Council delegates the governance of the university to the Board of Trustees. The Board includes 20 trustees chosen among higher education figures in the United States and business leaders in Lebanon and the U.S., all demonstrating a strong belief in USEK's mission and working together for the public good. The Board exercises institutional authority and carries out all lawful functions.

In addition to its Executive Committee, the Board currently numbers the following committees:

- The Academic Affairs Committee
- The Audit Committee
- The Finance and Compensation Committee
- The Fundraising Committee
- The Trustee, Governance, and Institutional Planning Committee
- The Student Affairs Committee

The Chair of the Board and a majority of its voting members must remain free from any contractual, employment, personal, or financial interest in the institution.

The President

The University President has power on behalf of the Board to lead the university and to perform all actions necessary for sustaining both the academic and fiscal affairs of the university and for implementing decisions made by the Board. Traditionally a member of the OLM, the President is appointed by the Chancellor with the support and upon the approval of the Board.

As Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the President presides over the Executive Committee and the Academic and Research Council, chairing these units and ensuring that they function and develop in accordance with the Bylaws in force. He also has authority to take action regarding faculty as well as administrative and technical personnel in different functions, in addition to overseeing the management and supervision of the university. It is the responsibility of the President, in the first year of his term, to present to the Board of Trustees a strategic plan for the university, covering at least 3 years. He is evaluated by the Board of Trustees based on an annual detailed report on the academic, administrative, and financial statements.

Furthermore, the President ensures the implementation of the university budget, in conjunction with the Board. He shall approve the budget and submit it to the Board and the OLM. He authorises the university's revenues and expenses, according to the decisions of the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and the Supreme Council. He signs all budgets, agreements, and conventions.

The University Executive Committee

Chaired by the USEK President, the Executive Committee is composed of the Vice Presidents who shall be members of the OLM, in addition to the Provost and Deputy Presidents. The Senior Vice President can be called upon to be the acting President in the event of unforeseeable circumstances leading to the absence of the President.

The Vice President for Finance is responsible for managing accounts and implementing the financial decisions taken by the President in keeping with the USEK budget and Bylaws. He elaborates and officially submits to the President the budget and financial statements of the university and ensures that the financial statements of the university comply with the Lebanese accounting standards, including the balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement, and additional notes.

The Vice President for Community Life ensures the coordination of various events within the university, such as registration, events, lectures, colloquiums, seminars, conferences, academic and cultural ceremonies, formal occasions, commencement ceremonies, and Honoris Causa award ceremonies. He prepares the administrative and academic calendars and maintains the archives of academic and administrative units. The Office of the Vice President for Community Life serves as a communication liaison among the constituents of the USEK community.

As Chief Academic Officer, the Provost is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of the academic affairs of the university and takes initiatives in proposing plans and actions in academic matters, as well as in reviewing and implementing educational programmes policies.

In addition to the Vice Presidents and the Provost, the President shall have the authority to appoint Deputy Presidents and prescribe their roles and duties. At the moment, USEK has six Deputy Presidents, each with a distinct role in managing university operations:

- Deputy President for International Affairs and Global Initiatives
- Deputy President for Students
- Deputy President for Public Relations
- Deputy President for Information Technology
- Deputy President for Research

The Academic and Research Council

The University Academic and Research Council is composed of the President, the Vice Presidents and Provost, the Deputy Presidents, the Deans of all academic units, the Dean of Doctoral College, the USEK Librarian, and two full-time faculty members. The Council approves the proposed updates of academic rules and regulations (including the admission policy and criteria as well as graduation requirements for all academic programs), academic policy and framework related to general education, and propositions for establishing or amending curricula and programme structures. The Council also gives its opinion on proposals for creating new academic units, updating faculty Bylaws, creating new research centres, and course offerings in Regional University Centres.

The Provost

The position of Provost was created in 2016 as part of the implementation of the 2015 USEK Bylaws. As Chief Academic Officer, they are responsible for the guiding vision and leadership of the university's academic affairs. Deans of all academic units report directly to the Provost. The Provost reports to the President and oversees the university's academic affairs, policies, and activities. He serves as a member of the

Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, as well as a member of USEK's Academic and Research Council.

The Provost works closely with the President to develop strategic plans and academic directions based on the university's mission, values, and vision. Working in conjunction with the Academic and Research Council, the Provost provides leadership in the development of plans, budgets, and policies regarding academic programs, instruction, and research. The Provost also offers guidance for achieving and retaining university accreditation, oversees individual school plans for professional accreditation, and works closely on all matters of policies and procedures related to faculty affairs.

Table 2 shows the organisational chart of USEK.

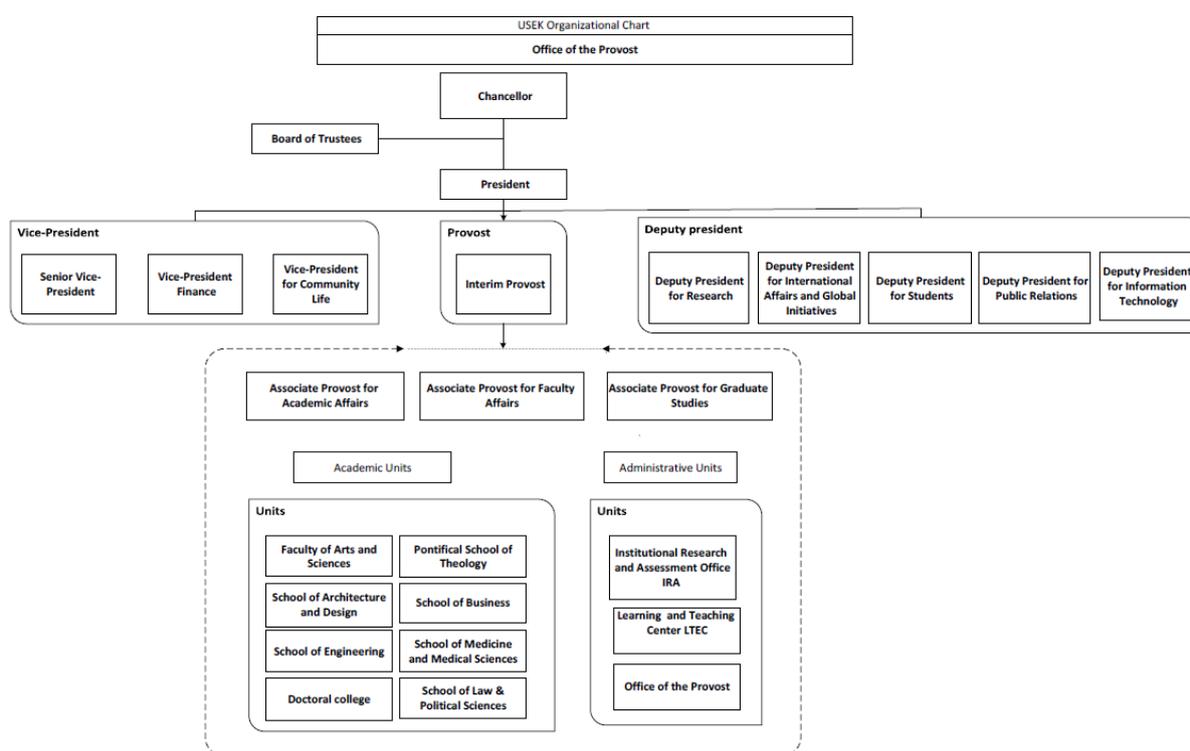


Table 2 – Organisational chart (Source: Self-evaluation report, appendix)

Academic Structure and Administration of Academic Units

In September 2019, a new academic structure was implemented, which merged USEK's faculties and schools into a new structure based on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and six professional schools.

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences embraces a variety of programmes, creating a diversified portfolio, supporting research, teaching quality, and student learning experience, and contributing to liberal art education.

The six professional schools are:

- The School of Architecture and Design
- The Business School

- The School of Engineering
- The School of Law and Political Sciences
- The School of Medicine and Medical Sciences
- The Pontifical School of Theology

The administration of each academic unit (school or faculty) is composed of:

- The Dean who serves as the chief administrative officer and ensures the development of school/faculty programmes in accordance with the general policy of the university. In consultation with the Provost, the Dean recommends to the President the recruitment of faculty, the nomination of assistants (Assistant Dean), and the promotion of a faculty member in accordance with the evolving needs of the school and the university's regulations and strategic orientations.
- The Associate Dean who coordinates community life within the school/faculty and assists the Dean in managing the unit, developing degree programmes, and ensuring the quality of programmes and of teaching and learning within the unit.
- The Head of Department and/or Head of Programme who coordinates programme review projects and provides follow-up, orientation, and advising for students registered in the department's programmes throughout their academic path.
- The Academic Unit Council, which is composed of the Dean, Associate Dean(s), Heads of Departments, Heads of Programmes, and the Head of the Doctoral Commission. Student representatives are also invited to attend specific Unit Council meetings depending on the agenda. The Academic Unit Council oversees and develops admission requirements in compliance with the admission policy and criteria defined by the university's Academic and Research Council, students' academic records, programme and student outcomes, proposals for inter-university agreements, research projects and programmes, as well as academic and scientific events.

The Faculty Senate

On April 29, 2022, the USEK Board of Trustees approved the newly established University Senate Bylaws, which aim to encourage faculty participation in decision-making, promote communication, and effectively advance the quality of the institution. The USEK Faculty Senate acts as the advisory body that represents and engages faculty in the governance of the institution, monitors all topics of interest to faculty, and assures that the faculty perspective is considered in decision-making on all important governance issues. The Faculty Senate is composed of 10% of full-time faculty proportionally distributed over USEK's academic units on the Kaslik campus, in addition to one senator from each Regional University Centre. It is structured around a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary.

Stakeholders' involvement in governance

Staff Participation

Staff representation in university governance is assured through the participation of staff members in the university's Academic and Research Council meetings when needed and according to its agenda. For the last couple of years, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial crisis, staff members – including the HR manager, the Chief Accountant, the Controller, the Director of the Communications and Events Office, and the Chief Technology Officer have been attending the Council's regular meetings.

In addition to the regular communication between the Deputy Presidents who are members of the Council and the staff members within the administrative units under their direct supervision, the USEK President hosts a town hall meeting once every semester to update staff and faculty on institutional orientations and inform them of staff-related decisions.

Student Participation

According to the self-evaluation report, USEK attaches great importance to the academic participation of students in the decision-making process. Feedback on the academic experiences of students is communicated through student representatives in each academic unit, allowing students to raise any concerns over academic issues, such as course contents, teaching methods, assessment criteria, resources, and feedback, while providing testimonials of good practice. A call for candidacy for student representation is sent by email to all students at the beginning of each academic year and representatives are selected for one academic year by means of a draw. Student representatives report directly to the Associate Dean and/or Head of the academic unit concerned, to the Director of the Student Affairs Office and, consequently, to the President.

Clarity and transparency and information policy

The university website "www.usek.edu.lb" is the primary source of information to the public and is consistently updated with the latest changes at all levels within the university, such as academics, governance, staff, and news.

USEK also maintains a broad social media presence through Facebook (about 120,000 followers), Instagram (about 21,500 followers), Twitter (about 10,800 followers) and LinkedIn (about 30,600 followers). The university's YouTube channel has 1,280 followers.

Academic freedom and hiring procedures

USEK is dedicated to adhering to the highest standards of ethics and morals as a guiding compass in all its functions. Therefore, academic integrity is comprehensively woven through all aspects of community life (such as USEK Bylaws, Disciplinary Bylaws, Academic Rules and Student Life, Doctoral Studies Rules and Regulations, Faculty Guide, Administrative and Technical Personnel Bylaws, the Code of Ethics, Codes of Conducts, and to the Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct Policy). It determines the main rules to promote and sustain the highest standards of governance,

characterised by integrity, accountability, responsibility, and commitment to the institutional mission, in addition to prudent and ethical leadership.

USEK call its academic integrity a commitment to six central values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. These values underpin the professional ethics enabling the USEK academic community to translate principles into action.

Academic integrity is at the core of USEK learning, faculty are called upon to urge their students to respect copyright laws and avoid plagiarism.

Professional autonomy and academic freedom is named fundamental to the protection of the rights of faculty and students. All school members are entitled to full freedom of research and the publication of the results in affiliation with the university. They have the freedom in research topics as well as the freedom in selecting the approach of their research as long as it is in compliance with the university's ethics.

Teachers are free to choose their teaching style and methods to achieve the learning objectives of the courses. There shall be no adverse consequences to employment status (hiring, promotion, and retention) as a result of expressions protected by academic freedom.

The university has a well-established process for recruiting and appointing faculty. Schools/faculty submit their recruitment plans along with the job descriptions to the Provost through their respective Deans. The plans take into account the needs assessment of the academic units, which is carried out at departmental level. After approval by the President, the Provost and the Human Resources Office take action to advertise the vacancy. Selected candidates are then conveyed to attend interviews with the Ad Hoc Committee responsible for confirming their compliance with the USEK mission, core values, academic, teaching and research standards. Salaries depend on the hires' respective fields and the date of the highest degree earned. However, to avoid wage compression, the proposed ranges take also into consideration the existing faculty salaries.

Assessment

Governance structure and decision-making processes

The experts assess the governance of USEK as clearly structured and documented. The responsibilities and procedures of the main university bodies are set and described in the constitution, the bylaws, and in the several policies. All appears well thought out and applicable. All the people working in the administration and management that could be talked to appeared very experienced and competent. The university is well equipped in terms of governance. According to the experts, USEK has further institutionalised participation and communication within the university. Besides student elections, various opportunities for student participation can be used. USEK has adapted its faculty structures in recent years, which was also recommended in 2017. Greater organisational efficiency can be seen.

Adequacy

The experts assess the presented governance structures as working in both formal and informal ways. They have no doubts about the efficiency and applicability of the university governance. The efficiency in governance is reflected in the fact that USEK has so far coped well with the current crises (including the economic situation in Lebanon, the Corona crisis, etc.), and that it also has concepts ready to continue offering students excellent higher education against all odds.

Stakeholders' involvement in governance

For the experts the decision-making processes are clear and USEK makes efforts to get its stakeholder groups involved. The university bylaws clearly describe all responsibilities.

The university has taken several steps to provide opportunities for more formalised student involvement in governance processes. The experts are aware that USEK follows approaches that are not comparable to Western European institutions. It seems entirely appropriate to the special situation in Lebanon that student political groups are banned on campus. According to the experts' observations, USEK's management, teachers and all students agree that USEK should maintain a peaceful climate for studying and teaching and emphasise the university's "community".

Clarity and transparency and information policy

The information policy of the university is exemplary in the view of the experts, USEK is active on various social channels, all publicly accessible information is up-to-date.

Academic freedom

The responsibility for research and teaching lies with the academics. The OLM does not interfere in teaching and research.

Based on the meetings held and the documents provided by the university, the expert panel conclude that independence is guaranteed in both academic and teaching activities. During the interviews, the experts experienced a genuine commitment of the academic staff to USEK.

Areas for improvement

The university seems very keen to make decisions in consensus with the university community. Nevertheless, some students complained that not all university decisions are always comprehensible. For example, sports facilities were cut – for no reason in the students' view. In such special cases, the leadership of USEK should pay utmost attention to transparency and perhaps explain unpleasant decisions more often again explicitly in public.

Recommendations or conditions

None

3.3. Resources

The criterion focuses on adequate resource endowment and deployment to sustain the core activities. The experts check the existence and sustainability of a professional funding and financial management. They also check whether the qualification and number of the (academic) staff (full-time and part-time) are adequate to support the institutional strategy as well as to ensure the intended learning outcomes. Further, they review which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development

are used and if the search, hiring and tenure procedure are in line with international academic practices. The resources, facilities and equipment are also part of the criterion. Therefore, the experts examine if the amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment) and if the resources are adequate to reach the objectives of the programme and are in accordance with the institutional strategy.

Current status

Financial resources and management

More than 90% of USEK' income comes from student tuition fees. These revenues are expected to cover the operational costs and development investments, while naming gifts provide financing for other key activities and major facilities expansion and renovation projects. USEK is continuously working to secure sufficient funding and proper financial management to achieve its mission towards its community of students, faculty, and staff, and keep playing a key role in the higher education, innovation, and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lebanon.

USEK's planning process addresses key components of institutional activity, such as the projected numbers of students, faculty and staff, research and new programmes, and investment in equipment and facilities. This bottom-up approach starts at the level of academic units and is later reviewed and consolidated at institutional level. The financial administration is led by the Vice President for Finance. It reviews and verifies projects, factors general and administrative expenses related to shared services into the university's budget and consolidates the projected financial plan. This plan is then reviewed by the Finance Committee, which reports to the Board of Trustees for voting and final approval.

USEK devotes more than 80% of its revenues to support its educational programmes, such as faculty/staff wages and salaries, student financial aid, external charges, travel expenses, staff development, library and software licensing and subscriptions, and teaching materials. The Board of Trustees regularly monitors the financial welfare of the institution through the review of USEK's financial statements. Since 2018, the annual financial audits are performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The current economic distress in Lebanon dealt a heavy blow to the already crumbling financial system. All sectors are deeply affected, especially the higher education sector, which is currently grappling with its worst economic turmoil. The decreasing purchasing power of Lebanese citizens and the rising unemployment rates also impacted on private universities and forced many students to drop out or transfer to the public Lebanese University.

Like all Lebanese institutions, USEK operations have been impacted by the crisis, imposing changes to its operations. In keeping with the mission of its founder, namely the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM), the university is fully pursuing its purpose to provide high quality academic education to students. USEK has therefore decided to keep its tuition fees denominated at the affordable rates to enable students and families to gradually adapt to the new evolving and challenging circumstances before easing back into regular operations. With this strategy, the university has succeeded in maintaining high enrolment figures and minimise student dropout rates, therefore continuing to cater to as many students as possible.

In light with the continuing challenges, USEK developed a 5-year financial plan to help guarantee its sustainability. This plan includes an increase on tuition fees for newly

admitted students and a semestrial fee in U.S. Dollars applicable to all students, along with a restructured compensation scheme for faculty and staff with an aim to retain the university's workforce and attract new qualified members.

Human resources and the recruitment process

USEK is committed to offer its student an excellent teaching and learning experience and maintain appropriate support for the university operations by attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled faculty and staff. In autumn 2022, the university employed 318 administrative and technical staff, 212 full-time faculty, and 539 part-time faculty. Over the past four years, personnel numbers have remained relatively stable despite the impact of nation-wide political and security instability on job sustainability and brain drain. The total number for the current year has even increased in line with the increase in student numbers. USEK is currently working in further improving the rate of its full-time faculty members by attracting talents and offering them the opportunity to engage and grow.

The university has a well-established process for recruiting and appointing faculty: Schools/faculties submit their recruitment plans along with the job descriptions to the Provost through their respective deans. The plans take into consideration the academic units' needs for part-time and full-time faculty. Needs' assessment is performed at the departments level, raised to the deans, and discussed and validated by the units' councils. The related recruitment plans are then developed by the deans and shared with the Provost who reviews and approves them or makes recommendations when and where needed, and sends the job descriptions the Human Resources Office for revision and validation. Once the recruitment plans and job descriptions are confirmed, the Provost informs the President and gets his and the financial administration's approvals on the budget to be allocated to the recruitment campaign and to the new hires and on the advertising timeframe (open or with a specific deadline).

Selected candidates are conveyed to attend interviews with the Ad Hoc Committee responsible for confirming their compliance with the USEK mission, core values, academic, teaching and research standards. Salaries depend on the hires' respective fields and the date of the highest degree earned. There are clear requirements for faculty academics: deep knowledge of their respective disciplines, practical experiences in their fields, interest and experience in research, and teaching competences.

The talent acquisition process for administrative staff is managed by the Human Resources Office. The human resources team undertakes an annual workforce planning exercise, keeps all job descriptions updated in line with their respective role requirements, manages internal job transfers and online applicants, and advertises existing job vacancies in a consistent and recurrent manner to ensure a short cycle from job posting to job offer acceptance and contract signature. Staff are selected according to a clear process with formalised interviews.

Staff quality assurance and evaluation

Faculty performance appraisal takes place annually and includes different sources of data. The Dean consults with the concerned Head of Department before getting back to the Provost through a duly filled out performance evaluation survey that takes into account all areas of professional responsibility. Where and when applicable, peers' opinion is provided as well. On another hand, students also give their feedback (per course) at the end of each semester through course feedback surveys.

Faculty can submit a promotion request via an online form. The Human Resources Office checks whether the requirements for promotion are met and collaborates with the Office of the Provost to initiate the relevant procedure. The final decision is made by the President.

Graduate assistantship has been recently adopted at USEK. It aims at enriching the students' educational and professional experience by enhancing their skills and competencies through involvement in teaching, research, communications, development, and administrative activities in return of a percentage of waiver from their tuition fees. Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants are graduate students who are expected to contribute to the university's academic mission and research ascendancy. Students are usually selected on the basis of a high academic record and their value to the department.

With an aim to sustain the performance level of the university's workforce, USEK provides current staff with training and personal development opportunities through the LTEC and the Organisational Development Office. The LTEC is dedicated to the development of the professional qualifications of educators in teaching and through the promotion of teamwork, innovation, self-reflection, the efficient use of instructional technologies, and the sharing best practices. It also provides support for the improvement of assessment practices. Instructors are also encouraged to partake in national and international programmes or be part of educational projects to improve their skills and competencies which will have a direct impact on their performance in terms of teaching, leadership, and services to the institution.

Even though the majority of the courses used to be taught in a face-to-face mode, online teaching has been introduced at USEK since 2015 as part of USEK's will to foster the use of innovative pedagogies and educational technologies. Related trainings and workshops were constantly offered to interested faculty. When the university went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, courses were shifted to online platforms to reduce face-to-face interactions on campus while maintaining the best learning experience for the students and delivering vital course objectives effectively and efficiently. The Learning Management System (Moodle) was not new for the majority of the USEK community members as it has been used for years through advanced techniques integrated within the existing Student Information System.

The LTEC provided faculty with guidance and gave them the opportunity to follow dedicated trainings to improve and adapt their teaching skills to the actual situation.

Facilities

USEK is continuously striving to provide its students, faculty, and staff with facilities designed to ensure their well-being and to create a favourable environment for teaching, learning, and research while promoting good study habits and wellness for academic success. These facilities include:

- The USEK Library
- IT infrastructure and services
- Laboratories
- University Restaurant
- Sports service
- Auditoriums and conference rooms

- On campus dorms
- Parking spaces
- Esplanades and indoor and outdoor spaces for students

The university has identified the following top strategies as part of its planning for a modern and stimulating campus:

- Focus on all-inclusive college building design
- Attract students with modern residence halls and campus spaces
- Ensure the reliability of its technology systems
- Promote wellness on campus with active design in accordance with legal requirements
- Create welcoming facilities with secure access for people with special needs and the latest safety and security systems
- Prioritise sustainable and regenerative design strategies.

