

# EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

## **Bachelor of Law**

College of Law

Prince Sultan University

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**March 2023**

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International evaluation and accreditation

## EVALUATION REPORT

### **Bachelor of Law**

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**February 2023**



The Prince Sultan University has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its Bachelor of Law program. The evaluation is based on the "External Evaluation Standards" of foreign study programs, adopted by the Hcéres Board on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. These standards are available on the Hcéres website ([hceres.fr](http://hceres.fr)).

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

Johanna Guillaumé, President of the committee

For the Hcéres<sup>1</sup>:

Thierry Coulhon, President

In accordance with the decree n°2021-1536, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021,

<sup>1</sup> The evaluation reports "sont signés par le Président du comité". (Article 13) — "are signed by the President of the committee" (article 13).

<sup>2</sup> The President of Hcéres "contresigne les rapports d'évaluation établis par les comités d'experts" (Article 8, alinéa 8) — "countersigns the assessment reports made by the experts' committees" (article 8, alinea 8).

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## I. STUDY PROGRAM IDENTITY SHEET

— **University/institution:**

Prince Sultan University (PSU)

— **Component, faculty or department concerned:**

College of Law

— **Program's title**

Bachelor of Law (LL.B.)

— **Year of creation and context:**

Since its creation in 1998, as the first non-profit private college in Saudi Arabia, PSU has grown significantly.

Today, the University is composed of 6 colleges: College of Law, College of Humanities and Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Business Administration, College of Computer and Information Sciences, College of Architecture and Design.

For academic year 2021-2022, 7495 students were enrolled at PSU: 3463 male students and 4032 female students.

More specifically, the College of Law was created in 2006. Initially, it was a Department of Law that offered only a legal education program to female students. Since the beginning, the program is bilingual, Arabic and English.

The choice to open the Bachelor of Law to female students "reflected the new orientation of granting women a major role in all the State affairs". Indeed, there was a need to educate female students to enter the job market in the legal sector.

In 2016, the first batch of male students was admitted.

From its beginning, the program distinguished itself in two ways. Firstly, it was only open to female students. On the other hand, it was the first bilingual legal program in Saudi Arabia.

The College of Law has since continued to develop, increasing its training offer. Now, it also offers a Master Program on Commercial Law.

— **Site(s) where the program is taught (Town and campus):**

PSU is located in the Middle East region of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh.

The campus is modern and very well equipped. The facilities allow for efficient working and studying for both teachers and students. The facilities also allow for very pleasant working conditions. The whole campus and the facilities are of high quality.

As in other universities in the Kingdom, the campus is divided into two parts, one for male students and the other for female students. The Men Campus and the Female Campus are in the same location.

Two positive elements should be highlighted. Firstly, the site visit showed that the facilities were absolutely identical in each part of the campus. Indeed, both campuses have cafeterias, a clinic, a bookstore, a copy center, a library, computers labs, language labs, a translation center. Also, both campuses have free access to sport facilities including various individual and team sports. This equality of treatment allows all students to have the same chance of success. Secondly, the other element is more innovative. The site visit revealed the development of mixed-use buildings: the cafeteria and the auditorium in the center of the campus.

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

- **Surname, first name**  
Abdulaziz ALTUWAIJRI
  
- **Profession and grade**  
Dean of the College of Law, Assistant Professor (PhD in Law, Georgetown University)
  
- **Main subject taught**  
Commercial Law

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

### – Methodology and agency

In 2016, the Bachelor program was assessed by the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA), formerly known as National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment.

### – Results

The Bachelor received its full accreditation by NCAAA, which is to say without reserve, from 2016 to April 2023. However, recommendations were made to improve the program which the College has largely followed, such as to improve the representation of women in the Advisory board (done) or revise the curriculum (done).

## HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAM

### – Human resources

#### Teaching staff

The teaching staff consists of 43 members divided into lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors.

1. Overview of the Teaching staff					
PhD		Gender		Nationality	
Yes	No	Male	Female	Saudi	Non-Saudi
33	10	18	25	17	26

2. Academic rank of teaching staff			
Full professors	Associate professors	Assistant professors	Lecturers
3	5	25	10

Almost 80 % of the teaching staff have a PhD. This percentage is quite satisfactory.