All construction and restoration work, adjustments, and readjustments to university buildings, premises, and landscaping are performed by the Architecture and Maintenance Office, which serves the Kaslik Campus and USEK's 3 satellite instructional locations of Chekka, Zahle, and Rmeich. The office, encompassing 16 members of staff, also ensures the purchase, installation, functioning, maintenance, and repair of USEK's various equipment (electricity, plumbing, mechanics, and carpentry, among others).

The property and buildings of the main campus are owned by USEK.

Library

The library employs 25 full-time professional staff with relevant degrees and 26 full-time paraprofessional staff with appropriate capacity-building programmes, in addition to student assistants who help with the library's clerical work based on training and regular monitoring. At the user level, the library consists of two reading rooms and closed stacks: the first reading room serves as a quiet area, while the second, recently renovated, invites group study. The library's 1,200 square metres of space offers learning opportunities, access to a wealth of academic materials, study rooms and research spaces. These rooms are equipped with projection equipment, workstations and the latest library tools and digital resources.

The library is open to the public for a total of 55 hours per week. Its print and electronic collections are enriched on a regular basis based on usage statistics and predefined selection criteria to support the university's curricula. It is fully automated (library integrated system, archival database, and repository) and most of its digital resources and reference services are accessible from outside campus, providing a virtual atmosphere that supports research. Furthermore, the Library provides customised reference and instruction services through online channels (webinars via Microsoft Teams, e-mails, online chats) and in person for the benefit of walk-in users and classes to promote a culture of information literacy at all levels.

In the spirit of collaborative development, open communication, and collegiality, the library strives to enrich its efforts to fulfil its mission to expand its network through national and international initiatives and partnerships. Currently, the library's network includes partnerships and memberships on the international level such as e-corpus,

World Digital Library, and American Library Association, and on the national level such as the Lebanese Academic Library Consortium and the Lebanese ILL/DD Service. Scholars from Lebanon and abroad frequently visit the library for its rich historical collections, particularly on Lebanon and the Middle East. Reference librarians and researchers are dedicated to support this aspect of the library's services.

IT

USEK maintains a sound IT infrastructure, which includes a fully equipped data centre to host all core applications and services. The Enterprise Information Technology Services (EITS) Department is responsible for the safety and continuous update/upgrade of the IT services and their underlying infrastructure (both software and hardware).

This includes:

- Information management by adopting and maintaining different tools such as the Student Information System (SIS)⁷, the learning management system (LMS) Moodle, the academic advising and degree audit software Degree Works, the survey system Explorance Blue⁸, among others
- Infrastructure management by continuously evaluating and monitoring the status of existing IT equipment, maintaining the university storage and network systems, and continuously checking and updating the server backups (off-site) and recovery procedures and policies
- User Support and computer labs management by providing users – students, faculty, and staff – with essential IT support and ensuring the maintenance of the university's computer labs.

In 2021, USEK created the position of Chief Technology Officer and restructured the EITS Department under a new leadership. With this new structure, the EITS team was able to introduce new products and provide a better management of the university's infrastructure, application, and services, resulting in a significant reduction in the budget associated with technology.

Laboratories

USEK laboratories are equipped for academic, research, and analysis services purposes. Shared laboratories and facilities are an integral part of education at USEK to give students hands-on means to generate and experiment with innovative ideas and inventions to better heighten their educational experiences. Not only do students access these labs for educational purposes or senior design projects, but they are also the resources for learners to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The USEK laboratories support the academic vision of the university by cultivating teamwork abilities, educating students towards good laboratory practices and research integrity, developing scientific reasoning abilities, understanding the complexity of empirical work, and learning practical skills. The reasons for its development lay in the need to produce skilled graduates for industries and highly ethical competent workers for research and development laboratories and market labours.

⁷ USEK uses several systems from Ellucian, such as Ellucian Banner, Ellucian Degree Works, cf. <https://www.ellucian.com> (accessed 3 May 2023)

⁸ Cf. <https://explorance.com/products/blue/> (accessed 3 May 2023)

Assessment

From the experts' point of view, USEK undoubtedly provides excellent and sufficient resources. University operations with high standards of quality and excellence are definitely guaranteed. The Kaslik Campus appears to be in the best condition and excellently maintained. The cleanliness of the buildings is particularly noteworthy for the experts.

Financial resources

In the experts' view the financial management is professional; the process of preparing the yearly budget is clear and executed with the collaboration of the faculties. The university finances itself almost exclusively from tuition fees – in the experts' view, this alone requires highly professional financial management. The experts are impressed with how the university is dealing with the economic crisis.

The financial management is professional; the process of preparing the annual budget is clear and executed with the collaboration of the faculties. In the interview with faculty members as well as with the Financial Department it became clear that this process works without any difficulties. According to the expert team, the distribution of resources is also in line with the mission statement of a student-centred educational institution.

Staff

The staff of the university is, according to the expert team, appropriate to provide high quality education to its students and to develop research. All teachers the experts could talk to presented themselves as highly motivated. The students who could be spoken to emphasised the good teaching climate and the open-door policy that characterises the teaching staff. The university's procedures for recruiting and later continuous training and developing staff seem appropriate and fulfil academic standards: The selection of academics is always based on an academic decision that is justified and documented in a standardised manner.

The experts appreciate the great support that USEK offers to staff and students to keep them at the university and in their studies respectively.

Facilities

The facilities of the university appear excellently managed and are without any doubts appropriate for sustaining the activities of the university. The buildings are in good condition, as are the classrooms.

There were no negative remarks from the students interviewed.

Large parts of the campus are accessible without barriers, and the university thus fulfils its commitment to an inclusive educational approach in an exemplary manner.

Library

The expert panel were particularly impressed by the library: a bright, communicative space, excellently and attractively furnished, with work areas for students and faculty.

Furthermore, the holdings are unique, especially the archival holdings on the Lebanese past, the restoration areas and the digitisation areas can be viewed to an extent and quality that need not fear comparison with Western European universities. In the view of the experts, there has really been tremendous progress in the library sector at USEK in recent years, certainly not least because of an extraordinarily dedicated and qualified staff.

The experts emphasise that the library continues to be attractive for specialist research by doctoral students.

IT

USEK's IT infrastructure is up to date and equipped with modern and functional software, which was also confirmed by various stakeholders during the site visit. A fast wifi connection is available everywhere on campus, even eduroam accounts work. The offer and use of virtual learning environments has become an integral part of the university portfolio. The experts appreciate all efforts the university makes to practically train teaching personnel in general methods of effective and interactive online teaching. USEK and its LTEC certainly have the role of a pioneer in Lebanon.

Laboratories

The laboratories are well equipped and excellently managed. Certainly, the accreditations by ABET and the WFME have given the equipment an additional boost.

Areas for improvement

For years, the campus has been redesigned to be close to nature as part of the "Green Campus" initiative. However, shady areas are rare - planning could be more active here.

Recommendation

To improve their retention at USEK, the university should consider incentives especially for those part-time academic staff who receive a better marking/assessment than expected.

3.4. Research

The criterion focuses on the research profile and academic goals of the institution and whether the profile fits the institutional strategy. Moreover, the experts check whether the academic standards are fulfilled, how the research process is organised and supported by the institution and how research is evaluated within the institution. They also check how the training of young researchers is organised, how the institution assures the academic standards of the training of young researchers and their rights.

Current status

Research and institutional strategies

Research at USEK is at the core vision and mission of the university and is coordinated by the Office of Deputy President for Research. USEK's vision is to become one of the best leading research-oriented universities at the national and international levels and to have a transformative impact on the society through continual innovation and creativity in research and entrepreneurship. In recent time, the Higher Center for Research has undergone several reforms and it is now an entity which encompasses the multidisciplinary research groups and the administrative research units.

Table 3 shows the organisation of research at USEK.

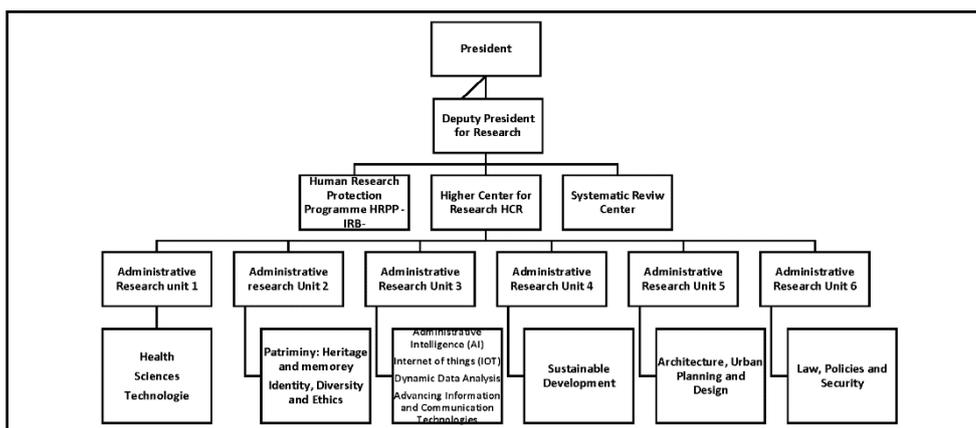


Table 3 – Organisation of research at USEK (Source: Self-evaluation report, p. 29)

While the CNRS (Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique) has still been the main government-funded source for funding research at the national level, USEK has sought other alternatives through different international agencies and also national and international NGOs (Non-governmental Organisations). Research is undertaken particularly within the doctoral programmes of USEK at the different academic units and accredited by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in Lebanon and/or through bilateral agreement established between USEK and other international partners. Individual researchers also benefit from funds provided by the CNRS, CEDRE, and AUF, among others.

The Higher Center for Research provides research project template forms to be used by all faculty members, and in these templates the Master's students are included as well as the Ph.D. students so that all Master's theses are included under the research priorities. In this context, faculty members are encouraged to take Master's students on their project to increase their chances of getting funds from the Higher Center to their projects. In addition, Master's students working on research projects and able to publish their research work with their corresponding supervisors are awarded relatively higher grades on their thesis defences.

According to the self-evaluation report, USEK is keen to create optimal conditions for research. The university's strategic goals for research and innovation are:

- Fostering a strong ethical interdisciplinary research and innovation culture
- Encouraging applied and translational research and commercialisation of projects

- Increasing USEK research and innovation visibility.

In order to secure a highly qualified human force, not only by recruiting but also by retaining high-profile researchers, several measures were taken to increase the recognition and faculty accomplishments in research. A research and incentives award day was launched in 2022 and is to be carried on a yearly basis. USEK has allocated additional budget for publications costs in addition to funding research projects by faculty members. Faculty are now publishing in Scopus indexed journals. However, a more or less equal number of publications is also published each year in non-Scopus indexed journals. The university strategy is to push all faculty towards Scopus indexed publications for more visibility.

In addition to the administrative research units, new multidisciplinary research groups were built, with a clear structure in an effort to have a cluster of researchers working together under the same priority axes. Faculty members are also considering other funding sources for their research.

Research and promotions

According to the self-evaluation report and the on-site meetings, research is considered at equal weight with teaching for the faculty assessment and promotion from the rank of assistant professor to associate professor and from associate professor to professor. In addition, faculty are continuously evaluated according to different rubrics including the number of publications in refereed indexed journals, external funded research, participation in national and international meeting/conferences, participation in multidisciplinary research groups, etc.

Faculty members who demonstrated a research load either through publications in Scopus indexed journals or through the development of projects or being recipients of international sponsored research grants are receiving monetary incentives in addition to being alleviated from a full teaching load.

USEK recently established the Technology Transfer Office which contributes to the “third mission” of the university by acting as a liaison between researchers, companies, and public authorities. The office aims at transferring technologies from the laboratory to the public. It manages the protection of intellectual property, the transfer of technologies to companies and the creation of spin-offs according to the regulation as regards ownership, protection, and transfer of research results obtained within USEK. It reports to the Deputy President for Research and Innovation or to the President. While the Higher Center for Research promotes research and Innovation in both its theoretic and practical aspects, the Technology Transfer Office is oriented towards the economic exploitation of patents.

Training of young researchers

Since its establishment in 1977, the Doctoral College has awarded more than 540 doctoral degrees in 22 different Ph.D. programmes among which are 19 Ph.D. programmes in humanities and social sciences. The Doctoral College has established new rules and regulations in 2020 to fit the requirement of the MEHE and also to meet excellence. Therefore, among the different criteria for selection of the Ph.D. candidates besides the grades is the comprehensive exam where each applicant has to demonstrate his research skills in front of a panel of expert in the respective research field (Doctoral Advisory Committee). In addition, and in order to be awarded the doctorate degree, the new rules and regulations stipulate the publication of two refereed

publications where the main author of each publication is the Ph.D. student. The students are urged to publish in Scopus indexed journals in order to increase the visibility. The new emerging researchers are already equipped with a strong background for research fortified by the introduction of “qualifying seminar course” in all Ph.D. curricula, where each Ph.D. researcher has to participate in at least 10 seminars (webinars, meetings, conferences, etc...) during his Ph.D. journey. Since autumn 2019, the number of enrolled Ph.D. students in the different programmes has witnessed a decrease by 22% mainly due to the economic crisis. It can be observed that Ph.D. graduates are often recruited by other universities or by key research development units in local and international industry.

Assessment

According to the experts, USEK has made great progress in the area of research. Compared to the initial accreditation in 2012, the university’s profile has changed fundamentally; in addition to excellence in teaching, research is now also an essential component of the institution. The experts appreciate that research activities of the academic staff are encouraged by the university. Research interest and publication frequency are considered when hiring new academics. The on-site discussions also revealed that students are encouraged to participate in research projects.

The restructuring of the faculties has undoubtedly helped to open up new, common research topics.

Research and promotions

Research is visible on campus. The research labs are not to be overlooked; in the past, various Erasmus projects have been carried out, through which additional equipment could be financed – most clearly seen in the LTEC. The library shows changing exhibitions on historical topics of Lebanon.

The experts note that research activities are integrated into the curricula through projects and internships.

Training of young researchers

Young scientists are obviously supported and promoted by the institution in many ways. The university is aware of international requirements for good research, the protection of the rights of young scientists and the fight against plagiarism.

The doctoral college and the doctoral regulations make an extraordinarily positive impression on the experts.

Areas for improvement

Research cooperation with domestic and foreign universities should be further expanded. Strategic partnership contracts with universities abroad could be increased to offer more postgraduate/doctorate for the young scientists.

In addition, the local community is an obvious topic for research.

Recommendation

The research strategy should be further developed. A university-wide approach for measuring the quality of research results would be a next step.

3.5. Institution and society

The experts check whether the strategy of the institution takes the needs of the society into account. They also examine the activities with which the institution connects to the society among others with cooperation, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, diversity. In addition, the experts review whether the activities fit the strategy.

Current status

Considering the needs of society

Anchored in its founding principles and its mission to provide faith-based education and development rooted in Catholic tradition and spiritual values, USEK prides itself on its close connection with the surrounding community at all levels. Service to society is part of the university's core values. This social commitment can be seen in the following areas:

- Scholarships and financial aid
- Diversity and inclusion
- Commitment to sustainable development
- Preservation of the cultural heritage
- International collaborations and partnerships
- Support for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Scholarships and financial aid

As part of its commitment to financially support students to complete their higher education studies and to create an inclusive environment for all local community constituents, USEK has implemented a comprehensive support system with both need-based financial assistance and merit-based scholarships. In the 2021-2022 autumn Semester, around 50% of USEK students benefitted from discounts on their tuition fees.

Diversity and inclusion

As part of its mission, USEK has been offering, since its founding, equal access to higher education to all constituents of the Lebanese community without any discrimination. Gender equality is noticeable with a stable ratio of 53% of female students out the total student population over the past 5 years, with a decrease of only 1% since 2012. This equality is also reflected in gender distribution by academic unit, as the percentage of female students in the autumn of 2021 ranged from 36% in the School of Engineering to 67% in the School of Law and Political Sciences and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the only exception being the Pontifical School of Theology wherein only 6% of students are females since the majority are seminarians.

As part of its admission processes, USEK offers equal opportunity to students coming from all types of high schools. According to official numbers in 2020, 32% of students in Lebanon attended public schools that offer free education to Lebanese citizens. In the autumn of 2021, 22% of applicants came from public high schools, with an acceptance rate of 71% and a yield rate of 83% compared to an acceptance rate of 75% and a yield rate of 78% for students coming from private schools. 53% of first-time students coming from public schools benefitted from discounts on their tuition fees during their first semester at USEK.

Additionally, USEK is on a mission to facilitate equal access for students with developmental disabilities and learning difficulties to the academic, social, and recreational activities and programmes through its recently created Access Office. This initiative will promote USEK as an inclusive university and will also indicate to parents of school students with special needs that USEK is a safe environment offering proper accommodations to their children.

Sustainable Development

According to the self-evaluation report, USEK stands out as a green, inclusive and sustainable institution through the knowledge, proactivity, collaboration and creativity of its community. The university was ranked by GreenMetric World University Ranking 2017 as 1st Green University in Lebanon and among the 10 'Greenest' Universities in the Arab World, and in 2019, 1st Sustainable and Green University in Lebanon and 3rd Most Sustainable and Green University in the Arab World of that year. For four consecutive years, USEK has been maintaining its top position in Lebanon as the Most Sustainable and Green University in Lebanon.

Sustainability, as adopted by USEK, is not only environmentalism but it also encapsulates the concepts of social justice and economic development, in accordance to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDG).⁹

On the functional level, students are very motivated and encouraged to work on projects related to "Green" initiatives promotion. The General Education framework has been restructured covering the (SDG) while enabling students to become "eco-citizens" of the future, actively engaged in the development of societies, empowered with a sound culture, possessing know-how as well as humanism, and contributing to the establishment of a better world. With the support of the green committee, around 600 students per semester are building their capacities by pitching classes of civic engagement and "green" concept so they can engineer, run, and execute on these programmes/projects.

Preservation of the cultural heritage

USEK plays an active role in the preservation of the Lebanese cultural heritage through different units and projects, and by tightening its connections and partnerships with national and international organisations with shared interest in cultural heritage preservation. Being one of the major units with contribution in this area, the USEK library has upheld its academic support by establishing three centres since 2006: the Conservation and Restoration Center, the Digital Development Center, and the

⁹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (accessed 3 May 2023).

Phoenix Center for Lebanese Studies. These centres help protect important archives from permanent damage and loss, while putting them at the disposal of researchers.

The USEK Library got recently awarded by the Endangered Archives Programme, which is funded by the British Library and Arcadia for the project aiming at preserving 24,848 newspaper pages dating back to 1895 and showcasing the identity crisis of the entity that evolved to become the modern-day Lebanon.

On the level of academic offerings, USEK launched in the 2018-2019 autumn Semester the BA in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in cooperation with the University of Urbino. As a unique academic programme offered in response to the specific needs of the Lebanese context, the programme offers students the opportunity to gain international experience by spending two months in Italy, a trip fully funded by USEK in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Lebanon. As part of this programme, students participated in 2021 in the restoration of the Stucco in Sursok Palace that was damaged by the Beirut blast in 2020.

Furthermore, USEK is engaged in multiple projects that aim at preserving the Lebanese heritage. An example of these initiatives is the Lebanese Historical Church Restoration Project initiated in 2018 in collaboration with the Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Hungary). The first two phases of the project have been accomplished with the restoration of 33 churches, and the third phase was launched in January 2023 and will include the restoration of 30 churches across the country.

International Collaborations and Partnerships

Internationalisation is at the heart of the USEK community and a major component of the university's mission. The International Affairs Office strives to develop an international environment for students, faculty, and staff to be better prepared to meet the challenges of a globalised world. The office manages partnerships, supports international cooperation, and promotes student mobility: Currently, the International Affairs Office coordinates more than 100 international agreements relating to all the academic units and around 40 memberships in national and international organisations. The purposes of these agreements could cover a wide range of collaborations such as offering joint academic programmes, sharing knowledge and expertise, or offering mobility opportunities to faculty, staff, and students. Despite the difficult circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic hardship, the mobility of 37 inbound and 33 outbound faculty and staff, and 19 inbound and 47 outbound students was supported during the period 2021-2022.

Support for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship was established in 2017 at USEK to empower youth and Lebanese individuals, give voice to their bright ideas, connect them with like-minded people, provide the right expertise and knowledge to enable new ventures and inspire future leaders in Lebanon. Meanwhile, the centre has over 40 active startups at different stages and sectors including green, clean-tech, and agri-tech sectors. These startups can get advisory support from 50+ network of mentors, experts, coaches, and resources such as labs for prototyping, co-working space, and investment funding. It also organises workshops, talks, competitions, hackathons, and boot camps, and programs, including 10 ideations, 13 four-week design thinking, and 2 accelerator programmes with more than 23 USEK startups.

Connection to civil society

As part of the green initiative, USEK works closely with various non-governmental organisations, to name but a few: UNEP (UN Environment Programme), Ajjerni (which is a platform for private rentals), Wave (which offers electric bicycle subscriptions).

Besides, USEK engages in the “Rebuilding Hope” initiative in support of the students affected by the Beirut port explosion in August 2020.

Several agreements grant Lebanese Army, Internal Security Forces, and General Security Forces servicemen and women as well as their dependents tuition fee discounts for their undergraduate and graduate studies.

Within the context of an inclusive educational approach, USEK has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Autism Community (NAC) to set out a long-term accessibility plan for students with a certain disability, providing them with various types of accommodations and facilities to help them succeed in their academic path and enjoy their campus life experience. As already described in chapter three, the university buildings meet a variety of needs with rooms designed for wheelchair access and access ramps recently added on all campus entrances. By the end of the 2022-2023 Academic Year, USEK aims to make the Kaslik Campus fully accessible for all students so that they can participate fully in the academic, social, and sports life of the university.

Assessment

The expert panel highly appreciate the strong and active affection of USEK to its local neighbourhood as well as to Lebanese society needs. The university’s mission affirms both its commitment and its responsibility to the further improvement of society.

The self-evaluation report and the interviews during the site visit also gave proof that university executives, staff and students give high attention to this mission. In all discussions with members of the university, there was a high level of willingness to participate in addressing the current social crisis. Their own values are formative, but never exclusive, always inclusive, encompassing all aspects of Lebanon’s diverse society.

The many activities that the university carries out on campus and together with civil society are impressive. In the view of the experts, it can be seen as great asset of USEK to be such an active part in the society.

Areas for improvement

The integration with the neighbourhood and the social commitment are impressive. In the view of the experts’ this could also open up more scientific opportunities to evaluate experiences and develop models. More “applied social research” would be a field in which USEK could focus on, addressing issues and challenges of modern Lebanon which could also become topic of teaching. Besides, this would open doors to international researchers.

Recommendation

USEK should further strengthen its links with the neighbouring community and expand its social and “green” engagement.

3.6. Quality assurance

The criterion focuses on the internal and external mechanisms used by the institution to monitor and improve its quality. The experts check the existing quality assurance concept of the institution, which indicators are used for monitoring the achievement of objectives and how the institution and the persons responsible for the programme systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information about their activities. Moreover, the experts examine whether quality assurance is used regularly, systematically and effectively for quality enhancement, if quality feed-back loops are closed and how the institution fosters the development of a quality culture in general.

Current status

The quality assurance concept

According to the self-evaluation report and several meetings with the Institutional Research and Assessment Office at USEK, continuous improvement and excellence are the key points of USEK's activities and strategic planning. In its mission, USEK is committed to providing students "a high quality American-style education" and has set "excellence in teaching and learning", "excellence in quality service", and "creativity and continuous improvement" as part of its core values. The university's strategic plans for the years 2015-2018 and 2018-2022 included specific emphasis on the fostering and sustaining a culture of excellence and continuous improvement on the organisational, service, and academic levels.

Table 4 illustrates USEK's concept of continuous improvement.

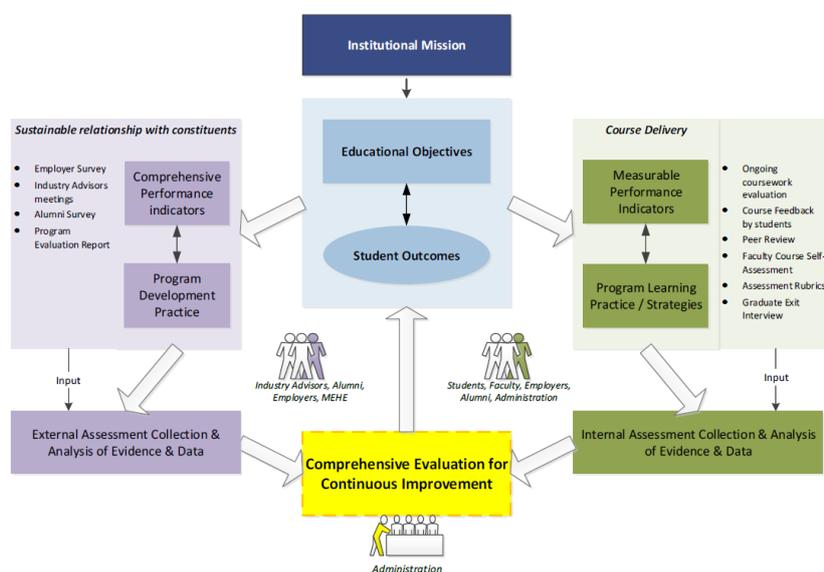


Table 4 – Continuous improvement process (Source: Self-evaluation report, p. 38)

USEK quality assurance focuses on the effectiveness in the areas of organisation, student services and academic goals. The effectiveness of the institution's organisational structure and system of governance shall be reviewed regularly and systematically on an annual basis. The review involves the different academic and administrative units, which submit their progress reports. Progress reports and milestones are examined

and analysed by the Office of the Provost and the Institutional Research and Assessment Office.

USEK has centralised all its procedures, forms, workflows, and regulations on its intranet site. Promoting a paperless environment, the university started to convert its forms and procedures into workflows to improve efficiency, automate the processes results, eliminate unnecessary steps, standardise procedures, and keep audit trails. The institution measures the performance and the efficiency of the procedures to demonstrate compliance with the determined requirements; these activities of supervision and measurement are carried out consistently through conducting internal auditing at planned intervals.

USEK is the first university in Lebanon and the region to receive matrix accreditation¹⁰ for its student services offices, recognising that the university is committed to providing students with 360-degree services and support. To track and improve the quality of all student services, all offices are required at the beginning of each semester to submit an action plan for the upcoming academic year, which is reviewed at the end of the autumn semester and by the end of the year in question by the Office of the Deputy President for Students. By the end of each academic year, each office is also requested to submit an activity report detailing completed, uncompleted, and pending actions and mentioning the need for any extraordinary measures.

A campus well-being survey is conducted every semester, which covers different aspects of student life, such as student services and campus life. According to the results, all units can assess their performance, which helps identify the areas for improvement, recognise efficient services, and put forth new proposals.

Academic effectiveness is examined at various levels: at course level as well as at programme and institutional level. Various quantitative and qualitative tools are used to evaluate students' success.

At course level, the course syllabus forms the basis for assessment as a whole, it links learning outcomes with assessment methods. Since 2021, the course portfolio collection procedure for all the schools/faculty follows a common predefined structure. At the end of every semester, the Institutional Research and Assessment Office sends surveys to students and faculty members. The teaching and learning experience is evaluated by students through a course feedback survey and by lecturers through a faculty self-evaluation of courses, in addition to peer review of teaching.

Indicators and collection of information

USEK uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to measure student success throughout their education and beyond graduation. This data, used to measure and enhance students' success and educational experiences and to support decision-making, cover the areas student enrolment, retention and graduation rates. All data are gathered from the Student Information System by the Institutional Research and Assessment Office that prepares the analytics related to the students' progression indicators, shares it on the university website, and disseminates it to the concerned persons for

¹⁰ The matrix Standard is an international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance. It helps providers to improve their services by benchmarking against best practice and it offers accreditation to those that meet the full standard. The matrix label ensures the quality of the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance. Cf. <https://matrixstandard.com/> (accessed 3 May 2023).

review, appraisal and decision-making. Indicators are published in the yearly factbook by degree level (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, continuous education), by programme, by faculty, and by location (USEK Campus and Regional University Centres). They include different metrics such as the first-year retention, graduation rates, inter-university transfer, students on probation, and employment rates.

Using such ongoing analysis of data, USEK's administration continuously analyses and works on improving students' academic paths. For example, during the last academic year, the Office of the Provost reviewed the admission criteria based on the programme requirements and on the background needed to ensure better students' achievements of learning outcomes. Moreover, the university plans on creating a foundation programme to support students who did not qualify academically for admission into their desired majors by offering them preparatory courses that will allow them to progress and succeed in their first-choice degree.

USEK considers that educational effectiveness is not only limited to the academic paths, but has another major impact on the graduates' employment and efficient integration in the marketplace. Therefore, on the one hand, potential employers take part in the programmes assessment process; on the other hand, the Institutional Research and Assessment Office keeps on tracking graduates' employability through a "first destination survey", which is focused on graduates' employment after one year from graduation and includes questions about the support of the Career Services Office and the Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The results of this survey are used to identify the employment rate after 6 to 12 months from graduation.

In accordance with the self-image of a student-centred institution, USEK monitors students' academic experiences and levels of achievement by surveying both students and graduates with a variety of instruments:

- The students' well-being survey is used to gather students' feedback on different aspects of their university life, including academic quality, student support services, and general services, as well as to rate the different factors for which the students have chosen to enrol at USEK. This survey is completed by all students at the end of every semester.
- A national survey of student engagement was launched in spring 2017. The participation rate reached 63% with 1,551 respondents out of 2,466 sophomore, junior and senior students.
- A programme experience survey, previously known as end-of-programme exit survey, is sent to students upon graduation and includes questions about the graduate's academic experience and their satisfaction with the support services. This survey, originally used for programme assessment, was revised in spring 2021 to include a section about the programme's contribution to specific competencies linked to the institutional learning outcomes.
- An alumni programme feedback survey is focused on the competencies earned through the academic programmes and the contribution of the education at USEK to the graduate's adaptability in the workplace.

Systematic analysis and closing feedback loops

USEK has put in place different mechanisms to increase students' participation in the decision-making process and to improve communication between the university administration and students. On the level of students' feedback in the end of semester course evaluations, and since results of these surveys cannot be shared publicly with

the university community to ensure the confidentiality of the data, students' comments in the open-ended question were made available to deans starting spring 2022 for action taking accordingly. Students' feedback on their experience is complemented by the participation of students' representatives in the meetings of their respective schools' councils where they can raise any concerns over academic issues, such as course contents, teaching methods, assessment criteria, resources, and feedback, while providing testimonials of good practice.

On the institutional level, the role of students' representative has been advanced with the creation of the Deputy President for Students position in 2019 and the support of the Student Affairs Office. Student representatives hold bi-weekly meetings to discuss student concerns and proposals and report them to the Student Affairs Office.

Student participation within these entities has contributed to the organisation and support for several activities based on student initiatives, such as the 2022 end-of-year event, in addition to addressing student needs, such as gym membership offers for students and the installation of a secured box for the submission of official papers outside regular office hours, to name a few.

The Institutional Research and Assessment Office, in collaboration with the Deputy President for Students, are planning on adding a section to the student well-being survey to assess the satisfaction of students with the representation system. In its self-evaluation report, USEK stated that for the academic year 2021-2022, 83% of the students responded with "Yes certainly" or "Yes probably" to the question of the well-being survey "Do you think that your answers to this questionnaire will be taken into consideration?"

University quality culture

As already described, regular consultations are held with university stakeholders at programme level. The university sees the various external evaluations and accreditations, which have been increasingly addressed since 2012, as an essential building block towards a true "quality culture": Several external programme evaluations have been carried out in recent years as part of accreditations (ABET, NAAB, WFME, etc.). Several programmes are still under review for accreditation, including the business programmes with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). AACSB accreditation is expected to be obtained between 2024 and 2026.

In parallel, an internal review standard for non-externally accredited programmes has been developed for implementation from spring 2023. This involves the development of a self-study based on a set of standards, including programme outcomes, content and structure, learning assessment, programme resources, student success and outcomes, and the assessment process.

Student learning outcomes are comprehensively evaluated annually and industry advisors are consulted in the evaluation process. Implementation strategies are developed during departmental meetings and summaries of actions taken are presented and discussed with the industry advisors. Online tools are currently being developed to enable teachers to record the results of assessment tools used in their courses and department heads to access this data.

Assessment

From the experts' point of view, USEK has an exceptionally well-developed quality assurance system, which is based on a variety of proven policies, guidelines and formalised procedures, while remaining agile and under constant review. Many offices of the university are involved and actively contribute to its implementation. There is no doubt that the university attaches great importance to institutional effectiveness. Comprehensive monitoring is also sought in the area of teaching, and findings also inform teaching.

The experts particularly emphasise the system of peer review of lectures and courses, which is not very often a matter of course in universities. The fact that teachers accept this as a method of quality assurance is impressive and speaks for a university-wide understanding of quality.

The quality assurance tools developed in recent years appear to be widely accepted and implemented. The Institutional Research and Assessment Office works efficiently and closely with the university management. Discussions with lecturers and the administration revealed a broad acceptance of the QA activities and the trustful cooperation was emphasised several times. Students express high satisfaction with education as well as student services at USEK.

Assessment criteria, indicators, and tools are clearly defined, as are the processes and responsibilities. Further development and improvement is seen as an obligation.

As has been described elsewhere in this report, the various processes and activities at USEK are interlinked: study programmes are developed with high standards and their compliance is systematically and continuously monitored. Teachers with excellent CVs are recruited and supported in the delivery of their teaching through the various institutions of the university. Since 2012, USEK has undergone a series of external evaluations, which has led to a real permeation of the institution and an awareness of quality in higher education. The experts can only recommend it: Keep up the good work!

Areas for improvement

The role of the LTEC in the quality process could be extended, for example by developing improvement models for courses where student feedback and examination results indicate weaknesses. Outstanding teachers with high grades could also be given more publicity.

According to the experts, it would also be useful and interesting to develop and discuss indicators for monitoring the strategic goals, especially for large study programmes such as Psychology.

The experts' impression is that students feel informed, but perhaps it could be made clearer to them what concrete changes have been made based on previous student feedback.

Recommendation

USEK should create a "community of practice" to support the work of the LTEC in its improvement activities through "learning and teaching champions" from the faculty.

USEK's experience in developing and implementing its QA strategy should be published.

4. Programme assessment

The programmes to be assessed are located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences at USEK, founded in 2019, is the result of the merge of the Faculty of Letters (1950), Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities (1950), Faculty of Sciences (2000), and Faculty of Music (1970) as part of an academic reengineering process initiated and approved in 2017¹¹. The faculty embraces a variety of programmes supporting research, teaching and students' learning experience in Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts, and Natural Sciences, in addition to Mathematics, Computing, and Nutrition. There are currently around 2,200 students enrolled.

In the following assessment of the study programmes, four ESG standards are reviewed: programme profile (separately for each programme), curriculum (also separately for each programme), student assessment (summarised for all programmes) and organisation of the programmes (summarised for all programmes).

4.1. Programme profiles

The profile and objectives of a study programme is an essential criterion for the assessment. The experts have to evaluate, whether the objectives of each programme are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution. Further, they assess if the intended learning outcomes of the programmes are well defined, publicly accessible and whether they correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme. They also consider whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market, and if they contribute to the employability of the graduates. The experts have to evaluate the programmes' relation to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research-based teaching). The experts assess whether the profile and objectives of the programmes comply with internationally accepted standards. The experts consider the international dimension of each programme and verify whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate in terms of the profile and the objectives of the programme.

4.1.1. Education – Basic Education (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Education – Basic Education (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor's degree.

The main mission of this programme is to train future teachers with moral, human and ethical, values, and an ability for scientific reasoning skills confirmed in education at the primary level (in cycles I and II), and an ability to manage a class independently and responsibly. These skills shall empower future teachers to integrate into the labour market, access higher education and research.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

¹¹ The merger was a recommendation of the institutional review by **evalag**.

1. Graduates will become qualified teachers who will engage their skills for the promotion of education at the forefront of technology and professional and ethical knowledge.
2. Graduates will make careers in schools, especially in primary schools and will be education specialists adapted to training in sub cycles I and II.
3. Graduates will demonstrate all the skills necessary to pursue a graduate course and excellent research.
4. Graduates will become teacher leaders in knowledge transmission and design, and in the evaluation of the teaching and learning process.¹²

Learning outcomes

At the end of the programme, students will be able to:

- a. Analyse, through observation and reflection, a variety of educational philosophies and approaches, and develop personal learning styles and an individual teaching philosophy.
- b. Apply theories of learning to instructional decision-making, with attention to diverse learners' characteristics.
- c. Demonstrate the knowledge needed to promote psychological and cross-cultural understanding, along with educational equity in the classroom, to meet the diverse needs of students.
- d. Demonstrate competences, ethical and professional skills in a diverse and technological society in order to develop commitment to professional growth and to the ethical responsibilities of school teachers.
- e. Demonstrate ability to write in a scholarly manner and apply rigorously the standards of research methodology.
- f. Distinguish the grammatical and linguistic specificities of the language, used as a language of teaching and oral and written communication, in order to conduct educational analysis on different kinds of texts.
- g. Integrate the educational objectives into different didactic situations, in order to achieve the practical activities, and evaluation modalities that support the theoretical approaches in teaching languages and scientific subjects.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

The main employment destinations for graduate students of the programme are the schools where they can become qualified teachers in primary schools, cycles I and II. The Bachelor's studies will be consolidated by the Teaching Diploma.

¹² Cf. self-evaluation report, p. 44

Relation between study and research

In every course, the students will have the opportunity to partake research in a field relevant to the specific course. This will prepare students to lead research related to their discipline and to be active in elaborating courses' contents. This form of collaboration focuses on the joint acquisition of knowledge. The active learning approach is adopted for course delivery to permit students to participate in building the courses throughout their research.

The programme is deeply related to research since the faculty members keep on tracking the new national standards in primary education, the latest research development and the new teaching and learning methods to be adapted into their course. For this purpose, the REFA (=Recherches en Éducation pour la Formation et l'Apprentissage) Laboratory was established, which promotes research in collaboration between different partners at the Department of Educational Sciences, researchers-professors at USEK as well as educators of universities and schools interested in the research in the fields of pedagogy, didactic and education management. Conferences, seminars, thematic colloquies are often organised, open to staff and students. The platform promotes interdepartmental exchange, and interfaculty exchange based on the principle stipulating that humanities and social sciences are continuously correlating. The researchers as well as the Master and Ph.D. students work in the REFA laboratory to meet the needs of basic education for the constant perfection of the teacher in cycles I and II. Papers published in the context of the laboratory are used by faculty members and students as a reference book.

International dimension

The Education Department has partnership agreements with several universities in Belgium, France, Canada, and Italy. Furthermore, there are affiliation to the Réseau International Francophone des Etablissements de Formation de Formateurs (RIFEFF), Canada, the Association of Catholic Institutes of Education (ACISE), Canada, and the Association for the Development of Evaluation Methodologies in Education (ADMEE), Lebanon and Europe. The Bachelor's programme is comparable to similar programmes offered in France, Belgium and Canada, notably at the Catholic University of West Angers in France and the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students and employers

revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification. The Bachelor's programme provides teaching skills and can be deepened later with the Teaching Diploma. According to the students, this is successful.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught, and small practical exercises are also integrated into the study programme.

International dimension

According to the lecturers, there is lively contact with the partner universities. However, because of Corona, neither staff nor students have been able to make visits in either direction in recent years.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

Contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened now that the pandemic is over. As the current difficult situation in Lebanon makes real exchange difficult, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.1.2. Journalism and Communication (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme "Journalism and Communication (B.A.)" is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor's degree.

The main mission of this programme is to prepare students to become professional media practitioners (reporters, editors, copywriters, designers and layout artists, etc.) and communication professionals. The curriculum will improve their techniques of expression and communication, and develop their capacities to understand, analyse and judge events and social phenomena, providing leading research and generating knowledge.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Graduates will acquire strong academic knowledge and state of the art techniques in journalism.
2. Graduates will develop professional skills (writing, reporting, editing, shooting, filming...).
3. Graduates will practice journalism and communication in various types of media, namely online journalism.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the programme, students will be able to:

- a. Use different techniques of expression in different contexts to elaborate a correct and coherent text in a target language.
- b. Use the contributions of related disciplines in their specialisation.
- c. Implement audio-visual and multimedia technology and demonstrate working knowledge to produce effective communication.
- d. Understand and analyse social, political, and historical events, as well as economic issues.
- e. Identify and abide by ethical standards.
- f. Identify, select, and use appropriate communication strategies.
- g. Integrate required knowledge and skills to be professional practitioners (writers, reporters, editors) using specific norms and techniques.
- h. Develop the ability to edit and write effectively for a variety of media.
- i. Acquire critical thinking skills and will be able to analyse texts and pictures in the light of theoretical concepts.
- j. Implement the learning outcomes of their courses in a real-life professional workplace.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

The graduates from this programme work with local and national newspapers, magazines, and websites and in public relations. Some also progress to graduate studies. Graduates from the BA in Journalism degree can hold the position of newspaper reporters, magazine feature writers, digital content writers, TV producers/researchers/presenters, PR executives, or social media executives.

Relation between study and research

The Journalism and Communication programmes are analytically driven, with a strong emphasis on research through several courses. Both undergraduate and Master students are taught scientific research methods and are required to submit research papers throughout their studies.

International dimension

The Department of Journalism and Communication benefits from several agreements established by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. In particular, the department has a specific agreement with the École Publique de Journalisme de Tours in France. This agreement allows for the exchange of students and faculty, as well as collaboration on research and other academic projects. The department is also able to draw on the resources and expertise of the École Publique de Journalisme de Tours to enhance the training and professional development of its students.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students and employers revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme. The programme and the orientation seem very modern and attractive to the experts.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification and the qualifications provided promise opportunities in the labour market of an increasingly mediatised society. As mentioned above, the content is up-to-date, but the programme should go beyond traditional journalism by media professionals and also address the PR activities of companies and institutions that supply the media.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught, and small practical exercises are also integrated into the study programme.

International dimension

According to the lecturers, there is lively contact with the partner universities. However, because of Corona, neither staff nor students have been able to make visits in either direction in recent years.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

Contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened now that the pandemic is over. As the current difficult situation in Lebanon makes real exchange difficult, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

The programme should not only focus on classical journalism, i.e., working in the media, but also on PR activities of companies and institutions that have to supply media.

4.1.3. Language and Literature (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme "Language and Literature (B.A.)" is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor's degree.

The main mission of this programme is to develop the undergraduate students' communicative competence in Arabic / English / French and critical thinking skills to develop writing and speaking skills and to interpret literature. It works toward forming students academically and tends to achieve intercultural dialogue between these languages. It also provides the students with the educational resources that enhance their appreciation of the significance of the language and literature in the world today and promote cultural exchanges between Lebanon, the region, and the world.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Graduates will be able to think critically when they evaluate literary texts and linguistic situations.
2. Graduate will work successfully as educators by teaching the Arabic / French / English language and literature, coordination Arabic / French / English courses, and promoting Arabic / Francophone / English culture in schools.

Learning outcomes

At the end of their academic path, Languages and Literature students will be able to:

- a. Classify literary works and explain concepts of literature.
- b. Analyse literary works critically.

- c. Distinguish and explain basic linguistic concepts.
- d. Use linguistic knowledge to analyse real-life situations critically.
- e. Apply different literary theories to evaluate literature.
- f. Apply various linguistic approaches to evaluate real situation texts.
- g. Write effectively for different purposes.
- h. Communicate effectively and use speaking skills for various purposes.
- i. Relate language and literature to wider social and historical contexts.
- j. Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of varied cultural situations related to literature and language.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the current Lebanese context, there is much demand for professionals in fields due to the significant shortage of language and literature teachers, editors, writers, and communication-skilled employees. As a result, and given that the programme focuses on various skills (writing, speaking, analysing, and teaching), its graduates are hired as soon as and even before they graduate. They can work in several positions such as primary and secondary school teacher, university teacher, analyst and critic in several fields such as literature, linguistics, and art, editorial positions, writer of school, university and personal textbooks and books, and participant in academic programmes and course development, researcher in the field of language and literature, or in the field of comparative linguistics and literature, cultural representative and delegation in mass media, social worker, advertising and public relations specialist or any other position requiring explicit communication skills.

Relation between study and research

The programme stresses on research as an integral part of academic performance and trains students to think critically and develop their analytical skills. Throughout the curriculum, students are taught to use referencing styles in writing, persuade and argue, and defend a thesis statement by relying on secondary resources.