32 are full-time and 11 are part-time according to the Self-evaluation Report. But the full-timers were 36 right at the time of the visit.

Another interesting fact is the high number of foreign teachers: 26 out of 43. The nationalities represented are very varied (Algeria, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Egypt, France, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, United Kingdom, USA). This diversity of the teaching team is a real advantage in educational and cultural terms.

In terms of staffing, the number of professors in relation to the number of students is acceptable if we consider the students enrolled in the Major Law, regardless of the Preparatory year program (PYP)<sup>1</sup>. However, the tasks performed by faculty members are numerous: teaching activity, administrative activities, community activities and research activities.

As the College of Law offers a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, and also assumes research ambitions, the teaching staff could be enriched with more full professors or associate professors. The College of Law is aware of this point. Among the 4 full-timers recruited in the last six months, one is a Professor.

### **Non-teaching staff**

Non-teaching staff consists of 4 people.

#### **– Material resources**

Teaching takes place in small classrooms with a capacity between 20 and 40 students. The teaching conditions are excellent.

	Male campus	Female campus
Buildings	3	4
Classrooms (including computes labs)	104	82

There is a central library, the PSU library, on each of the two campuses. In this central library, the collection of legal books is rather small.

However, there are plans for a law library in the new independent College of Law building. This planned creation is a reaction to one of the recommendations made by the NCAAA ("Improve the law library").

Apart from books or paper journals, students and teachers have access to several databases that are accessible from the campus but also off campus. The law database is very satisfactory : Arabic Legal Decisions Encyclopedia, Gulf Legislation network, KSA Lawyer Website, LexisNexis Academic.

PSU uses digital resources. Several digital resources are available for the Bachelor of Law :

- For the management of the Bachelor program (registration of courses, marking, communication, registration of absences, etc.) : Edugate
- For learning : Moodle LMS.

PSU does not just use digital resources. It also ensures that they are used properly. For example, in 2014, the E-Learning centre (ELC) was set up to help the teaching staff to adopt the best practices for teaching with technology. Moreover, how to use these digital resources is explained, including in videos accessible via social networks.

New technologies, social networks and the PSU website are very well used as communication tools for students and the external environment, particularly current and future partners.

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<sup>1</sup> The preparatory year programme (PYP) is a one-year programme for students preparing for a full multi-year degree curriculum at a university. It offers a bridge between high-school and university-level studies.



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

Evolution of enrolled students				
	<b>Year 2018</b>			
	<b>PYP-Law</b>		<b>Major Law</b>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	125	181	213	375
<b>Total</b>	<b>306 students (including 9 non Saudi)</b>		<b>588 students (including 20 non Saudi)</b>	
	<b>Year 2019</b>			
	<b>PYP-Law</b>		<b>Major Law</b>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	141	235	232	373
<b>Total</b>	<b>376 students (including 12 non Saudi)</b>		<b>605 students (including 18 non Saudi)</b>	
	<b>Year 2020</b>			
	<b>PYP-Law</b>		<b>Major Law</b>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	149	206	266	459
<b>Total</b>	<b>355 students (including 10 non Saudi)</b>		<b>725 students (including 18 non Saudi)</b>	

Currently enrolled students (2021-2022)			
Major Law			
Gender		Nationality	
Male	Female	Saudi	Non Saudi
288	526	794	20
<b>Total : 814 students</b>			

Over the last four years there has been a steady increase in the number of students in the Major Law. The increase concerns both male and female students, but it is more pronounced for female students.

Regarding the typology of students, two observations can be made.

The first observation concerning the typology of students currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Law program concerns gender : female students far outnumber male students (almost twice as many).

The second finding is related to the nationality of the students, who are almost all Saudi nationals. The visit made it clear that the few foreign students are resident in Saudi Arabia and did not come specifically to study at PSU. However, this is by no means a lack of willingness or attractiveness of the Law College to host foreign students. The situation is a consequence of the national police rules which did not allow universities to enroll foreign students since student visa did not exist until now.