The university library provides them with an important research base through the books they can consult or online resources they can access. To demonstrate their acquired knowledge in research methodology, students write research papers and articles and present their own papers orally in class. As such, the programme prepares them to further their research skills in the Master's and Ph.D. programmes. Finally, students are formed by teachers who are themselves researchers and trained academics.

International dimension

The Department of Languages and Literatures has partnership agreements with universities in Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, and Poland. Students from Italy have been welcomed to study at USEK. Two exchange professors from Poland and Turkey also visited USEK last spring semester to teach courses.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students and employers revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme. The programme and the orientation seem very modern and attractive to the experts.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification. As already mentioned, the content seems to be up-to-date and the qualifications provided promise opportunities in the labour market of an increasingly media-tised society.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught, and small practical exercises are also integrated into the study programme.

International dimension

According to the lecturers, there is lively contact with the partner universities. However, because of Corona, neither staff nor students have been able to make visits in either direction in recent years.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

Contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened now that the pandemic is over. As the current difficult situation in Lebanon makes real exchange difficult, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.1.4. Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor’s degree.

The mission of the programme is to enable students to promote interlinguistic communication. They will achieve a complete knowledge and practice of Arabic, French and English simultaneously with the other international languages elective acquisition as well as the art of translation and interpretation from one of these languages into another. The programme is concerned with promoting multilingualism and rewardingly, to train professionals in the practice of written translation and interpretation.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Graduates are trained to become successful and professional trilingual translators (Arabic / French / English) who produce quality translations in multicultural contexts.
2. Graduates are trained to teach translation and modern languages in primary and secondary classes.
3. Graduates are trained to develop professional competencies and skills through lifelong learning.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this programme, students will be able to

- a. Teach English, French, and Arabic language.
- b. Develop bilingual and/or trilingual glossaries.
- c. Teach general translation courses.
- d. Contribute to lingual monitoring in their native and foreign language.
- e. Perform economic and legal specialised translations.
- f. Intervene in international negotiations and mediations.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

Future graduates may become cultivated multilingual translators open to dialogue and communication, professionals in the practice of written translation, teachers or consultants of modern languages and translation, sworn translators, translators in public services, embassies, banking, language analysts, touristic guides, etc. The university reports that the employment rate of graduates of the programme is high.

Relation between study and research

Since translation is interrelated to various disciplines comprising, among others, linguistic issues, comparative literature, specific terminologies, technical concepts, and cultural topics, translators often must work with diverse areas of specialisation depending on the subject and the language of the material they are required to translate. Consequently, the programme puts a high value on activating research seen from two complementary angles:

- Translation-oriented research that is necessary to understand properly the content of the text that should be translated and to produce quality translation in the target language. The programme focuses on introducing students to research methods and techniques to ensure their professional success. Besides, students are assigned to present research papers or term papers to pass courses.
- Innovative research dealing with issues and topics of great interest in the field of translation. Both teachers and students are encouraged to take part in academic events, conferences, seminars, symposiums, training sessions, etc., in or outside USEK, in Lebanon or abroad, to expand their knowledge and gain continuous enriching experiences.

Particular importance is attached to the promotion of research, by encouraging teachers to publish papers and articles in the “Revue des Lettres et de Traduction”, affiliated to USEK, and in scientific journals, and by constantly encouraging students to continue their higher education in order to obtain Master’s and Doctorate degrees in the field of translation.

International dimension

The Department of Languages and Literatures has partnership agreements with universities in Belgium, France, and Spain. Staff are also involved in scientific associations like the Conférence Internationale des Responsables des Universités et Instituts Scientifiques d’expression française (CIRUISEF) and the Conférence Internationale des Formations d’Ingénieurs et Techniciens d’expression française (CITEF).

Several international guest researchers visited USEK in recent years for lectures and workshops.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students as well as with employers revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme. The excellent qualifications of the graduates were highlighted several times by the reviewers. The very good language skills of the students, even in the lower semesters, were also evident.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification. There are many subsequent areas of work, particularly in an international and/or tourism environment.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught. The experts appreciate how students are encouraged to write and publish their own research papers and that they are supported in carrying out their own projects.

International dimension

According to the lecturers, there is lively contact and exchange with the partner institutions abroad.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

As in all the bachelor's programmes evaluated, contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened. Regarding the current difficult situation in Lebanon, virtual exchange seems more realistic than visits. For this purpose, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.1.5. Philosophy (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Philosophy (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor’s degree.

The main mission of this programme is to provide students with a broad and intensive training in philosophy and offer them the opportunity to develop critical thinking competencies, in order to analyse the major issues of our time and to have the ability to handle complex logical arguments.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Graduates will become qualified teachers and professionals in philosophy in secondary education schools.
2. Graduates will make careers in interdisciplinary environments such as journalism and media.
3. Graduates will demonstrate all the skills necessary to pursue a graduate course and carry out excellent research.
4. Graduates will become leaders in the conversion of thinking.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this programme, students will be able to:

- a. Correlate the various fields of human sciences and target the interaction between philosophy and other sciences.
- b. Recognise that philosophical wisdom is transboundary and prioritise the Arab world and the Far Eastern world.
- c. Assess the contribution of classical philosophy and tradition as the foundation of modernity.
- d. Develop a rational approach to compare the different currents or tendencies and philosophical schools.
- e. Create questioning situations that highlight reflection upon ontological and anthropological problems.
- f. Build up an ethical-political knowledge and integrate it into action.
- g. Validate the parameters of meaning in their various linguistic, artistic and religious expressions.
- h. Put into practice the knowledge acquired, evaluate training, and master the fundamental skills pertaining to teaching philosophy and pedagogy.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

Upon graduation, students will have wide possibilities of employment such as: i) secondary education, ii) journalism and mass media, and iii) research in public and governmental domains. The programme shares a number of common courses with the other undergraduate degree programmes offered by the various departments at the

faculty thus ensuring that the student attains the vast knowledge in humanity and ethics required in any field.

During their final year at the Bachelor's programme, students are required to complete a capstone course as a preparation for employment. The purpose of this course is to propose several approaches to the current teaching of philosophy in high schools, and to highlight the various and complex problems specific to this area.

Relation between study and research

The programme gives students the opportunity to be enrolled in a Master of Research programme, followed consequently by a doctoral programme. In every course, the students will have the opportunity to partake research in a field relevant to the specific course. This will prepare students to lead research related to their discipline and to be active in elaborating courses' contents. This form of collaboration focuses on the joint acquisition of knowledge. The active learning approach is adopted for course delivery to permit students to participate in building the courses throughout their research.

Additionally, the Department of Philosophy disposes to its students the SOPHIA Laboratory which is a research centre for philosophers that contributes to publish articles written by students either from their own individual assignments in different classes, or from a common project launched by SOPHIA.

Since it was founded in 2008, the SOPHIA Research Laboratory has suggested a research theme on "Ethics, Politics, Religion". The three-term research subjects, in the first place, suggestive of problematics related to various human standards on the ontological, anthropological and metaphysical levels of existence. These levels can be examined individually or altogether. The 5 axes of SOPHIA Laboratory examine, on a double synchronic and diachronic plan, the role of values in guiding the private and professional life of humans (the field of ethics), and the role of citizen responsibilities (the field of politics), and research on the fundamental criteria of values of religion, highlighting the scope of "spatiotemporal emancipation of man" (the field of religion).

International dimension

The Department of Philosophy has agreements with higher education institutions in Belgium, France, Italy, Canada and Tunisia.

A partnership agreement with Institut Plantatio in France allows students from Institut Plantatio to spend one year at USEK and complete the requirements for a double degree, one from USEK and one from Institut Plantatio. After being on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mobility opportunities within this agreement were reactivated and the department welcomed one student from Institut Plantatio during the 2021-2022 academic year and two students during the current 2022-2023 academic year.

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme design and the learning outcomes are comparable to those of similar programmes offered several European and American universities.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the

applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students and staff revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme. The content of the programme is very broad, so that graduates can develop in many professional directions.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification. The experts appreciate practical parts in schools.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught. The reviewers liked the fact that students are encouraged to produce their own publications from the start and that there is a strong emphasis on working with texts.

International dimension

According to the lecturers and the list of contacts, there is lively contact and exchange with the partner institutions abroad. The programme with the Institut Plantatio in France, which was unfortunately suspended by Corona, is to be resumed, which is particularly pleasing to the experts.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

As in all the bachelor's programmes evaluated, contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened. Regarding the current difficult situation in Lebanon, virtual exchange seems more realistic than visits. For this purpose, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.1.6. Psychology (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Psychology (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor’s degree.

The mission of the programme is to produce clinical psychologists trained in a variety of areas: cognitive, clinical, pathological, social, labour and developmental psychology. The programme helps students command, on the one hand, theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge. On the other hand, it prepares them to practice the profession of psychologist and researcher.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Preparing graduates to build a career in the field of orientation, counselling, support, and guidance within a pluralistic team in the different institutions from early childhood to adulthood.
2. Demonstrating all the skills necessary for graduates to pursue a graduate course and excellent research.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this programme, students will be able to:

- a. Define key concepts of the different domains of psychology, which constitute the basis of the Bachelor’s degree.
- b. Distinguish the different theoretical perspectives of social psychology, develop conceptual skills of communication, and put into practice group functioning.
- c. Rigorously adopt a methodological and statistical analysis of the scientific approach in psychology, which combines the epistemological, ethical, technological, and static principles.
- d. Examine the personality across the different theoretical and psychometric perspectives of psychology.
- e. Adopt the models and methods of consulting advice and guidance toward education, training, and careers.
- f. Analyse through cognition the psyche and human behaviour, normal and pathological in its environment.
- g. Validate the clinical approach, maintenance procedures and clinical examination and the method of testing at the level of the child, adolescent, adult, and worker.
- h. Put into practice the acquired knowledge and evaluate training.
- i. (Clinical Psychology) Recognise the foundations of the psychology of child, adolescent, and adult development, and highlight the relative characteristics of each stage.

- j. (Clinical Psychology) Correlate the basic notions of psychoanalysis and target the relationship between theory and analytical practice in clinical settings.
- k. (Clinical Psychology) Delineate psychopathology existent from early childhood to adulthood on a personal and professional level.
- l. (Industrial Psychology) Put into practice the fundamental concepts of ergonomics while placing them as priority work health and worktime relations and analysing sociologically the institutional environment.
- m. (Industrial Psychology) Develop psychological management of management issues, developments of labour and their consequences.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

The core purpose of the programme is to produce clinical psychologists trained to a high standard in academic, clinical and research domains, enabling them to meet the related international standards. The main employment possibilities for graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology are (1) in the field of psychological orientation, counselling, support, and guidance, (2) in clinical and school domains, (3) in specialised rehabilitation and training centres, (4) in hospitals or in prison centres for youth and adolescents, and (5) in the various institutions of "human resources" and companies, public or private where they can become a qualified psychologist.

Relation between study and research

As the programme is strongly research-based, faculty members keep abreast of the latest research and methodologies, which are integrated into their courses. They also participate in international laboratories to discuss new issues related to their area of interest. The PSYCHE Laboratory mainly manages ongoing research and publications of current studies related to psychology. The published papers become a reference for both teachers and students.

On the other hand, students with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology can go on to a Master's degree in Psychology and later a Ph.D.

In each course, students have the opportunity to participate in research relevant to that particular course. They are thus prepared to carry out research related to their discipline and to play an active role in the development of course content. This form of collaboration focuses on the joint acquisition of knowledge. The active learning approach is used in the delivery of the courses to allow students to participate in the development of the courses throughout their research.

International dimension

The Department of Psychology has agreements with universities in Belgium, France, Italy, Canada and Tunisia. Besides, there are affiliations with the Association Internationale des Sociologues de Langue Française (AISLF), France and the Conférence de Psychologie Universitaire de la FIUC (FIUCUP), Canada

According to the self-evaluation report, the department applies quality standards in Psychology to ensure that the offered education and training are compared to those offered by international programmes. The partnership agreements and affiliations promote collaborative work and constructive dialogue by exploring and adding new

standards that allow continuous development and quality enhancement. through the mentioned collaborations, the programme has offered many incoming and outgoing exchange opportunities to students.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. The competences taught in the programme are also precise and clear. The content of the programme is very broad, so that graduates can later work in many different psychological specialisations.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught. The reviewers liked the fact that students are encouraged to own short research work.

International dimension

According to the lecturers and the list of contacts, there is lively contact and exchange with the partner institutions abroad.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

As in all the bachelor's programmes evaluated, contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened. Regarding the current difficult situation in Lebanon, virtual exchange

seems more realistic than visits. For this purpose, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.1.7. Social Sciences (B.A.)

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Social Sciences (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Successful graduates receive a Bachelor’s degree.

The mission of the programme is to train students with skills that enable them to be teachers and future social actors who drive their institutions, companies and local societies toward a socially equitable development – civically, economically and politically. The student learns to deal with different forms of social issues. The Bachelor’s programme prepares the students for research, particularly that concentrating on the exploration of their society; to engage in it as promoters of progress, peace and development. These skills empower students to integrate into the labour market, access further education and excel in research.

The educational objectives are described as follows:

1. Graduates will become teachers or trainers in the fields of social sciences in schools and public and private institutional spaces.
2. Graduates will become coordinators of research projects and research/action projects.
3. Graduates will become coordinators in the areas of planning and evaluation pertaining to action and social, socio economic and cultural politics.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this programme, students will be able to:

- a. Identify the various social sciences disciplines through their history and their theoretical and conceptual orientations.
- b. Apply the concepts and theoretical approaches in the areas of specialisation in social sciences.
- c. Implement statistical techniques of data collection and interpretation of results.
- d. Adopt the methods, approaches and techniques of demography and social sciences research within an epistemological and ethical perspective.
- e. Identify the various humanities disciplines through some of their concepts, theories and approaches.
- f. Implement the coordination of components of a research project and a social action project.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

The main employment possibilities for graduated from the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences are schools (public and private) where they can become qualified teachers of sociology (at this level, the formation will be consolidated by the Teaching Diploma), NGOs, social science research projects, municipalities, even ministries, especially of social affairs, etc.

Relation between study and research

The programme, in the conceptual, methodical and theoretical parts, is an initiation to research in the fields of social sciences. Faculty members and students work in the IDEES multidisciplinary research Laboratory on teaching and learning, to meet the needs of initial teaching for the continuous development of the teacher and future researcher.

The programme is deeply related to research, since the faculty members keep on tracking the new research results and new methods to adapt them into their courses. They also participate in the construction of partnership with national and international organisations based in Lebanon, with the aim of developing and managing research projects in the department. The IDEES laboratory is editing new issues that develop new and problematic themes related to the domain of social sciences. The papers to be published will include teachers and students.

Students are involved in the research work of the department covering the following topics: (i) protection and consolidation of the intangible cultural heritage, (ii) responsible conjugality, (iii) separation, (iv) participation in terms of social action with people with special needs, (v) religious and cultural pluralism, and (vi) presence and mission of women in the Church and the society.

Additionally, students graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences are able to continue a Master's degree in Social Sciences or in Social Work and Intervention, and later a Ph.D. in the field of Social Sciences. According to the self-evaluation report, this is very common.

In every course, students have the opportunity to partake in a research topic in a field that is relevant to that specific course.

International dimension

The Department of Social Sciences has partnerships with universities in France, Italy, Canada, Tunisia, Argentina and also collaborates with the National Commission for UNESCO in Lebanon.

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme is comparable to similar programmes offered in France and Canada.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

USEK has an established procedure for the recruitment and appointment of teaching staff, which is laid down by bylaws. The application and selection procedures follow a defined set of requirements and a process based on the required qualifications of the applicants. In addition to teaching competence, scientific reputation is a decisive criterion. USEK offers opportunities for further development of competences.

In addition to the graduate teaching staff (usually Ph.D.), the programme also employs assistants.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

According to the expert panel, the profile of the programme is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. The competences taught in the programme are also precise and clear. The broad content of the programme enables students to work as teachers as well as with NGOs.

Learning outcomes and relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

In the view of the experts, the described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. The defined outcomes correspond to the level of awarded qualification.

Relation between study and research

The teaching of scientific methods is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught. In the view of the experts, the programme offers a very sound and structured introduction to sociological methods and interpretations. The experts appreciate that students are encouraged to own projects from the very beginning of studies.

International dimension

According to the lecturers and the list of contacts, there is lively contact and exchange with the partner institutions abroad.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to the experts, the staff for the Bachelor's programme is well positioned.

Areas for improvement

As in all the bachelor's programmes evaluated, contacts with foreign partners should be strengthened. Regarding the current difficult situation in Lebanon, virtual exchange seems more realistic than visits. For this purpose, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2. Curriculum

The second criterion for programme assessment concerns the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning methods. The expert panel evaluate, whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes and whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s). The experts also evaluate the organisation of the learning process, especially if there are appropriate student-centred teaching and learning methods, if students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process and whether the diversity of students and their needs are taken into account.

Introductory remarks

The Social Sciences and Humanities programmes, which consists of 96 credits (excluding first year), includes general education courses, common core courses (considered as a liberal arts curriculum), and major courses that are aligned with the programme outcomes through the curriculum map. Details of these requirements are given in the following sections.

The level of a course's contribution to a programme outcome can range from introductory to deepening and emphasising. At the end of their studies, students are required to complete a capstone course (internship in most programmes), which culminates in a professional assessment that provides evidence of the achievement of the programme outcomes and the graduate's readiness for future employment.

Over the past five years, enrolment in the seven programmes has been influenced by the labour market for each discipline. On the one hand, enrolments in the programmes Education and Languages and Literature have declined due to the deteriorating circumstances that have severely affected the education sector in Lebanon. On the other hand, enrolment in the programmes Psychology, Journalism and Communication, and Modern Languages and Translation has increased significantly since 2017.

General education programme

USEK places great emphasis on the General Education Programme, which is rooted in a commitment to human flourishing, spiritual values and respect for cultural and religious pluralism. In addition to equipping students with value learning, intellectual inquiry and various interdisciplinary skills, it also aims to develop the skills necessary to create thoughtful, engaged and active citizens at the national, regional and global levels, while enabling a critical and appreciative understanding of religious traditions, ethical theories and moral development. USEK's General Education Programme consists of 30 credits and spans the three years of undergraduate study (Sophomore, Junior and Senior). The General Education Programme includes courses in English and French Communication, Religious Studies, Quantitative Reasoning, Civic Engagement, Physical Education, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Science/Health.

As part of its continuous improvement approach, USEK developed a new General Education Programme in 2021, taking into account the strong correlation between the main objectives of General Education and the Liberal Arts Education Programme. This new programme aims to broaden students' perspectives while aligning institutional learning outcomes with today's market needs and challenges, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Several areas of general education aim to promote broad liberal arts outcomes that highlight both hard and soft skills. The 30-

credit programme aims to fill gaps in the humanities and social sciences for students enrolled in science and professional fields, and in the natural sciences and quantitative reasoning for those enrolled in the humanities. It is designed to help students from different disciplines to evaluate and use evidence to shape arguments and make evidence-based decisions. Students are encouraged to use tools from different disciplines to identify and address intellectual, ethical and practical problems of relevance to the contemporary world. By engaging students in the creative process of critical and effective thinking in line with their professional and social lives, this programme will enable students, regardless of their major, to undertake extensive research using a variety of resources, whether traditional or digital/technological.

Table 5 lists the general education topics.

| General education areas | Credits |
|---|-------------------|
| English Communication | 3 |
| Work Ethic & Career Management | 3 |
| Intercultural And Religious Fluency | 3 |
| Artistic Discovery and Education | 3 |
| Psychology And Social Behavior | 3 |
| Lebanese History and Legacy | 3 |
| Effective Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning | 3 |
| Sciences And Health | 3 |
| Humanities, Ethics, And Civilizations | 3 |
| Digital Literacy and Information Technology | 3 |
| Total | 30 credits |

Table 5 – General Education offered within the Social Sciences and Humanities programmes (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 60)

Liberal Arts Curriculum

The programmes share a number of common courses with the other undergraduate programmes offered by the various departments of the faculty. All the liberal arts courses common to the humanities programmes are courses that aim to

- Introduce the methodology of research as the main basis for all the practical work and research proposed in the courses of the different specialisations offered by the faculty;
- Introduce quantitative reasoning, which allows each student to develop his or her logical reasoning within his or her field of study;
- To consolidate knowledge with a psycho-sociological dimension that helps the future teacher to master the self in front of an audience of students.

Teaching and learning methods

At USEK, the active learning approach is generally promoted. To ensure effective and efficient learning, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted aiming at enhancing the intellectual and professional abilities of the students. Courses alternate among different teaching styles, such as lecture teaching, activity-based teaching, and brainstorming teaching sessions.

USEK strongly emphasizes the importance of technology and teachers use various technologies, e.g., PowerPoint presentations are frequently given to students as an alternative to handout readings. In addition, the teachers have access to the e-learning platform and Microsoft Teams which allow them to interact with the students online.

Over the past five years, the seven programmes have undergone changes based on internal and external assessment processes, as part of the culture of continuous improvement that USEK promotes. One of these changes is the inclusion of an 18-credit liberal arts component in the Philosophy, Literature, Journalism and Social Sciences programmes. This component has been thoroughly reviewed and redesigned to provide students with a broader understanding of different disciplines in the humanities. Six new courses have been introduced, covering topics such as Research Methods, Anthropological Issues, History and Art Criticism, Mediation, Philosophy, Psychology and Personal Development, and History and Ideologies. These courses aim to provide students with a broader knowledge base and encourage them to develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

4.2.1. Education – Basic Education (B.A.)

Programme structure

The study programme “Education – Basic Education (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common courses: 18 credits
- Major Courses: 48 credits including the capstone course which is a 90 hours internship, EDU471 (A and B), covering all the programme outcomes taken over two phases (observation and practice of class).