The newly introduced long-term student visa for university studies (in force since October 2022) may increase the number of international students who choose to come to Saudi Arabia to study at PSU.

Year	Graduated				Overall graduated
	Saudi		Non Saudi		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2017	/	74	/	4	78
2018	25	103	3	5	136
2019	37	76	0	3	116
2020	40	69	0	4	113
Overall	102	322	3	16	<b>443</b>

It can be seen that the number of male graduates is constant or even slightly increasing. During the same period, the number of female graduates is decreasing.

## II. VISIT DESCRIPTION

### COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

- Dr Johanna GUILLAUMÉ, Chair of the panel, Full professor of Private Law, Dean of the College of Law, University of Rouen Normandy, France
- Dr Julien BOUDON, Full professor of Public Law, Paris Saclay University, France
- Dr Walid BEN HAMIDA, Associate Professor of Private Law, Evry Val d'Essonne University, France
- Ms Zakia MESTARI, PhD Student in Public Law, Toulouse Capitole University, France.

Hcéres was represented by Ms Michelle Houppé, Head of project at Europe and International Department.

### VISIT DESCRIPTION

#### – Date of the visit:

The visit took place from Sunday October 23 to Monday October 24, 2022. The committee carried out the visit on site, except for the chair of the panel who, for health reasons, participated in the interviews from a distance.

#### – Summary of the proceedings:

Before the visit took place, the report of the exploratory mission (exploratory visit in March 29, 2022), the self-assessment report and many appendices had been received by the experts.

A preparatory meeting between the Hcéres Head of project, the Director of the Europe and International Department and the panel of experts was held in Paris (October 10, 2022).

The on-site visit took place over two days, according to a schedule agreed between PSU and the experts' panel.

Once written by the panel chair, the report was submitted to all panel members for review.

#### – Organisation of the visit:

*Sunday October 23, 2022*

- Opening session with top management (presentation of PSU challenges): Meeting with PSU President and Vice Presidents (Vice Presidents Campus for women and Vice President Academic Affairs)

- Presentation of the Bachelor and discussions: Meeting with the Dean of the College; the Chair of the Law Department and his team
- Bachelor Teaching staff: Meeting with a representative panel of professors from the program in terms of position, status, gender, discipline and nationality
- Campus tour: Half of the panel visited the female campus and the other half of the panel visited the male campus. The panel also visited the common areas
- Alumni and employers of the Bachelor Program: Meeting with representatives of different sectors of activity (employment or internships) not teaching in the program.

Monday October 24, 2022

- Quality assurance: Meeting with Quality assurance representatives
- Bachelor students: Meeting with a representative panel of students from the program under evaluation in terms of gender, nationality, year of studies, learning arrangements, etc.
- Closing session: Meeting with the Dean of the College and the Chair of the Law Department.

During the two days, the committee held regular debriefing sessions and the final debriefing was held on October 24 in the afternoon.

– **Cooperation of study program and institution to be accredited:**

The College of Law at PSU has been cooperative throughout the process.

The self-evaluation report was sent according to the agreed schedule. It was very clear and supplemented by numerous documents in the appendix.

All the questions asked were answered clearly and precisely.

The panel of experts is absolutely satisfied that the conclusion reached is based on fair and full disclosure of all relevant information.

– **People met:**

- *Top management:* Dr. Ahmad Yamani (PSU President), Dr Heba Khoshaim (Vice President, Campus for Women), Dr Nasser Alsadoun (Assistant to the Vice president, in charge of administrative and financial affairs)
- *College of Law members :* Dr Abdulaziz Altuwaijri (Dean, Assistant professor), Prof. Zlatan Meskic (Chair of the Law Department, professor), Dr Maha Maiman (vice Dean of Students Affairs, Assistant professor), Dr Maitha Alghanmi (Assistant of the co-chair of the Law department, Assistant professor), Rafeef Aldharrab (Lecturer), Ian Parker (Lecturer), Dr Abdulmalik Altamimi (Assistant professor), Dr Tarek Alsamara (Assistant professor), Dr Rehanna Parveen (Assistant professor), Dr Jawahitha Sarabeddine (Associate Professor), Ms Nora Crimly (Lecturer).
- *Alumni and Employers:* Sultan Almutairi (Legal Affairs Specialist, Nupco), Turki Almunifi (Associate Trainee, Al Amr Bin Ali and P.), Yazeed Altoaimi (Managing Partner of STAT Law Firm), Shahad Albakri (Associate Trainee, Clyde and Co), Reem Almaiman (Regulatory and public Policy Associate, Clifford Chance), Najla Algadi (Associate at Latham and Watkins)
- *Quality assurance representatives:* Mr Reda Aloufi (Director, quality Assurance Center-MC), Ms Roohi Jan (Director, quality Assurance Center-CW), Dr Rehanna Parveen (college of Law, Assistant professor)
- *Students:* Waqas Dirar, Mohammed Aleissa, Turki Alhumaid, Dareen Abdulkareem, Fatma Ashry, Seba Alfuraih, Bdor Alnumir.