Table 6 shows the common courses with other programmes offered by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, table 7 shows the major courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|--|-------------------|
| MTR 225 - Methodology Research | 3 |
| EDU 201 - History of Education | 3 |
| EDU 215 - Techniques of expression | 3 |
| PSY 214 - Developmental Psychology | 3 |
| EDU 318 - Issues in syntax | 3 |
| SOC 218 - Statistics applied to human sciences I | 3 |
| Total | 18 credits |

Table 6 – Common core courses within the Education curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 62)

| Course code and title | Credits |
|--|-------------------|
| EDU 305 - Class Management | 3 |
| EDU 310 - Learning Theories | 3 |
| EDU 322 - Phonetics / Phonology | 3 |
| EDU 325 - Digital Resources for Educational & Professional Development | 3 |
| EDU 330 - General Didactics | 3 |
| EDU 345 - Applied linguistics to teaching French | 3 |
| EDU 400 - The Teacher's Ethical Skills | 3 |
| EDU 401 - Specialized Didactics of Scientific Disciplines I | 3 |
| EDU 402 - Specialized Didactics of Scientific Disciplines II | 3 |
| EDU 421 - Young Adults' and Children's Literature | 3 |
| EDU 423 - Evaluation in Education | 3 |
| EDU 433 - Teaching by Themes and in Sequences | 3 |
| EDU 434 - French Language Specialized Didactics I | 3 |
| EDU 469 - Video / « Serious Games » in Schools | 3 |
| EDU 471 A - Internship: Classroom Observation and Practice | 6 |
| EDU 471 B - Internship: Classroom Observation and Practice | 0 |
| Total | 48 credits |

Table 7 – Common core course (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 62)

Table 8 shows the typical 3-year study plan.

| Year 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | EDU201 | History of Education | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | University Working Methodology | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | SOC218 | Statistics applied to human sciences I | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | PSY214 | Developmental Psychology | 3 | |
| | EDU215 | Techniques of expression | 3 | |
| | EDU318 | French Language Skills | 3 | |
| | EDU322 | Phonetics / Phonology | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | EDU330 | General Didactics | 3 | |
| | EDU305 | Classroom Management | 3 | |
| | EDU325 | Digital Resources for Educational & Professional Development | 3 | |
| | EDU345 | Applied linguistics to teaching French | 3 | EDU322 |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | EDU310 | Learning Theories | 3 | |
| | EDU434 | French Language Specialized Didactics | 3 | EDU330 |
| | EDU469 | Video / « Serious Games » in Schools | 3 | EDU325 |
| | EDU421 | Young Adults' and Children's Literature | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

| Year 3 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | EDU433 | Teaching by Themes and in Sequences | 3 | EDU330 |
| | EDU401 | Specialized Didactics of Scientific Disciplines I | 3 | EDU330 |
| | EDU471A | Internship: Classroom Observation and Practice | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | EDU400 | The Teacher's Ethical Skills | 3 | |
| | EDU402 | Specialized Didactics of Scientific Disciplines II | 3 | EDU401 |
| | EDU423 | Evaluation in Education | 3 | |
| | EDU471B | Internship: Classroom Observation and Practice | 3 | EDU471A |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

Table 8 – Study plan for “Education (B.A.)” (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 64)

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

As described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students' understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills. Inquiry-based teaching equips the students with the necessary tools to build their own learning experience.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The academic path of the student is clearly divided among the three years (6 semesters) that the student must attend:

- General education courses
- Common core courses usually taken during the first year
- Major courses usually taken over the second and third year

Students also have flexibility to move courses backwards.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format will be revised by the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs in Spring 2023 to focus on assessment methods and their links to learning outcomes. This should also make continuous assessment more transparent.

Table 9 shows an example of a syllabus.



HOLY SPIRIT UNIVERSITY OF KASLIK
Course Syllabus

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal course / Code : EDU | Number : 322 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed modification of an existing course / Code : | Number : |
| If need be, new code : | new number : |
| I. Course Information (based on catalogue) | |
| Academic unit : Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities | |
| Department : Education Sciences | |
| Type : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> TP <input type="checkbox"/> TD <input type="checkbox"/> CTP <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> TH <input type="checkbox"/> SM | |
| Level of studies : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III | |
| Title (FR) : Phonétique et phonologie | |
| Title (EN) : Phonetics/Phonology | |
| Delivery language : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fr. <input type="checkbox"/> Eng. <input type="checkbox"/> Ar. | |
| Abbreviation of the title (max 30 characters including spaces): | |
| Number of credits: 3 | |
| Number of contact hours per week: 3 | |
| Lecturing hours (remunerated to faculty) : 45 | |
| Lab hours (remunerated to faculty) : 0 | |
| Billing credits: 3 | |
| Code of course financial attribute : | |
| Code(s) and number(s) of Equivalent course(s): | |
| Code(s) and number(s) of Co-requisite course(s): | |
| Registration restrictions (Academic unit, Major, Level of studies, Degree, Program, Campus, Semester) | |
| Education Sciences students, Level 1, Kaslik Campus, Fall semester | |
| II. Course Core Curriculum | |
| Course Description: This course will develop diction competencies of future teachers. Students will first be asked to distinguish between phonetics and phonology. They then learn the International Phonetic Alphabet, knowledge that will give them access to all the features of the phonetics of the French language. All the rules of pronunciation and diction will be subsequently addressed (pronunciation of sounds, letters, accents, links, intonation) to finally reach a correct and expressive reading of a poetic corpus, narrative or theatrical. All theoretical information will be immediately followed by practical exercises that will be based on the very practice of students. These, through listening exercises and diction, will be asked to identify their shortcomings and those of others, to explain and to address them gradually. | |
| Description of Delivery Mode: | |
| - The theory is discussed quite succinctly using an inductive method that will lead students to structure the outline of phonetics and phonology of French. | |
| - Each theoretical part will be immediately followed by a punctual directly applied work that will check the acquisition of each concept. This will be done through exercises and reflexion questions on E-Learning, as well as through class exercises (orally and written). | |
| - Pronunciation exercises will be tackled regularly and individually, in order to detect the eventual shortcomings of each student. | |
| - Listening exercises will also mark out the course and lead to an exploitation of the perceived language and of the variations that it can present. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Course Timetable <i>(Provide course topics)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> per Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> per Week |
| 1. Presentation | |
| Presentation of the syllabus. Presentation of the Moodle platform as a work tool, and of the terms (duration - frequency - grading) of the weekly homework via e-Learning. | |
| Presentation of PW | |
| Each student will choose a French song and conceive a classroom activity around that song. The activity will stress on phonetics and / or phonology: auditory discrimination exercises, phonemes recognition, phonetic associations, prosody, etc. Depending on the date of the PW, the student will apply this or that phonological notion learned. The proposed activity should take into account all the concepts discussed so far. | |
| Schedule of the activities (depending on number of students): from 12 October to 4 December. | |
| Dates distribution. | |
| Historic | |
| Small historical overview about phonetics and phonology, followed by a scientific and pragmatic distinction between the two disciplines. | |
| 2. The International Phonetic Alphabet (1) | |
| The basis of the course, the International Phonetic Alphabet, will be tackled gradually. The discovery of the phonemes will be achieved step by step through the students' readings. They will be asked to progressively provide additional examples to existing ones. Fixation exercises will be offered in class. The theoretical concepts of phoneme, grapheme, word, and syllable, will also be addressed and distinguished through practical examples. A homework on e-Learning will verify the acquisition of a first set of phonemes. | |
| 3. The International Phonetic Alphabet (2) | |
| Vowels, consonants, and semi-vowels will be addressed progressively. In class, we will listen to natives pronouncing the various phonemes via a CD player. Fixation exercises are directly provided. Students are thus led to memorize the IPA. A homework on e-Learning will ensure the acquisition of all the phonemes. | |
| 4. The vocal apparatus | |
| This is to show the students the anatomic components of the pronunciation of phonemes. A layout will be shown and exploited using the computer and the projector. The timely intervention of a speech therapist can be a valuable asset at this level of the course: awareness to the particular pronunciation of each phoneme, detection of disorders, practical advice, etc. A homework on e-Learning will verify that the students are able to identify the morphological components of the vocal apparatus. | |
| 5. The phonetic particularities | |
| Many phonetic particularities of the French language are addressed in this section: the silent letters, the letter <i>h</i> , and the words with a particular pronunciation. All these cases are first offered to students in the form of collective guessing. Then, they will notice that "what stood for an "obviousness" is actually far from it. A homework on e-Learning will push students to additionally research the phonetic particularities of certain terms of the French language. | |
| 6. Articulation methods (1) | |
| All diction processes are discussed here. It begins with the phoneme pronunciation time, and the three types of accents. These two concepts are addressed through an audio file using the CD player. Several targeted plays will highlight the articulation processes. A homework on e-learning will assess, through a voice recording from each student, the application of concepts learned. Beginning of the PW presentations. | |
| 7. Articulation methods (2) | |
| We then discuss the intonation (typology of phrases and melodic curves) through an audio document. A preliminary listening will evaluate the degree of "intuitive" perception of intonation errors among the students. Then, the three types of links (mandatory, optional, prohibited) will be tackled through sentences read by the students. The reading is followed by a discussion and will lead to the rule. Applied exercises and targeted individual readings will follow. PW presentations. | |
| 8. Midterm | |
| Midterm: correction. | |
| 9. Articulation methods (3) | |

Table 9 – Course Syllabus Example (Source: USEK)

III. Faculty Qualification

| Faculty Name F.T (Full-Time) – P.T (Part-Time) | Academic Degrees | Related Coursework | Other Qualifications |
|---|--|--|---|
| Christelle STEPHAN-HAYEK (Full-Time) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in French literature (USEK) - MA in French literature (USEK) - PHD in French literature Major : linguistics and theatrical studies (Paris 3) - MA in Languages' and FFL (French as a Foreign language) didactics (Paris 3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phonetics and phonology sessions for teachers in Lebanese schools. - Coordinated work with a speech therapist to prepare part of the course. - Scientific publication about the influence of the mother tongue (Arabic) on French learning for Lebanese students : « Les Libanaises des élèves », <i>Initiation aux questions pédagogiques</i>, Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, USEK, Kaslik, Lebanon, coll. « Initiation à », n° 5, 2008. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thirteen years of experience for this course. - Member of REFA laboratory. - Coauthor of French school books (éd. Ahlia). - Author of FFL (French as a Foreign language) school books (Dar Al Tarbiyayoun). - French coordinator in Lebanese schools. - Head of the French Section of the USEK Language Center (USEK). |

IV. Course Grading

| Grading Criteria (Total = 100%) | Grid recommended by the University | Other grid applied for special courses and dissertations |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Attendance and participation | 10% | |
| Homework, project, research paper | 20% | |
| Quizzes, Tests, Midterm | 30% | |
| End of semester evaluation (e.g. Final exam or thesis defense result) | 40% | |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

V. Course Material

| Required Texts | Supplemental References |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DERIVERY N. (1997). <i>La phonétique du français</i>. Paris : Seuil. - IMBS F. (1993). <i>Comment ça se prononce ? Comment ça se dit ?</i> Beyrouth : Samir éditeur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BÉCHADE H-D. (1992). <i>Phonétique et morphologie du français moderne et contemporain</i>. Paris : PUF. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Vowel sequences and consonant sequences (differentiation with links) will be addressed by reading a text with multiple meanings. The theory will be followed by individual applied exercises and case studies. A homework on e-Learning will help ensure that students are able to differentiate the two types of sequences. PW presentations. | |
| 10. Reading exercises The students are required to progressively put into practice the acquired knowledge. The exercises are aimed at one skill or another, before crossing them. An oral assessment will verify the application of the discussed concepts. PW presentations. | |
| 11. Prosody (1) The rules of versification, reading and pronunciation of the poetic text are discussed in detail. Various types of exercises are proposed to lead to the rules. The poems are first heard. Students can then deduce certain rules of prosody. It is a seized opportunity for broadening the literary culture of the students. A homework on e-Learning will push the students to research and find poems that correspond to a particular prosodic criterion. PW presentations. | |
| 12. Prosody (2) The versification, the different types of stanzas, the rhymes system. Poems will be presented in the form of exercises with blanks giving the students the opportunity to discover some concepts. Applied exercises are offered through an anthology of poems. A homework on e-Learning will push students to do additional research to find poems that correspond to this or that newly addressed prosodic criterion. PW presentations. | |
| 13. Prosody (3) Application of all the rules discussed so far through audio poems. By listening, the students will have to synthesize all the prosodic rules learned. Besides, the focus is on the concept of poetic declamation. A homework on e-Learning will allow to listen to the declamation of the students who will record their reading of a poem of their choice. PW presentations. | |
| 14. Oral evaluation Step 1: Individual reading of a poem prepared on site, ten minutes in advance. This reading is followed by a series of questions to verify the level of understanding and mastery of the student. Step 2: Spontaneous reading of a little prose text / a mathematical problem / a notion of natural sciences. Evaluation of the ability of the student to read properly and to adapt his/her flow in front of an unknown and unprepared text. | |
| 15. Synthesis Final exam. | |
| Learning outcomes (Students will be able to) | Assessment Methods (Define the use of the assessment method chosen) |
| LO #1 Aurally identify all of the French phonemes, transcribe them using the IPA, and recognize the different elements of the vocal apparatus and their respective functions. | ✓ Assignment: written evaluation using an audio document |
| LO #2 Identify phonetic particularities in the most common French words, and explain the mechanism of the three main processes of articulation. | ✓ Exam: written evaluation using an audio document: questions and exercises |
| LO #3 Incorporate the learned rules of pronunciation, articulation and prosody to reading well various types/kinds of texts. | ✓ Assignment: oral evaluation through various reading exercises |
| LO #4 Apply the rules of prosody to the various types of known texts. | ✓ Exam: written evaluation using a written text: questions and exercises about all the discussed notions |

Table 9 (cont.)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CARTON F. (1974), <i>Introduction à la phonétique du français</i>. Paris : Bordas. - CHAMPAGNE-MUZAR C. (1998). <i>Le point sur la phonétique</i>. Paris : Clé international. - GEBRAEL M. (1999). <i>Étude comparative entre la phonétique arabe et la phonétique française</i>. Mémoire de licence. USEK (Liban). - LÉON, P. R. (1992). <i>Phonétisme et prononciations du français</i>. Paris : Nathan. - LÉON P., Léon M., Léon F., Thomas A. (2009), <i>Phonétique du FLE</i>. Paris : Armand Colin. - WIOLAND, F. (1991). <i>Prononcer les mots du français: des sons et des rythmes</i>. Paris : Hachette. |
| Required Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CD reader - LCD with speakers for PC - e-Learning |

VI. Syllabus Administration

| Prepared by | Signature | Date |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Head of Department | | |
| Academic Secretary | | |
| Dean | | |

| Approved by | Signature | Date |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Program Commission | | |

Table 9 (cont.)

Latest improvements

The programme recognised the need to adapt its curriculum to the current needs of the labour market. With the outbreak of Covid-19 and the move to online learning, the programme placed an emphasis on technology. The department reviewed the technology component of the curriculum and made the necessary changes to ensure that students were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the digital age and improve their employability.

The work placement process, which is an essential part of the education as it provides students with practical experience and helps them to apply their knowledge in a professional environment, was also reviewed and improved in consultation with all stakeholders in the programme. It was decided to retain the two-semester placement at the first and second levels of the programme and to modify the grading system to include assessments and grades for each aspect of the placement. The updated guidelines were used to ensure that the student's performance was assessed fairly and accurately. This would enable students to understand their strengths and weaknesses and improve accordingly, which would help them to be job ready and more competitive.

The programme has integrated a professional ethics course, which covers topics such as moral and ethical principles, codes of conduct and decision-making frameworks, with an emphasis on building students' self-esteem. Through interactive activities, students learn how to create a positive classroom culture, communicate effectively and provide constructive feedback that supports student growth. This change aims to prepare students for successful and effective careers and promote a positive learning experience for their students.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2.2. Journalism and Communication (B.A.)

Programme structure

The study programme "Journalism and Communication (B.A.)" is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common courses: 18 credits
- Major Courses: 48 credits including the capstone course JCM460 which is a 30 hours internship covering all the programme outcomes.

Table 10 shows the common courses with other programmes offered by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, table 11 shows the major courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|--|-------------------|
| PSY300 Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| SOC315 Anthropological Issues | 3 |
| MTR225 Research Methods | 3 |
| PHI310 Mediation Philosophy | 3 |
| HIS315 History and Ideologies | 3 |
| HIS325 History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| Total | 18 credits |

Table 10 – Common core courses within the Journalism curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 65)

| Course code and title | Credits |
|---|-------------------|
| ARA210 Advanced Arabic | 3 |
| JCM300 Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| JCM310 Communication theories | 3 |
| JCM315 Television Reports Techniques | 3 |
| JCM316 Media Law and Deontology | 3 |
| JCM317 Media and Current Events Coverage | 3 |
| JCM325 Data and society | 3 |
| JCM326 Multimedia Journalism | 3 |
| JCM330 Specialized Press | 3 |
| JCM430 Socio-political Communication | 3 |
| JCM435 News and Copy Editing | 3 |
| JCM440 Media Techniques: Radio TV | 3 |
| JCM445 Media Discourse and Semiotics | 3 |
| JCM450 Business and Economic Reporting | 3 |
| JCM455 Journalistic Writing: Print and Online Media | 3 |
| JCM460 - Professional Internship | 3 |
| Total | 48 credits |

Table 11 – Major courses offered within the Journalism curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 65)

In the course organisation, the main subjects are linked by a series of introductory courses; the introduction is at intermediate level, followed by a series of workshops. In the first year, students are introduced to journalism and communication:

- Courses in the 200 series introduce students to researching and analysing information.
- Courses in the 300 series introduce students to theoretical considerations in the field of communication, in parallel with professional courses in writing,

photography, viewing, shooting and editing. At this level, students also practise various journalistic genres.

In the 400 series courses, industry techniques are applied in practical workshops where students can practice communication techniques and tools. The culmination of the course is the professional internship, which must be completed in the final stage of the course. At this stage, students' analytical skills are developed, enabling them to develop their critical thinking skills.

In addition, students have the opportunity to acquire general knowledge and culture through 30 credits of general education from various fields such as languages, humanities and arts, sciences and environment. Table 12 shows the typical 3-year study plan.

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|--------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | ARA210 | Advanced Arabic | 3 | |
| | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 18 credits | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | SOC315 | Anthropological Issues | 3 | |
| | JCM316 | Media Law and Deontology | 3 | |
| | JCM317 | Media and Current Events Coverage | 3 | |
| Summer Session 3 credits | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | |
| | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | JCM310 | Communication theories | 3 | |
| | JCM315 | Television Reports Techniques | 3 | |
| | PHI310 | Mediation Philosophy | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | JCM325 | Data and society | 3 | |
| | JCM326 | Multimedia Journalism | 3 | |
| | JCM330 | Specialized Press | 3 | JCM315 |
| | HIS315 | History and Ideologies | 3 | |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| Year 3 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | JCM430 | Socio-political Communication | 3 | JCM310 |
| | JCM435 | News and Copy Editing | 3 | |
| | JCM440 | Media Techniques: Radio TV | 3 | JCM435 coreq |
| | HIS325 | History and Art Criticism | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | General Education Course | 3 | |
| | JCM445 | Media Discourse and Semiotics | 3 | JCM310 |
| | JCM450 | Business and Economic Reporting | 3 | JCM435 |
| | JCM455 | Journalistic Writing: Print and Online Media | 3 | JCM435 |
| | JCM460 | Professional Internship | 3 | |

Table 12 – Study plan for of “Journalism and Communication (B.A.)”
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 65)

As the core of the Journalism and Communication programme is writing stories and reporting news, language skills are a must for journalists and communication professionals. Therefore, language skills are required for some courses. Students who do not meet these requirements at the time of admission or in the language support courses cannot be enrolled in the course until they have acquired these requirements.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

All teaching approaches aim to develop the analytical skills of the students and to provide them with a professional training on the technical and editorial skills required for the various media supports as well as for the communication professions. As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students' understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills. Inquiry-based teaching equips the students with the necessary tools to build their own learning experience.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The academic path of the student is clearly divided among the three years (6 semesters) that the student must attend:

- General education courses
- Common core courses usually taken during the first year
- Major courses usually taken over the second and third year

Students also have flexibility to move courses backwards.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

Since the last accreditation visit, the Journalism programme has undergone a curriculum revision in response to the latest developments and market needs. The programme has incorporated liberal arts courses, which are considered essential for any humanities specialisation, to provide students with a well-rounded education. In addition, the programme has introduced a digital component through the course JCM455 Journalistic Writing: Print and Online Media, which compares traditional writing techniques with the new demands of online journalism.

Data journalism has been given greater emphasis in the new curriculum through the course JCM325 Data and Society, which aims to equip students with the skills to write and report news that is relevant to society. The programme has also added a course in business and economic reporting, JCM450, to help students develop the skills needed to collect and analyse data to produce business reports and articles based on a thorough and scientific approach.

Recognising the growing need to train specialist journalists, the programme has also developed and expanded the Professional Internship course, JCM460, to include more than 30 hours of work experience in a media organisation. The aim is to provide students with practical experience in their field and to prepare them for the job market by matching their academic background with the needs of the market.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2.3. Language and Literature (B.A.)

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme "Language and Literature (B.A.)" is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits). Table 13 on next page shows the common core courses.

The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common courses: 18 credits
- Emphasis/Specialisation Courses: 48 credits chosen based on the emphasis (A-Arabic/B-French/C- English).

| Common Core | 12 |
|--|-----------|
| MTR225 - Research Methods | 3 |
| JCM300 - Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| ANG411 – Modern cultural issues in English | 3 |
| PSY300 - Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| Electives (2 of the below) | 6 |
| HIS325 - History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| PHI310 - Mediation philosophy | 3 |
| SOC315 – Anthropological issues | 3 |
| HIS315 - History and ideologies | 3 |

Emphasis English: Common core courses within the curriculum

| Common Core | 18 |
|--|-----------|
| MTR225 - Research Methods | 3 |
| SOC315 – Anthropological issues | 3 |
| JCM300 - Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| HIS325 - History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| PHI310 - Mediation philosophy | 3 |
| HIS315 - History and ideologies | 3 |

Emphasis French: Common core courses within the curriculum

| Common Core | 12 |
|--|-----------|
| MTR225 - Research Methods | 3 |
| PSY300 – Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| JCM300 - Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| ARA311 – Current Problems in the Arab World | 3 |
| Electives (2 of the below) | 6 |
| HIS315 - History and ideologies | 3 |
| SOC315- Anthropological Issues | 3 |
| HIS325 - History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| PHI310 - Mediation philosophy | 3 |

Emphasis Arabic: Common core courses within the curriculum

| Emphasis: English | |
|---|---|
| ANG411 – Modern cultural issues in English | 3 |
| ELL 313 - English Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| ELL315 – Public speaking | 3 |
| Emphasis: French | |
| LFR 201 - Advanced French course | 3 |
| Emphasis: Arabic | |
| ARA311 – Current Problems in the Arab World | 3 |
| ARA 210 - Advanced Arabic | 3 |
| ARA310 – Techniques of Expression in Arabic | 3 |
| LLA 318 - Arabic Morphology and Syntax | 3 |

Common core courses with the BA in Modern Languages and Translation programme

Table 13 – Common core courses within the Language and Literature curriculum (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 69-70)

The specialisation courses are designed to cover a wide array of linguistic subjects as well as literary genres. Whether students are enrolled in the Arabic, French or English emphasis, they are simultaneously initiated to both linguistics and literature. Table 14 shows the specialisation courses.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Emphasis: English | 48 |
| ELL315 – Public speaking | 3 |
| ELL 210 - Introduction to Linguistics | 3 |
| ELL 222 - Survey of English Literature I | 3 |
| ELL 223 - Sophomore Rhetoric | 3 |
| ELL 225 - Poetry | 2 |
| ELL 310 - Survey of English Literature II | 3 |
| ELL 311 - Introduction to Drama | 3 |
| ELL 313 - English Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| ELL 321 - History of the English Language | 3 |
| ELL 322 - Development of English Poetry | 3 |
| ELL 323 - Development of the English Novel | 3 |
| ELL 324 - American Literature | 2 |
| ELL 410 - Literary Criticism | 3 |
| ELL 411 - The Age of Shakespeare | 3 |
| ELL 413 - Special Topics in the English Language | 2 |
| ELL 422 - Comparative Literature | 3 |
| ELL 425 - Special Literature Themes | 3 |
| Emphasis: French | 48 |
| PSY300 - Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| LFR 201 - Advanced French course | 3 |
| LFR 211 - Textual analysis | 3 |
| LFR 212 - Commentary | 3 |
| LFR 220 - History of French Literature | 3 |
| LFR 221 - Literature Culture and Society | 3 |
| LFR 224 - Elements of Linguistics | 3 |
| LFR 227 - From Texts to Stage representation | 3 |
| LFR 310 - Francophone Literatures and cultures | 3 |
| LFR 316 - French Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| LFR 322 - Novels, Texts and representation | 3 |
| LFR 409 - Topics in French Literature | 3 |
| LFR 411 - Latin Language and Civilization | 3 |
| LFR 420 - Literary Readings | 3 |
| LFR 423 - Linguistics of Enunciation | 3 |
| LFR 430 - Literary criticism | 3 |
| Emphasis: Arabic | 48 |
| ARA 210 - Advanced Arabic | 3 |
| ARA310 – Techniques of Expression in Arabic | 3 |
| LLA 212 - Introduction to Linguistics | 3 |
| LLA 222 -Introduction to Rhetoric and Stylistics | 3 |
| LLA 224 - Introduction to the Study of Literary Genres | 3 |
| LLA 312 - Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Epochs | 3 |
| LLA 315 - Novel and Theater | 3 |

| | |
|--|---|
| LLA 316 - Literature in the Abbasid Era | 3 |
| LLA 318 - Arabic Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| LLA 323 - Literature in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods | 2 |
| LLA 324 - Literature in the Renaissance Era | 3 |
| LLA 325 - Literature in the Andalusian Era | 2 |
| LLA 326 - Overseas Arabic Literature | 2 |
| LLA 411 - Comparative Literature | 3 |
| LLA 412 - Arabic Linguistics Problems | 2 |
| LLA 415 - Lebanese Popular Heritage | 2 |
| LLA 423 - Modern and Contemporary Arabic Literature | 2 |
| LLA 435 - Modern and Contemporary Arabic Criticism | 3 |

Table 14 – Specialisation courses within the Language and Literature curriculum (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 69-71)

The academic year is divided into two semesters, fall and spring, and a summer session. Table 15 gives the study plans of the three specialisations.

Emphasis: English

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | ANG411 | Modern Cultural Issues | 3 | |
| | ELL210 | Introduction to Linguistics | 3 | |
| | ELL223 | Sophomore Rhetoric | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 17 credits | ELL315 | Public Speaking | 3 | |
| | ELL225 | Poetry | 2 | |
| | ELL222 | Survey of English Literature I | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>Elective Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 18 credits | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | |
| | ELL310 | Survey of English Literature II | 3 | ELL222 |
| | ELL311 | Introduction to Drama | 3 | |
| | ELL313 | English Morphology and Syntax | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 17 credits | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | |
| | ELL321 | History of the English Language | 3 | |
| | ELL322 | Development of the English Poetry | 3 | |
| | ELL323 | Development of the English Novel | 3 | ELL310 |
| | ELL324 | American Literature | 2 | |
| | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Year 3 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 14 credits | ELL410 | Literary Criticism | 3 | |
| | ELL411 | Age of Shakespeare | 3 | |
| | ELL413 | Special topics in the English Language | 2 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>Elective Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | ELL422 | Comparative Literature | 3 | |
| | ELL425 | Special Literary Themes | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

Emphasis: French

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | LFR201 | Advanced French course | 3 | FRN140 |
| | LFR211 | Introduction to Textual Analysis | 3 | |
| | LFR212 | Commentary | 3 | FRN140 |
| | SOC315 | Anthropological issues | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | LFR220 | History of French Literature | 3 | |
| | LFR221 | Literature Culture and Society | 3 | |
| | LFR224 | Elements of Linguistics | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 18 credits | LFR316 | French Morphology and Syntax | 3 | |
| | LFR310 | Francophone Literatures and cultures | 3 | |
| | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | |
| | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Spring Semester 18 credits | LFR227 | From Texts to Stage representation | 3 | |
| | LFR322 | Novels, Texts, and representation | 3 | |
| | LFR411 | Latin Language and Civilization | 3 | |
| | HIS325 | History and Art Criticism | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Year 3 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | LFR409 | Topics in French Literature | 3 | |
| | LFR420 | Literary Readings | 3 | |
| | HIS315 | History and ideologies | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | LFR423 | Linguistics of Enunciation | 3 | LFR224 |
| | LFR430 | Literary criticism | 3 | |
| | PHI310 | Mediation philosophy | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

Emphasis: Arabic

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 18 credits | ARA310 | Techniques of Expression in Arabic | 3 | |
| | ARA210 | Advanced Arabic | 3 | |
| | LLA212 | Introduction to Linguistics | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | LLA222 | Introduction to Rhetoric and Stylistics | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | LLA 224 | Introduction to the Study of Literary Genres | 3 | |
| | ARA311 | Current Problems in the Arab World | 3 | |
| | | <i>Elective Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

| Year 2 | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite | |
| Fall Semester 18 credits | LLA312 | Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Epochs | 3 | | |
| | LLA315 | Novel and Theater | 3 | | |
| | LLA316 | Literature in the Abbasid Era | 3 | | |
| | LLA318 | Arabic Morphology and Syntax | 3 | | |
| | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | LLA323 | Literature in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods | 2 | | |
| | LLA324 | Literature in the Renaissance Era | 3 | | |
| | LLA325 | Literature in the Andalusian Era | 2 | | |
| | LLA326 | Overseas Arabic Literature | 2 | | |
| | | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite | |
| Fall Semester 16 credits | LLA411 | Comparative Literature | 3 | | |
| | LLA412 | Arabic Linguistics Problems | 2 | LLA212 | |
| | LLA415 | Lebanese Popular Heritage | 2 | | |
| | | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>Elective Course</i> | 3 | | |
| Spring Semester 14 credits | LLA 423 | Modern and Contemporary Arabic Literature | 2 | | |
| | LLA 435 | Modern and Contemporary Arabic Criticism | 3 | | |
| | | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | | |

Table 15 – Study plan of “Language and Literature (B.A.)” (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 71-74)

Some courses have language requirements as a prerequisite. Students who do not meet these requirements, either at the time of enrolment or through remedial language courses, will not be able to enrol in the course unless they acquire the necessary language skills. This is the case, for example, with the Advanced Arabic, Advanced French and English Grammar and Composition courses, which should logically be taken before other advanced courses, since the student must first acquire the grammatical knowledge to be able to compose and write correct text commentaries and essays in the three languages.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students’ understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills.

All programme outcomes can be effectively assessed through the core course in Literary Criticism, as well as through the other core courses, such as classifying literary works, explaining literary and linguistic concepts, critically analysing literary works, using linguistic knowledge to critically analyse situations, using different literary theories to evaluate literature, using linguistic approaches to evaluate texts, writing effectively for academic purposes, demonstrating knowledge of different cultural contexts in relation to literature.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The curriculum map is structured around 3 observable levels of contribution: Introduction, Emphasis, Consolidation.

In all three streams, students begin their academic journey with courses designed to introduce them to the basic concepts of linguistics and literature. The more advanced courses are designed to reinforce the knowledge acquired in the introductory courses. As for the courses that deal with the history of language and literature in different periods, as well as the specificities of literatures such as Lebanese, Francophone and English, they are designed to reinforce the knowledge emphasised in the previous courses and to add a broader cultural dimension to the programme. Finally, the capstone course, which is literary criticism for all three concentrations, is designed to assess students' ability to approach a text critically. As an integrative culmination of the student's academic programme, the Literary Criticism course assesses the student's ability to analyse a text, be it a passage from a novel, a play, an essay or a poem, through the study of significant linguistic features and the application of various literary theories.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

The Bachelor's programme faces the challenge of attracting students in the face of growing demand for professionals in fields such as technology, business, engineering and architecture. In order to ensure that the programme remains relevant and offers graduates a wide range of employment opportunities, the programme has undergone a significant change in 2022.

To ensure that students on the programme are well-rounded and versatile in their skills, the programme has adopted a liberal arts model that prioritises a broad and diverse education. This approach is designed to give students the flexibility and adaptability needed to succeed in a rapidly changing job market.

To achieve this, the programme has redesigned its core curriculum to include new courses designed to give students a deeper understanding and appreciation of the humanities. These courses cover a wide range of topics including literature, history, philosophy, cultural studies and critical thinking. These courses have been carefully selected to be of high interest and relevance to students in order to engage them in the learning process and help them develop a broader understanding of the subjects.

The new curriculum also includes opportunities for students to engage in hands-on learning experiences, such as research projects and study abroad programmes. These

experiences are designed to provide students with practical skills that will be valuable in their future careers.

Overall, the main goal of these changes is to ensure that “Languages and Literatures (B.A.)” remains a valuable and relevant choice for students seeking a well-rounded education that prepares them for a variety of career paths and provides them with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in an ever-changing job market.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2.4. Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.)

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme “Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits).

The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common core courses: 27 credits
- Major Courses: 39 credits including the capstone courses TRD 428 and TRD 429 which are Conference Translation (Arabic/French/English) and Sight Translation (Arabic(A)/French(B)/English(C))

Table 16 shows the common core courses, table 17 shows the major courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|--|-------------------|
| ARA 210 - Advanced Arabic | 3 |
| ARA 310 - Techniques of expression in Arabic | 3 |
| ARA311- Current Problems in the Arab World | 3 |
| LLA318- Arabic Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| ELL 313 - English morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| ELL 315 - Public Speaking | 3 |
| LFR 201 - Advanced French course | 3 |
| LFR 316 – French Morphology and Syntax | 3 |
| ANG411 – Modern Cultural Issues in English | 3 |
| Total | 27 credits |

Table 16 – Common core courses of “Modern Language and Translation (B.A.)” (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 75)

| Specialization | Credits |
|--|-----------|
| LFR205- Modern Cultural Issues in French | 3 |
| LFR 216 - Techniques of expression in French | 3 |
| TRD 220 - Initiation to translation | 3 |
| TRD 310 (Methodology and Rules of Translation) | 2 |
| TRD 321 (General Translation A-B/B-A) | 3 |
| TRD 322 (General Translation A-C/C-A I) | 3 |
| TRD 415 (Computer-Assisted Translation) | 2 |
| TRD 416 (Linguistics and Translation) | 3 |
| TRD 421 (Legal Translation A-B/B-A) | 3 |
| TRD 423 (General Translation A-C/C-A II) | 3 |
| TRD 424 (Economic Translation A-B/B-A) | 2 |
| TRD 425 (Economic Translation A-C/C-A) | 3 |
| Capstone | 6 |
| TRD 428 (Conference Translation A, B, C) | 3 |
| TRD 429 (Sight Translation A, B, C) | 3 |
| Total | 39 |

Table 17 – Major courses of “Modern Language and Translation (B.A.)” (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 75)

Table 18 shows the typical study plan.

| Year 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | TRD220 | Initiation to Translation | 3 | |
| | LFR201 | Advanced French | 3 | FRN140 |
| | ARA210 | Advanced Arabic | 3 | ARA120 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | TRD322 | General Translation A-C/C-A I | 3 | TRD220 |
| Summer Semester 3 credits | TRD321 | General Translation A-B/B-A | 3 | TRD220 |
| | ARA310 | Techniques of Expression in Arabic | 3 | |
| | | Psychology and Social Behavior | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 16 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | ELL313 | English Morphology and Syntax | 3 | |
| | LFR216 | Techniques of expression in French | 3 | FRN140 |
| | TRD310 | Methodology and Rules of Translation | 2 | |
| | LLA318 | Arabic morphology and Syntax | 3 | |
| | TRD415 | Computer-Assisted Translation | 2 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | ... | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | ANG411 | Modern Cultural Issues in English | 3 | |
| | LFR316 | French Morphology and Syntax | 3 | |
| | TRD421 | Legal Translation A-B/B-A | 3 | TRD321 |
| | TRD423 | General Translation A-C/CA II | 3 | TRD322 |
| Summer Semester 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 3 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 14 credits | ... | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | ELL315 | Public Speaking | 3 | |
| | TRD424 | Economic Translation A-B/B-A | 2 | TRD321 |
| | TRD416 | Linguistics and Translation | 3 | |
| | TRD428 | Conference Translation A, B, C | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | ... | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | LFR205 | Modern Cultural Issues in French | 3 | |
| | ARA311 | Current Problems in the Arab World | 3 | |
| | TRD425 | Economic Translation A-C/C-A | 3 | TRD322 |
| | TRD429 | Sight Translation A, B, C | 3 | |

Table 18 – Study plan of “Modern Language and Translation (B.A.)” (Source: Self-evaluation report p. 77)

The prerequisites for the courses play a special role in the students’ curriculum: Some courses require basic linguistic knowledge. Students who do not fulfil these requirements during admission or through the languages remedial courses cannot be enrolled in the course unless they acquire these requirements. This is the case for example of the courses “Advanced Arabic” and “Advanced French course” which should be taken logically before the courses “Techniques of Expression in Arabic” and “Techniques of Expressions in French”. For other courses, a preliminary theoretical knowledge must be present. For instance, the courses of “Initiation to translation” and “Methodology

and rules of translation” are to be taken before all the general and specialised translation courses.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students’ understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills.

Organisation of students’ learning experience

The programme integrates three types of courses mapped to the learning outcomes: introductory courses, emphasising course and reinforcement courses.

In addition, the programme includes two trilingual capstone courses, “Conference Translation” and “Sight Translation”, which are offered at the end of the course and reflect all the learning outcomes and qualification objectives of the programme. In particular, they raise students’ awareness of the formative role of translators in contributing to the continuous progress of their society through the transfer of knowledge, the promotion of public intercultural exchange, which improves the nation at various levels, such as educational, technological, medical, political, economic, tourist and banking.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

Based on the latest accreditation recommendations, the curriculum has been redesigned. Changes have been made to the common core courses by adding new courses in French, English and Arabic, for example on current events and cultural issues.

The syllabi of the specialisation courses have been thoroughly revised in order to combine the fundamentals with more skill-oriented courses.

The new curricula promoted a conducive learning environment that emphasised active, personalised and participatory learning. Qualified teachers were recruited. Teachers were encouraged to use innovative teaching materials that take into account the abilities and needs of the students. Redundancies have been eliminated. Emphasis was placed on real-world practice in an approach that balanced theoretical and practical knowledge.

As mentioned in the curriculum section, new courses are now being explored that meet the above objectives, such as Machine Translation, Translation Project Management and Transcreation.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The experts appreciate the high amount of practical training. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2.5. Philosophy (B.A.)

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme "Philosophy (B.A.)" is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits).

The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common core courses: 18 credits
- Major Courses: 48 credits including an internship which is considered the capstone course covering all the programme outcomes.

Table 19 shows the common courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|---|-------------------|
| MTR225- Research Methods | 3 |
| SOC315- Anthropology Issues | 3 |
| JCM300- Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| PHI310- Mediation Philosophy | 3 |
| HIS325- History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| PSY300- Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| Total | 18 credits |

Table 19 – Common core courses within the Philosophy curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 79)

Table 20 shows the major courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|---|---------|
| PHI210 - Greek Philosophy | 3 |
| PHI301 - Medieval Philosophy | 3 |
| PHI327 - Philosophical Anthropology | 3 |
| PHI333 - Modern Philosophy | 3 |
| PHI445 - Metaphysics | 3 |
| PHI447 - Moral and Political Philosophy | 3 |
| PHI453 - Hermeneutics | 3 |
| PHI455 - German Idealism | 3 |
| PHI458 - Phenomenology | 3 |
| PHI459 - Existentialism | 3 |
| PHI432- Philosophie of Art | 3 |
| PHI420 - Logic and Philosophy of Knowledge | 3 |
| PHI375 – Internship | 3 |
| Electives (9 credits) | |
| PHI449 – Islamology | 3 |
| PHI456 - Modern and Contemporary Arab Thought | 3 |
| PHI448 - Arab Philosophy in the Middle age | 3 |
| PHI419 - Philosophy and Sciences | 3 |
| PHI433 - Far-East Philosophy | 3 |

Table 20 – Major courses within the Philosophy curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 79-80)

The typical curriculum is three years (6 semesters). Students are required to take general education courses, common core courses and major courses. Table 21 shows the plan.

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | PHI210 | Greek Philosophy | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC 315 | Anthropology Issues | 3 | |
| | PHI301 | Medieval Philosophy | 3 | PHI210 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | PHI333 | Modern Philosophy | 3 | PHI210 |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PHI310 | Mediation Philosophy | 3 | |
| | PHI327 | Philosophical Anthropology | 3 | PHI210 |
| | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | |
| | PHI420 | Logic and Philosophy of Knowledge | 3 | PHI210 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PHI455 | Metaphysics | 3 | PHI210/PHI301 |
| | PHI453 | Hermeneutics | 3 | PHI210/PHI327 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | PHI | <i>Elective course</i> | | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | HIS 315 | History and Ideologies | 3 | |
| | PHI447 | Moral and Political Philosophy | 3 | PHI210 |
| | PHI458 | Phenomenology | 3 | PHI210/PHI301/PHI327 |
| | PHI455 | German Idealism | 3 | PHI210 |
| | PHI | <i>Elective course</i> | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | PHI432 | Philosophy of Art | 3 | PHI210/PHI455 |
| | PHI459 | Existentialism | 3 | PHI210 |
| | PHI375 | Internship | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PHI | <i>Elective course</i> | 3 | |

Table 21 – Study plan of “Philosophy (B.A.)”
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 80-81)

The curriculum combines technical and professional requirements with general education requirements and electives to prepare students for a professional career and further study in the discipline associated with the programme.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students' understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The curriculum has three components that enrich and enhance the teaching of philosophy, while reflecting the current state of the discipline:

- A component with a dual ontological and anthropological aspect, which on the one hand creates situations in which questions about man and the world are posed, using Greek, classical and modern philosophies. On the other hand, it formulates metaphysical problems from a strictly philosophical perspective.
- A multidisciplinary component that focuses on the interaction between philosophy and the human and exact sciences, showing the current range of Western, Arabic and Far Eastern philosophy.
- An ethical-philosophical component that shapes knowledge in the following dimensions: scientific, moral, social, political and religious, building and integrating acquired knowledge into action. Ethics occupies a large place in the curriculum. It is presented as the foundation of all areas of philosophy, given the effectiveness of its teaching today in a world that is increasingly materialised and robotised.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

The programme has been revised following the integration of the liberal arts component. The programme has maintained its focus on historical and contemporary philosophical works, while introducing new electives that allow students to choose three courses based on their philosophical orientation and area of special interest.

The programme has also introduced a course on mediation as part of the liberal arts courses, in order to provide students from different humanities disciplines with the communicative and ethical ways of thinking in their personal and professional lives.

In addition to these changes, the department contributes to the general education programme by proposing two philosophy courses, Philosophical Questions and Ethics and Values, so that students from all disciplines can benefit from exposure to philosophical critical thinking.

In order to foster a sense of community and engagement between Philosophy students and students from other disciplines, the programme has also started to organise

Philosophy Talks, where students can discuss and debate a specific topic (happiness, dialogue, etc.) as a pilot project to be implemented in future semesters.

The Philosophy programme also encourages interdisciplinary collaboration. Philosophy lecturers are actively involved in interdisciplinary projects, such as a project on pluralism in Lebanon with the Social Sciences programme, highlighting the relevance of philosophy in different fields and its ability to bring new perspectives and insights.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The experts appreciate the high amount of practical training. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Arab philosophers could be given more consideration, because it could be an excellent opportunity, almost a unique selling point, to be able to treat Arab authors in the original language at a Christian university.

Some students have commented in interviews that they lack a set order or structure in their studies. This should be investigated by USEK - there may not be enough guidance.

Recommendation

The USEK should pay more attention to Arab philosophers in its curriculum.

USEK should review the system of student guidance in relation to course selection.

4.2.6. Psychology (B.A.)

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme “Psychology (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits).

The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common core courses: 42 credits
- Emphasis courses: 24 credits; since the Bachelor’s programme offers two emphases (Clinical Psychology and Industrial Psychology), students can choose the emphasis they want and accordingly they enrol in the respective courses. These courses include internship which is considered the capstone course covering all the programme outcomes.

Table 22 shows the common courses, tables 23 and 24 the two different specialisations.

| Course Code and Name | Credits | Prerequisites |
|---|-----------|---------------|
| Common Core | 42 | |
| PSY201- Introduction to Psychology | 3 | |
| MTR225- Research Methods | 3 | |
| PSY214- Developmental Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| PSY305- Clinical Psychoanalysis I | 3 | PSY201 |
| PSY311- Theories and Methods of Personality | 3 | PSY201 |
| PSY315- Psychology and Health | 3 | PSY201 |
| PSY325- Introduction to Psychosomatics | 3 | PSY305 |
| PSY330- Social Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| PSY370- Counseling and Ethics | 3 | PSY311 |
| PSY422- Cognitive Psychology | 3 | PSY311 |
| PSY433- Fundamental Psychobiology | 3 | PSY311 |
| PSY467- Group Management Functioning and Dynamics | 3 | PSY311 |
| SOC218- Statistics Applied to Human Sciences I | 3 | |
| SOC318- Statistics Applied to Human Sciences II | 3 | SOC218 |

Table 22 – Common courses of “Psychology (B.A.)”
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 82)

| Emphasis – PSYC / Clinical Psychology | 24 | |
|---|-----------|--------|
| PSY335- Developmental Clinical Psychology | 3 | PSY214 |
| PSY337- Child and Adolescent Psychopathology | 3 | PSY214 |
| PSY437- Adult Psychopathology | 3 | PSY335 |
| PSY445 - Clinical Psychoanalysis II | 3 | PSY305 |
| PSY469- Communication Techniques and Clinical Examination | 3 | PSY337 |
| PSY470- Adult Psychological exam | 3 | PSY335 |
| PSY475- Internship of Clinical Psychology | 3 | PSY480 |
| PSY480- Personality Study with Projective Techniques | 3 | PSY445 |

Table 23 – Courses with emphasis on Clinical Psychology
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 82)

| Emphasis – PSYT / Industrial Psychology | 24 | |
|--|-----------|--------|
| SOC 423 - Organizational sociology and labor | 3 | PSY330 |
| SOC 460 - Survey methodology | 3 | SOC318 |
| PSY 366 - Personal and professional development in occupational Psychology | 3 | PSY331 |
| PSY 378 - Practice of the evaluation in industrial psychology | 3 | PSY366 |
| PSY 415 - Ergonomic analysis | 3 | PSY311 |
| PSY 439 - Psychopathology of Work | 3 | PSY366 |
| PSY 455 - Psychological management of human resources | 3 | PSY366 |
| PSY 479 - Internship of Industrial Psychology | 3 | PSY455 |

Table 24 – Courses with emphasis on Industrial Psychology
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 83)

The typical curriculum is three years (6 semesters). Students are required to take general education courses, common core courses and major courses. Some courses are aligned with the programme outcomes as introductory courses, while others are set as reinforcing courses; the third group is the group of emphasis courses. The capstone courses PSY 475 - Clinical Psychology Internship or PSY 479 - Industrial Psychology Internship are the culmination of all programme outcomes.

Tables 25 and 26 show the plans for the two different specialisations.

| Year 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC218 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences I | 3 | |
| | PSY201 | Introduction to Psychology | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY330 | Social Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY311 | Theories and Models of Personality | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY214 | Developmental Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| | SOC318 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences II | 3 | SOC218 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY305 | Clinical Psychoanalysis I | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY337 | Child and Adolescent Psychopathology | 3 | PSY214 |
| | PSY433 | Fundamental Psychobiology | 3 | PSY311 |
| | PSY422 | Cognitive Psychology | 3 | PSY311 |
| Spring Semester | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY335 | Developmental clinical psychology | 3 | PSY214 |
| | PSY445 | Clinical Psychoanalysis II | 3 | PSY305 |
| | PSY 469 | Communication Techniques and Clinical Examination | 3 | PSY337 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

| Year 3 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|--------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY437 | Adult Psychopathology | 3 | PSY335 |
| | PSY480 | Personality Study with Projective Techniques | 3 | PSY445 |
| | PSY325 | Introduction to Psychosomatics | 3 | PSY305 |
| | PSY467 | Group Management Functioning and Dynamics | 3 | PSY311 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY470 | Adult psychological exam | 3 | PSY335 |
| | PSY475 | Internship of Clinical Psychology | 3 | PSY480 |
| | PSY315 | Psychology and Health | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY370 | Counseling and Ethics | 3 | PSY311 |

Table 25 – Study plan of Clinical Psychology
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 83-84)

| Year 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|--------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC218 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences I | 3 | |
| | PSY201 | Introduction to Psychology | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY330 | Social Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY311 | Theories and Models of Personality | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY214 | Developmental Psychology | 3 | PSY201 |
| | SOC318 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences II | 3 | SOC218 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY305 | Clinical Psychoanalysis I | 3 | PSY201 |
| | SOC423 | Organizational sociology and labor | 3 | PSY330 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | PSY433 | Fundamental Psychobiology | 3 | PSY311 |
| | PSY422 | Cognitive Psychology | 3 | PSY311 |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC460 | Survey methodology | 3 | SOC318 |
| | PSY455 | Psychological Management of Human Resources | 3 | PSY366 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | PSY366 | Personal and professional development in occupational Psychology | 3 | PSY330 |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

| Year 3 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|---------|--------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Prerequisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY378 | Practice of the evaluation in industrial psychology | 3 | PSY366 |
| | PSY415 | Ergonomic analysis | 3 | PSY311 |
| | PSY325 | Introduction to Psychosomatics | 3 | PSY305 |
| | PSY467 | Group Management Functioning and Dynamics | 3 | PSY311 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY439 | Psychopathology of Work | 3 | PSY366 |
| | PSY479 | Internship of Industrial Psychology | 3 | PSY455 |
| | PSY315 | Psychology and Health | 3 | PSY201 |
| | PSY370 | Counseling and Ethics | 3 | PSY311 |

Table 26 – Study plan of Industrial Psychology
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 84-85)

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

The programme offers students two different specialisations: Clinical Psychology and Business Psychology. Both specialisations provide students with a comprehensive education in Psychology based on research and evidence-based practice. As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students' understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills.

The programme also emphasises the development of observational and experimental skills, which are put into practice in the postgraduate programme through the use of scientific methods to test hypotheses and form logical arguments and conclusions. Creative thinking and problem solving are also encouraged.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The curriculum provides students with a solid foundation in psychology through courses that cover basic psychological principles as well as various theories and approaches to practice such as cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis, personality, assessment, research methods and more. In addition to comprehensive training, students have the opportunity to participate in supervised internships in a variety of settings including hospitals, schools, businesses and non-governmental organisations. Students are also encouraged to engage in evidence-based research and participate in studies conducted by faculty members and the PSYCHE laboratory.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

The programme has undergone enhancements to improve the educational experience for students. One of the most significant changes is the integration of supervised group dynamics sessions in schools into the practicum course (PSY 469). These sessions provide students with practical, hands-on experience and are incorporated into the curriculum, allowing students to apply concepts learned in the classroom to real-life situations.

Placement opportunities for students have also been diversified, with a wider range of settings such as prisons, psychiatric hospitals and schools now available for students to complete their placements. This will provide students with a wider range of experiences and perspectives from which to draw, further enriching their educational experience.

In addition, the programme has integrated online coursework, which has led to increased student engagement and participation in research activities. The curriculum has also been redesigned to place greater emphasis on group work and discussion of scientific articles, similar to the approach used in the PSY 325 course.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The experts appreciate the high amount of practical training. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.2.7. Social Sciences (B.A.)

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme “Social Sciences (B.A.)” is a three-year full-time programme (96 credits).

The courses are distributed into three groups and structured as follows:

- General education courses: 30 credits
- Common core courses: 18 credits
- Major courses and emphasis/concentration course: 48 credits including the capstone course (SOC 466) which is a 150 hours Internship covering all the programme outcomes and spread over two phases (observation and practice of research techniques and projects construction).

Table 27 shows the common courses, tables 28 shows the major courses.

| Course code and title | Credits |
|---|-------------------|
| MTR225 - Research Methods | 3 |
| JCM 300 - Fundamentals of Communication | 3 |
| HIS 325 - History and Art Criticism | 3 |
| PHI 310 - Mediation philosophy | 3 |
| PSY 300 - Psychology and Personal Development | 3 |
| HIS 315 - History and Ideologies | 3 |
| Total | 18 credits |

Table 27 – Common courses within the Social Sciences curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 86)

| Course code and title | Credits |
|---|---------|
| SOC218 - Statistics Applied to Human Sciences I | 3 |
| SOC231 - Sociology, Fundamental Concepts and theories | 3 |
| SOC315 - Core Themes in Anthropology | 3 |
| SOC318 - Statistics Applied to Human Sciences II | 3 |
| SOC411 - Financial Economics | 3 |
| SOC421 - The Sociology of Deviance | 3 |
| SOC422 - Political Sociology | 3 |
| SOC423 - Organizational Sociology and Labor | 3 |
| SOC426 - Theories and Practices of Development | 3 |

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| SOC430 - Sociology of Religion | 3 |
| SOC431 - Sociology of the Family | 3 |
| SOC432 - Sociology of Conflicts | 3 |
| SOC435 - Social Protection Policy | 3 |
| SOC438 - Demographic Analysis | 3 |
| SOC460 - Survey Techniques | 3 |
| SOC490 - Internship / Laboratory / Workshop | 3 |
| Total | 48 credits |

Table 28 – Major courses within the Social Sciences curriculum
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 87)

The typical curriculum is three years (6 semesters). Students are required to take general education courses, common core courses and major courses, usually taken over the second and third year. Table 29 shows the plan.

| YEAR 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Long Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | ENG240 | English Communication | 3 | |
| | MTR225 | Research Methods | 3 | |
| | SOC218 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences I | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC 315 | Core Themes in Anthropology | 3 | |
| | JCM300 | Fundamentals of Communication | 3 | |
| | SOC318 | Statistics Applied to Human Sciences II | 3 | SOC218 |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| YEAR 2 | | | | |
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | HIS325 | History and Art Criticism | 3 | |
| | SOC430 | Sociology of Religion | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC431 | Sociology of the Family | 3 | SOC231 |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | SOC422 | Political Sociology | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC421 | The Sociology of Deviance | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC460 | Survey Techniques | 3 | |
| | PHI310 | Mediation Philosophy | 3 | |
| Summer Session 3 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |

| YEAR 3 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Term | Course Code | Course Title | Credits | Pre-requisite |
| Fall Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | PSY300 | Psychology and Personal Development | 3 | |
| | SOC432 | Sociology of Conflicts | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC426 | Theories and Practices of Development | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC435 | Social Protection Policy | 3 | |
| Spring Semester 15 credits | | <i>General Education Course</i> | 3 | |
| | HIS315 | History and Ideologies | 3 | |
| | SOC423 | Organizational Sociology and Labor | 3 | SOC231 |
| | SOC438 | Demographic Analysis | 3 | |
| | SOC490 | Internship / Laboratory / Workshop | 3 | SOC460 |

Table 29 – Study plan of “Social Sciences (B.A.)”
(Source: Self-evaluation report p. 87-88)

The curriculum combines technical and professional requirements with general education requirements and electives to prepare students for a professional career and further study in the discipline associated with the programme. Some courses are matched to the programme outcomes as introducing courses, while others are set as reinforcing courses; as for the third group, it is the group of emphasising courses. The capstone course SOC 466 (A and B) is the culmination of all the learning outcomes.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

As already described above, different teaching and active learning strategies are adopted. For instance, some courses are delivered essentially by means of lectures, in others teachers are expected more to act as facilitators by leading the students to become critical thinkers and solve problems autonomously. Class discussions and other activities, such as working in groups, play a vital role in ensuring interaction between teacher and students, allowing the teacher to evaluate the students’ understanding of the topic under study and development of the targeted skills.

Organisation of students’ learning experience

The programme is designed to provide students with a state-of-the-art education in the field. The curriculum is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments and advances in the discipline, including new areas of research, innovative teaching and learning methods and the latest research techniques. This should ensure that the graduates are not only well versed in the field, but also equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to remain at the forefront of the discipline. In addition, the programme focuses on developing students into both knowledgeable teachers and active social actors who can use their education to make a positive difference in the world. Graduates of the programme are not only teachers and social actors, but also role models in teaching sociology and being social agents of change.

Course syllabi clearly identify the learning outcomes for each course and the knowledge, skills and abilities that students are expected to have at the end of each course. The syllabus format follows the standard already shown in table 9, chapter 4.2.1.

Latest improvements

In an effort to improve the overall educational experience for students, several changes have been implemented in the programme. The curriculum has been redesigned to place greater emphasis on interdepartmental collaboration and integration. For example, students will now have the opportunity to study a wider range of subjects by taking courses from other departments such as Philosophy, Languages and Literature, Communication and Journalism, which will be integrated into the common courses of the programme.

Another change is the expansion of internship opportunities to include community placements, which will provide students with a wide range of practical learning experiences. These experiences will now be integrated into specific courses, allowing students to apply the concepts they learn in the classroom to real-world situations.

Last but not least, students became integrated into the research activities of the IDEES multidisciplinary research laboratory to give them the opportunity to work alongside experienced researchers and contribute to ongoing research projects.

Assessment

Programme structure

The expert panel consider the curriculum to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

A variety of teaching methods are used. The experts appreciate the high amount of practical training. The teaching methods are described in the course syllabi, which also detail the forms of assessment used during the semester. Overall, the curriculum and its concrete implementation in the courses seem to be well planned.

Organisation of students' learning experience

In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plan is clear and also offers flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

Areas for improvement

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4.3. Student assessment (all programmes)

Current status

Organisation of assessment

Students are evaluated based on formative and summative assessments on course level as well as on programme level. During their studies, they receive continuous feedback on their work, and on their progress, especially the attainment of the specific learning outcomes of every course.

- At course level, the evaluation of students' work is performed according to the grading scale stated in the syllabus and shared with the students during the first sessions of the course.
- At programme level, student progress is monitored by the department with feedback and guidance provided to students through the academic advisors within the department. The department ensures these prerequisites are met by all students through the Banner Student Information System that does not allow enrolment in a course, unless all that course's prerequisites are met. Student performance is evaluated based on the student's continuous improvement, general average, academic standing, and the internship.

Amount and requirements of assessments

The assessment of student performance is seen as a continuous process, both at course level in the current semester and at the end, as well as at programme level with the final examination. Examinations can take different forms such as multiple choice, case study, dissertation, project or work placement report. They can be written or oral, such as a presentation of the work done during a project to the class group.

At course level, the overall grade is usually distributed as per the following scale knowing that these percentages can vary between courses, but the final examination cannot exceed 45% of the final grade:

- Active Participation: 10%. It takes into account students' engagement with the course material and within the learning community.
- Continuous assessment: 50%. It includes projects, assignments, research papers and the mid-term evaluation. These are central indicators for student integration and understanding of the material learned thus providing reinforcement of work done in class.
- End of semester evaluation: 40%. It is the final examination.

Based upon the grades a student has received, a student's grade average is calculated in the standard way, by summing the total numerical value of the grades received and dividing that sum by the total number of credit hours associated with the courses taken.

At the end of studies, students enrolled in the Bachelor's programmes must complete an internship which is considered the final examination towards the degree. This allows the department to obtain an external evaluation of student performance before

graduation. This Internship is done in a school under the supervision of a faculty member. The final grade is based on the internship evaluation criteria.

Requirements of the final assessment

The graduation requirements for the B.A. degree include the following criteria:

- Earning 96 credits, the required number of credits for the programme
- Fulfilling the minimum and maximum duration of studies that vary from 6 semesters (3 years) to 14 semesters (7 years) excluding the Freshman year
- Passing all the required courses
- Fulfilling all the General Education requirements
- Fulfilling the internship
- Having a total grade average not less than 70/100 and not being in probation.

The Registrar Office / Academic Path Division executes the degree audit of students in coordination with the department. This audit consists of two main steps:

First audit

1. The Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer at the Registrar Office / Academic Path Division generates the list of potential graduates for the current semester according to their total number of credits.
2. The Head of Department checks if all the specialization courses are fulfilled.
3. The Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer checks if the General Education requirements, the capstone project, and other graduation requirements such as the minimum number of semesters, the minimum number of credits are fulfilled. In the case of inconsistency, the Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer informs the Head of Department who will have to solve the issue with the student.
4. The Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer prevalidates the transcript (putting stars for failed courses, etc.)
5. The first audit is finished, and an updated transcript is generated and placed in the student file.

Second audit

1. At the end of the semester, the Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer generates an updated list of students who are eligible to graduate according to their total number of credits.
2. The Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer checks if the General Education requirements, the capstone project, and other graduation requirements such as the minimum number of semesters, the minimum number of credits are fulfilled. In the case of inconsistency, the Graduation Procedure and Student Files Officer informs the Head of Department who will have to solve the issue with the student.
3. The Registrar validates the final transcript.

4. The university proceeds with the graduation of the students who have met the requirements at degree level as well as the issuance of diplomas according to the procedures indicated in the Academic Rules and Student Life.

Students have the right to suspend their graduation in the case where they are willing to re-enrol in the Summer Semester/Session to repeat a course and increase their GPA. In order to do so, students should visit the Registrar Office to put an end to the graduation procedure as soon as they receive the notification of the ongoing degree audit and graduation processes.

The academic unit to which students are affiliated should approve the suspension request.

A student can ask for a degree audit at any time.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria are set out in the course syllabus and programme description. They are set out on the examination paper and used consistently to ensure transparency and fairness in marking. In addition, the final examination questions are linked to the learning outcomes of the course and this link is shown on the examination paper.

The final grade is a numerical grade ranging from 40 to 100 in increments of 5. The relationship between the different scales (grade above 100, 0-4 scale and alphabetical equivalent) is regulated in the "Academic Rules and Student Life".

Assessment qualification of staff

Faculty and staff are regularly trained in assessment. Assessment is also made topic in LTEC trainings.

Examination regulations and regulations for student absence, illness, etc.

There is a system of rules and regulations for the assessment.

A student who fails to meet a course requirement (examination, test, report, etc.) will be attributed by the teacher a failing grade to this requirement; unless the student presents a valid justification (e.g., medical report). In such a case, the teacher may re-schedule the examination, grant an extended deadline for submitting a report, or propose an alternative depending on the situation (the solution depends on the requirement itself, e.g., a written examination, an assignment, a presentation, etc.).

A student may repeat a failed course. A course cannot be failed more than twice at the undergraduate level.

Any student has the right to request a grade revision within 5 days of the grade being displayed. Grade revision is a multi-stage process that requires the approval of the Head of Department, the Associate Dean and the Head of the Academic Unit. In the event of a dispute, the Academic Unit Council makes the final decision.

Assessment

Organisation of assessment

The assessment system is transparent, clear and varied. Responsibilities are clear for both teachers and students.

Levels and requirements of assessment

The level and requirements of assessment are appropriate to the intended learning outcomes. They are fully in line with international practice.

The experts consider that a sufficient range of assessment methods and tasks is used.

Final assessment requirements

All procedures, requirements and criteria are clear and transparent and always up-to-date. The experts appreciate that students can ask for a degree audit at any time.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria are clearly defined and transparent for both students and staff. The students with whom the experts spoke were well aware of the assessment criteria, they know what is expected of them and they know who to contact if they have problems or questions. The student-centred learning approach provides almost optimal preparation for assessment.

Assessment skills of staff

According to the interviews conducted during the site visit, the staff carrying out the assessments are adequately qualified. In addition, staff receive regular training. The link between knowledge transfer and assessment is also addressed in the recruitment procedures.

Examination regulations and regulations for student absence, illness, etc.

All examination regulations are available online. There are clear and objective rules for student absence, illness and other extenuating circumstances.

Areas for improvement

In some meetings with students, the impression was given that there was a high examination load in some courses, esp. in core and extra-curricular courses. This was not verifiable by the experts, but the university should keep an eye on it.

Recommendation

USEK should monitor assessment carefully, particularly in relation to student workload. There should be no over-assessment of individual courses.

4.4. Organisation of the study programmes

Current status

Entry qualifications

Students enrolled in the seven BA programmes concerned should be holders of the Lebanese Baccalaureate: Life Sciences – LS, General Sciences – GS, Literature and Humanities – LH, or Economics and Sociology – ES.

The majority of these students have graduated from private schools with French as their first foreign language and English as their second foreign language. The language policy adopted by USEK has strengthened the use of English in order to provide them with the skills to access regional and international career opportunities where English is the dominant business language, without losing the practice of one of the foreign languages they already have a full or partial command of.

The selection of students is administered by the Admissions and Transfers Committee in accordance with criteria approved by the Academic and Research Council. USEK aims to provide a supportive service to all applicants and prospective applicants, principally by

- Providing clear and helpful pre-entry information and advice to enable students to apply for a course that meets their needs and interests.
- Welcoming applications from all students, regardless of background, recognising that the diversity of students from different social backgrounds contributes to the personal growth, intellectual development and maturity of all.
- To ensure that admissions policies and practices at all levels are designed to match the abilities and aptitudes of the student with the requirements of the programme.
- To provide preparatory courses for students who do not achieve the required standard in the general entrance assessment.

Students from schools with a French background will be assessed by the Admissions and Transfer Commission on the basis of their school grades and may be exempted from the 6 credits of remedial French if they provide evidence of French language proficiency. Students from English backgrounds are required to follow an intensive French language tuition programme equivalent to 6 credits. Successful DELF B2 or TCF B2 candidates will be exempted from the French remedial course.

In general, students admitted to USEK must demonstrate an adequate level of English by presenting one of the recognised standardised tests or the USEK English proficiency test. Depending on the results and based on the following rules, a student may need to enrol in a remedial English programme equivalent to 9 to 15 credits.

All information on admission, registration and academic regulations can be found in the Academic Rules and Student Life published online.¹³

Regulations for the recognition of qualifications

Applicants who have previously studied at another university accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education may apply to transfer to the programme. Transfer applications are evaluated twice a year, at the end of the autumn

¹³ See <https://www.usek.edu.lb/Site/ListingBlocks.aspx?pageid=2780> (accessed 3 May 2023)

and spring semesters, once all grades are available and candidates' files are complete. Admission is then granted to successful candidates for the following regular semester (admission is not granted for the summer session). Candidates must also meet the French and English language requirements as outlined above.

Once the application has been submitted, it is examined by the department in order to determine the courses to be transferred. The Dean then validates the application and submits it to the Admissions Committee for a final decision based on the following criteria:

- The course validated by the transfer must have the same credit hours as its equivalent in USEK;
- According to the American system, the minimum grade obtained in the original university that can be accepted during a transfer is 70/100 (according to the American system; 2.0/4.0). In all cases, the student must have passed the course validated by the transfer in his/her original university;
- Courses validated six years or more before the date of admission cannot be considered;
- The number of transferred credits cannot exceed 49% of the total number of credits required for the undergraduate programme;
- All transferred credits must be declared and validated at the time of admission to USEK, after which no more transferred credits can be added.

Accordingly, transferred courses will receive a grade of T and the student cannot later repeat a transferred course.

All students holding the Lebanese Baccalaureate are eligible for consideration for admission to the undergraduate programmes at USEK. Students holding the Lebanese Baccalaureate are granted 30 credits based on their Baccalaureate strand (cf. table 6):

| | Leb. Bac. Lit/Hum (LH) | Leb. Bac. Eco/Sco. (SE) | Leb. Bac. Life Sciences (LS) | Leb. Bac. General Sciences (GS) |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Humanities | 18 cr. (24h-68.6%) | 12 cr. (14h-40%) | 9 cr. (9h-25.7%) | 9 cr. (9h-25.7%) |
| Social Sc. | 3 cr. (3h-8.6%) | 9 cr. (10h-28.6%) | 3 cr. (2h-5.7%) | 3 cr. (2h-5.7%) |
| Natural Sc. | 4 cr. (3h-8.6%) | 4 cr. (4h-11.4%) | 12 cr. (16h-45.7%) | 8 cr. (11h-31.4%) |
| Mathematics | 3 cr. (2h-5.7%) | 3 cr. (4h-11.4%) | 6 cr. (5h-14.3%) | 9 cr. (10h-28.6%) |
| "Electives" | 2 cr. (3h-8.6%) | 2 cr. (3h-8.6%) | 0 cr. (3h-8.6%) | 1 cr. (3h-8.6%) |
| Total | 30 cr. | 30 cr. | 30 cr. | 30 cr. |
| Notes & References | Distribution of the 30 credits granted at USEK as equivalent to the Leb. Bacc. Part II, per discipline, giving the number of weekly hours at school and percentages for each discipline Reference: Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education Official Website | | | |

Table 30 – Lebanese Baccalaureate Part II contents per strand (Source: self-evaluation report p. 94)

Based on this table, all students have already acquired 12 to 21 credits in Humanities and Social Sciences. According to the regulations of the Lebanese Ministry of Education the above-mentioned subjects includes the following topics: Humanities (Languages, Literature, Philosophy, History), Social Sciences (Psychology, Sociology,

Anthropology, Economics, Geography), Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Astronomy, Nutrition), Mathematics.

Organisation of the study process

According to USEK teaching policy, courses are delivered in a student-centred approach joining together traditional lectures based on slideshow presentations, interactive methods and laboratory works. Almost all classes in this programme are face to face classes. There are also hybrid courses where the instructor interacts with his students through E-learning, and some of them might use the active whiteboard. The size of the classes varies from 15 to 35 students per class.

Students have regular assignments and are divided according to a schedule and a planned organisation every semester. Practical work is an addition to homework.

Since the university has adopted the North American credit system, in order to facilitate students' credit transfer and recognition, the U.S. credit is the measuring unit of the number of hours per semester. One credit represents one teaching hour (50 minutes course) per week during a 15 weeks semester (including exams and tests). For each credit, the student should dedicate around two hours for self-learning outside the classroom to complete his assignments and prepare for his examinations.

Management of the study programme

The Provost is responsible for overseeing academic programmes and providing guidance on long-term planning. The Academic and Research Council is responsible for approving decisions on the establishment of new research centres, academic regulations, the academic calendar and applications for institutional alliances. At the Faculty level, the Doctoral Commission, the Associate Dean, the Heads of Department or the Heads of Programme form the Academic Unit Council. The Academic Unit Council is responsible for the implementation of the study regulations within the Academic Unit. The Academic Unit Council discusses proposals for new programmes or adjustments to existing programmes before they are submitted to the Provost for validation and approval. The Academic Unit Council considers applications for new or modified programmes. If approved, the request is then submitted to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to obtain the Decree.

Student workload

Table 31 illustrates the students' workload.

| Study plan | | Total credits | Class attendance hours | Self-learning hours (outside classroom) | Internship in schools | Workload / semester | Workload / Week |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Year | Semester | | | | | | |
| 1 | Fall | 18 | 270 hours | 540 hours | - | 810 hours | 54 hours |
| 1 | Spring | 18 | 270 hours | 540 hours | - | 810 hours | 54 hours |
| 2 | Fall | 18 | 270 hours | 540 hours | - | 810 hours | 54 hours |
| 2 | Spring | 18 | 270 hours | 540 hours | - | 810 hours | 54 hours |
| 3 | Fall | 9 + 6 | 135 hours | 270 hours | 90 hours | 495 hours | 33 hours |
| 3 | Spring | 9 | 135 hours | 270 hours | | 405 hours | 27 hours |
| Total workload | | | 1350 hours | 2700 hours | 90 hours | 4140 hours | ~46 hours |

Student Workload in BA (without summer)

| Study plan | | Total credits | Class attendance hours | Self-learning hours (outside classroom) | Internship in schools | Workload / semester | Workload / Week |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Year | Semester | | | | | | |
| 1 | Fall | 15 | 225 hours | 450 hours | - | 675 hours | 45 hours |
| 1 | Spring | 15 | 225 hours | 450 hours | - | 675 hours | 45 hours |
| 1 | Summer | 3 | 45 hours | 90 hours | - | 135 hours | 27 hours |
| 2 | Fall | 15 | 225 hours | 450 hours | - | 675 hours | 45 hours |
| 2 | Spring | 15 | 225 hours | 450 hours | - | 675 hours | 45 hours |
| 2 | Summer | 3 | 45 hours | 90 hours | - | 135 hours | 27 hours |
| 3 | Fall | 15 | 225 hours | 360 hours | 90 hours | 585 hours | 39 hours |
| 3 | Spring | 15 | 225 hours | 360 hours | | 585 hours | 39 hours |
| Total workload | | | 1350 hours | 2700 hours | 90 hours | 4140 hours | ~39 hours |

Student Workload in BA (with summer)

Table 31 – Student workload (Source: self-evaluation report p. 95)

Student support system

USEK supports students at different levels: academic, personal, professional, etc. This is done through various units that are responsible for supporting students during their education at USEK. In 2015, USEK became the first university in Lebanon and the region to receive matrix accreditation for its student support services, which include the following offices: Registrar's Office, Student Affairs Office, Social Services Office, Admissions Office, International Affairs Office (services for international students), Career Services Office, Institutional Research and Assessment Office, ACCESS Office, USEK Counselling Centre.

The full fee schedule is available online, along with information on financial assistance.

Cooperation with internal and external partners

In addition to the other departments of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences with which the programme shares common core courses, the programmes' internal partners are all the departments and units that benefit from the general education courses.

The external partners of the programme are also all the stakeholders and, in particular, the employers where the students do their internships. The university has cooperation agreements with several industrial partners. For example, in the Education and Philosophy departments, there is cooperation with schools such as Ecole St-Enfant Jésus - Besançon - Baabdat, Collège des Apôtres - Jounieh, Saint-Joseph des Pères Capucins - Batroun, Central College - Jounieh, Collège des Soeurs des Saints-Cœurs - Kfarhabab. In the field of languages and literatures, there is close and occasional cooperation with the French Cultural Centre and the American Embassy. The external partners of the social sciences programme are the NGOs in which the students do their internships, such as the Anta Akhi Association (dealing with people with special needs), Youth for Peace (civic engagement), the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO (and the list of schools affiliated to the UNESCO Commission), 22 municipalities in the Kesrouan and Jbeil regions, OFRA Association and Women Pastoral Office for women's rights, Adyan Foundation and Faros Observatory for religious and cultural pluralism, SeSoBel for the concept of participation in the field of inclusion of people with special needs.

The Journalism and Communication programme has many local partners among the national media where students do their internships. Cooperation with external partners is also maintained through the participation of members of the professional markets in the delivery of courses.

Assessment

Entry qualifications

According to the experts, the entry requirements and regulations are appropriate and transparent. All information is available on the university's website.

Recognition of qualifications

USEK has a formalised recognition practice for previous qualifications from other universities. Besides, students holding the Lebanese Baccalaureate are granted 30 credits based on their Baccalaureate strand.

Organisation of the study process and management of the programme

According to the expert panel, the study process is well organised and clear. Roles, duties and responsibilities in the management are clearly defined and appropriately structured, and the people involved with whom the experts were able to speak are highly motivated and professional.

In addition, the university has established methods and means for student involvement, particularly in providing feedback.

Student workload

Having heard the students' views, the panel of experts is of the opinion that the workload of the programmes is manageable. It is clear from discussions with students and relevant teaching staff that the university strives to keep student workloads manageable. Student workload is monitored.

Organisation of the student life cycle

The experts note that there is excellent communication between students, teachers, and administration and management. There are many opportunities for formal and informal contact between teachers and students on campus and online. The students interviewed were very positive about the good organisation and familiar atmosphere of USEK and the whole study process.

In the meeting with the students, it was very often mentioned that the students would like to see more sports clubs established and supported by USEK.

Student support system

According to the interviews during the site visit, the university cares for its students' welfare. Student advisory services are well developed and known by students.

The university's web-based information and communication services play an important role and are frequently used.

Co-operation with external and internal partners

Internal cooperation with the other departments as well as with external institutions (in Lebanon and abroad) function well. The experts appreciate USEK's networking activities.

Areas for improvement

The existing good contacts with potential employers and schools could probably be used more intensively to improve the programmes. Joint discussion rounds and events to present new developments would be useful.

Recommendation

USEK should start to talk to the students about how to improve the sports and leisure facilities at the university.

5. Final assessment

A. Institutional assessment

During its two-day visit, the expert panel experienced an extraordinary university that defies the current adversities in Lebanon and provides excellent higher education from a humanistic and socially responsible perspective. USEK impressed the panel with its clear mission and vision, which influence the activities and daily life of the university.

The university has a clear institutional profile, in keeping with the character of a Catholic university. The strategies pursued by the university are closely and consistently linked to its mission and are in line with the expectations and needs of Lebanese society. Particularly in the current crisis, the university community has shown a strong cohesion, both internally and externally. The experts appreciate the strong emphasis on social responsibility and progress at the university.

Excellence in teaching, research, entrepreneurship and community engagement is the overarching goal of USEK, always understood as inclusive, not exclusive: For those who do not have the financial means, support is provided, and USEK makes also great efforts to enable its students to study and to retain its staff.

The strategic goals reflect how USEK strives for institutional effectiveness and efficiency in order to continuously improve teaching and learning. All staff are familiar with these objectives and they appear to be widely accepted, even internalised.

In 2017, the experts had recommended that in developing the new USEK strategic plan, the university should develop a process that facilitates discussion at faculty level and with external and internal stakeholders from the outset. In recent years, USEK has made considerable progress. Regular processes to reflect and adjust the strategies are implemented. They appear well thought out, based on indicators, and dynamic. The planning processes involve the university's key stakeholders and attempt to plan

on a broader basis. They take place on several levels, are well organised and transparent and follow practices that are common in universities internationally.

USEK's high reputation give evidence that the chosen strategies and activities are adequate for achieving the intended objectives. In the experts' view the strategies both on university and on school level appear to conform to the university mission.

The experts assess the governance of USEK as clearly structured and documented. The responsibilities and procedures of the main university bodies are set and described in the constitution, the bylaws, and in the several policies. All appears well thought out and applicable. The university has even taken several steps to provide opportunities for more formalised student involvement in governance processes.

USEK has adapted its faculty structures in recent years, which was also recommended in 2017. Greater organisational efficiency can be seen.

Academic freedom is guaranteed. The responsibility for research and teaching lies with the academics. The OLM does not interfere in teaching and research.

From the experts' point of view, USEK undoubtedly provides excellent and sufficient resources. University operations with high standards of quality and excellence are definitely guaranteed. The Kaslik campus appears to be in the best condition and excellently maintained. Large parts of the campus are accessible without barriers, and the university thus fulfils its commitment to an inclusive educational approach in an exemplary manner. The cleanliness of the buildings is particularly noteworthy for the experts. In the experts' view the financial management is also professional; the process of preparing the yearly budget is clear and executed with the collaboration of the faculties. The university finances itself almost exclusively from tuition fees and USEK's financial management is correspondingly highly professional and effective.

The staff of the university is, according to the expert team, appropriate to provide high quality education to its students and to develop research. All teachers the experts could talk to presented themselves as highly motivated. The students who could be spoken to emphasised the good teaching climate and the open-door policy that characterises the teaching staff. The university's procedures for recruiting and later continuous training and developing staff seem appropriate and fulfil academic standards: The selection of academics is always based on an academic decision that is justified and documented in a standardised manner.

The expert panel were particularly impressed by the library: a bright, communicative space, excellently and attractively furnished, with work areas for students and faculty. Furthermore, the holdings are unique, especially the archival holdings on the Lebanese past, the restoration areas and the digitisation areas can be viewed to an extent and quality that need not fear comparison with Western European universities. In the view of the experts, there has really been tremendous progress in the library sector at USEK in recent years, certainly not least because of the extraordinarily dedicated and qualified staff.

USEK's IT infrastructure is up to date and equipped with modern and functional software, which was also confirmed by various stakeholders during the site visit. A fast wifi connection is available everywhere on campus, even eduroam accounts work. The experts appreciate all efforts the university makes to practically train teaching personnel in general methods of effective and interactive online teaching. USEK and its LTEC certainly have the role of a pioneer in Lebanon.

According to the experts, USEK has made great progress in the area of research. Compared to the initial accreditation in 2012, the university's profile has changed fundamentally; in addition to excellence in teaching, research is now also an essential component of the institution. The experts appreciate that research activities of the academic staff are encouraged by the university. Research interest and publication frequency are considered when hiring new academics. The laboratories are well equipped and excellently managed. Certainly, the accreditations by ABET and the WFME have given the equipment an additional boost.

Young scientists are obviously supported and promoted by the institution in many ways. The university is aware of international requirements for good research, the protection of the rights of young scientists and the fight against plagiarism. The doctoral college and the doctoral regulations make an extraordinarily positive impression on the experts.

The expert panel highly appreciate the strong and active affection of USEK to its local neighbourhood as well as to Lebanese society needs. The university's mission affirms both its commitment and its responsibility to the further improvement of society. The many activities that the university carries out on campus and together with civil society are impressive. In the view of the experts, it can be seen as great asset of USEK to be such an active part in the society.

From the experts' point of view, USEK has an exceptionally well-developed quality assurance system, which is based on a variety of proven policies, guidelines and formalised procedures, while remaining agile and under constant review. Many offices of the university are involved and actively contribute to its implementation. There is no doubt that the university attaches great importance to institutional effectiveness. The quality assurance tools developed in recent years appear to be widely accepted and implemented. Assessment criteria, indicators, and tools are clearly defined, as are the processes and responsibilities. The Institutional Research and Assessment Office works efficiently and closely with the university management. Discussions with lecturers and the administration revealed a broad acceptance of the QA activities and the trustful cooperation was emphasised several times. Students express high satisfaction with education as well as student services at USEK.

USEK therefore undoubtedly and unreservedly deserves re-accreditation.

B. Programmes assessment

According to the expert panel, the profile of all programmes is clear and the overall objectives are well defined and described. Discussions with students and employers revealed that there is also clarity from this side about the competences taught in the programme. The programmes and the orientation seem very modern and attractive to the experts. Described learning outcomes are concise, clear and aligned with the content. They correspond to the level of awarded qualification. All content is up-to-date and the qualifications provided promise opportunities even in the difficult Lebanese labour market,

The teaching of scientific methods in all programmes is completely in line with the Bachelor's level. Basic scientific work (theorising, research, citation) is taught, and small practical exercises are also integrated into the study programme.

USEK has lively contact with partner universities and institutions abroad. All these contacts, esp. with foreign partners, should be strengthened now that the pandemic is

over. As the current difficult situation in Lebanon makes real exchange difficult, new media should be used and joint online teaching events could be considered.

The expert panel consider the programmes' curricula to be well structured and logical. Subjects and modules are well defined and cover the relevant content and competences to achieve the prescribed programme objectives and learning outcomes. The experts consider that the course design generally follows the objectives set out in the general programme profile.

A variety of teaching methods are used. The experts appreciate the high amount of practical training. In the opinion of the panel, the recommended work plans are also clear and offer flexibility and adaptability to students' personal life situations. The experts expressly welcome the combination of specialised studies with general studies and the liberal arts. With this study concept, USEK imparts a very broad qualification and competences that clearly go beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and will be of great benefit to the graduates in their further careers.

The adjustments made since the last evaluation are convincing. USEK should further develop its support for teachers in the areas of didactics, methodology and new media.

In the view of the panel, the assessment system at USEK is also transparent, clear and varied. Responsibilities are clear for both teachers and students. The level and requirements of assessment are appropriate to the intended learning outcomes. They are fully in line with international practice.

The assessment criteria as well as all procedures are clearly defined and transparent for both students and staff. All examination regulations are available online. There are clear and objective rules for student absence, illness and other extenuating circumstances. The students with whom the experts spoke were well aware of all regulations and criteria, they know what is expected of them and they know who to contact if they have problems or questions. The student-centred learning approach provides almost optimal preparation for assessment.

According to the expert panel, the study process is well organised and clear. Roles, duties and responsibilities in the management are clearly defined and appropriately structured, and the people involved with whom the experts were able to speak are highly motivated and professional. Student advisory services are well developed and known by students.

USEK has a formalised recognition practice for previous qualifications from other universities. The entry requirements and regulations are also appropriate and transparent. All information is available on the university's website.

In summary, the experts can only say that the programmes evaluated are fully convincing.

Assessment levels

| Level | Assessment | Description |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--|
| A | Passed. | The institution fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the institution and provided at a high academic level. |
| B | Passed subject to conditions | The institution does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within nine months after the assessment. |

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| C | Suspension of the accreditation procedure | The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that it will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure. |
| D | Failed | The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, and is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time. |

Assessment grades

| No | Assessment criteria | Assessment |
|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Institutional profile and strategy | A |
| 2 | Governance | A |
| 3 | Resources | A |
| 4 | Research | A |
| 5 | Institution and society | A |
| 6 | Quality assurance | A |
| 7 | Programme profiles | |
| | • Education – Basic Education (B.A.) | A |
| | • Journalism and Communication (B.A.) | A |
| | • Language and Literature (B.A.) | A |
| | • Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.) | A |
| | • Philosophy (B.A.) | A |
| | • Psychology (B.A.) | A |
| | • Social Sciences (B.A.) | A |
| 8 | Curriculum | |
| | • Education – Basic Education (B.A.) | A |
| | • Journalism and Communication (B.A.) | A |
| | • Language and Literature (B.A.) | A |
| | • Modern Languages and Translation (B.A.) | A |
| | • Philosophy (B.A.) | A |
| | • Psychology (B.A.) | A |
| | • Social Sciences (B.A.) | A |
| 9 | Student assessment (all programmes) | A |
| 10 | Organisation of the study programmes | A |

6. Accreditation recommendation of the expert panel to the evalag Accreditation Commission

According to the expert team, the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) and the seven reviewed study programmes meet **evalag**'s criteria for international accreditation. Therefore, the team recommends USEK for re-accreditation and recommends awarding the **evalag** label for institutional accreditation as well as for programme accreditation.

The expert panel recommends USEK to consider and implement the following recommendations (R) to further improve the university:

Institutional profile and strategy

- R 1** Strategic planning processes should be further professionalised and underpinned with clear data on demographic changes, the Lebanese labour market, national and international professional requirements, student achievement trends, student recruitment trends. The university should make greater use of expertise from the relevant departments (sociology, economics) for this purpose.

Resources

- R 2** To improve their retention at USEK, the university should consider incentives especially for those part-time academic staff who receive a better marking/assessment than expected.

Research

- R 3** The research strategy should be further developed. A university-wide approach for measuring the quality of research results would be a next step.

Institution and society

- R 4** USEK should further strengthen its links with the neighbouring community and expand its social and "green" engagement.

Quality assurance

- R 5** USEK should create a "community of practice" to support the work of the LTEC in its improvement activities through "learning and teaching champions" from the faculty.
- R 6** USEK's experience in developing and implementing its QA strategy should be published.

Programme profile (Journalism and Communication, B.A.)

- R 7** The programme should not only focus on classical journalism, i.e., working in the media, but also on PR activities of companies and institutions that have to supply media.

Curriculum (Philosophy, B.A.)

- R 8** USEK should pay more attention to Arab philosophers in the curriculum.
- R 9** USEK should review the system of student guidance in relation to course selection.

Student assessment

- R 10** USEK should monitor assessment carefully, particularly in relation to student workload. There should be no over-assessment of individual courses.

Organisation of the study programmes

- R 11** USEK should start to talk to the students about how to improve the sports and leisure facilities at the university.

7. Accreditation decision of the evalag Accreditation Commission

In its meeting on 29 June 2023, the **evalag** Accreditation Commission unanimously decides to re-accredit USEK and the seven programmes with the recommendations listed in Chapter 6.

Annex: Site visit schedule

Sunday, 12 March 2023

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| | Arrival |
| 18:30 – 20:00 | Internal meeting of expert panel |

Monday, 13 March 2023

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| 08:00 – 09:00 | Internal meeting of expert panel | |
| 09:00 – 09:45 | Meeting with University President, Vice-Presidents, Provost | |
| 09:45 – 10:00 | Break/ room change | |
| 10:00 – 11:00 | Meeting with Office of Provost | |
| 11:00 – 11:15 | Expert panel's internal review | |
| 11:15 – 12:00 | Meeting with the deans | |
| 12:00 – 12:15 | Break/ room change | |
| 12:15 – 13:00 | Parallel sessions: | |
| | <u>Group 1:</u> Meeting with Deputy President for Students and representatives of Student Support Services, Student Affairs, Registrar | <u>Group 2:</u> Meeting with Finance and HR |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch | |
| 14:30 – 16:00 | Campus tour (Library, Labs, facilities, IT, Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACIE)) | |
| 16:00 – 16:45 | Meeting with Learning and Teaching Excellence Center (LTEC) and Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) | |
| 16:45 – 17:30 | Meeting with the Higher Center for Research | |
| 17:30 – 18:15 | Internal meeting of expert panel: review of the first day | |
| Evening | Dinner with leadership and representatives of USEK | |

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| 08:00 – 09:00 | Internal meeting of expert panel | |
| 09:00 – 10:00 | Meeting with Dean of Faculty of Arts and Science and related Heads of the Departments | |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Break/ room change | |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | Parallel sessions: | |
| | <u>Group 1:</u> Faculty of Arts and Science: Meeting with full-time staff | <u>Group 2:</u> Faculty of Arts and Science: Meeting with part-time staff |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Break/ room change | |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Meeting with students from the Faculty of Arts and Science | |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | Parallel sessions: | |
| | <u>Group 1:</u> Meeting with International Affairs | <u>Group 2:</u> Meeting with Advancement & Alumni Offices |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch | |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Meeting with Internal Audit | |
| 15:00 – 15:30 | Meeting with External Stakeholders (employers, partners, alumni) | |
| 15:30 – 17:00 | Internal meeting of expert panel: review and assessment | |
| 17:00 – 17:30 | Closing meeting with the leadership of USEK | |
| Evening | Closing dinner | |
| | Departure | |