### III. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

#### 1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

PSU has a College of Law which offers a Bachelor of Law and a Master of Commercial Law.

When a student enters PSU, regardless of the College in which he/she wants to do their bachelor's degree, it is mandatory to follow the Preparatory Year Program (PYP). Only students who have passed two general law courses on top of other requisites are accepted in the Bachelor of Law program.

PSU is a non-profit institution, established by the Riyadh Philanthropic Society. That explains why tuition fees are half price compared to other Saudi private universities and there is a scholarship system set up by PSU, based on grade point average (GPA). To receive a scholarship that covers 100% of the tuition, students from all majors must earn:

- a cumulative GPA of 96% and above for Saudi students;
- a cumulative GPA of 99% and above for non-Saudis.

The Bachelor of Law is a four-year program based on a credit hours system (137 credit hours for completing the program).

Program structure	Required or elective courses	Numbers of courses	Credit hours
<b>PSU requirements</b>	Required	10	23
<b>College requirements</b>	Required	2	6
	Elective	2	6
<b>Program requirements</b>	Required	27	87
	Elective	5	15
<b>Total</b>		46	<b>137</b>

The Bachelor of Law at PSU has two main objectives: to prepare graduates either for direct entry into the workplace or for postgraduate law studies in Saudi Arabia or in different universities around the world.

In order to define its curriculum and the objectives of its curriculum, PSU takes into account the needs of the market and the socio-economic context. Accordingly, PSU considers that graduates of the Bachelor of Law degree will be able to become lawyers in companies (local, regional or international), in law offices (local, regional or international), in governmental bodies or in international organizations.

The vast majority of graduates of the Law Bachelor's degree will enter the workplace directly. Only a few may go on to a Master's degree immediately after the Bachelor's degree. Most often, it is after a few years in working life that students enter a Master's degree, if it is necessary for their professional career. Therefore, the primary objective of the Bachelor of Law at PSU is to enter the labour market, either in local institutions or in international firms' organizations or law offices.

To enable graduates to be recruited in these sectors, the Bachelor of Law offers a program that has the following characteristics:

- The program provides the necessary basic knowledge. Indeed, all fundamental areas of law are studied: Civil Law, Administrative Law, Criminal Law, Commercial Law, International Law, Islamic Law.
- The program is built on a system of progressive specialisation. When the students enter their "seventh term" (Senior Year), they elect one of four tracks featuring five advanced courses in these fields: Advanced Saudi Law; Commercial Law; International Law and General Law.
- The program enables students to acquire practical skills (legal and additional skills) so that they can enter the labour market directly: the professionalization aspect is very significant. The Cooperative Education Program (Co-Op), which enables the Bachelor of Law graduates to conduct a mandatory seven-month internship in leading offices, organizations, and governmental bodies, is a key feature of the program.

- The program is bilingual: 60 to 65% of the courses (maximum) are in Arabic and 35 to 40% (minimum) are in English. Through elective courses, students can take more courses in English. There are only four universities in Saudi Arabia that offer a bilingual Bachelor of Law program, only one of which is in Riyadh.

## 2 - PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAM'S SELF-EVALUATION APPROACH

The program has a strong commitment to quality assurance.

The self-evaluation report is very clear. It is structured considering the Hcéres evaluation framework. It provides answers for each of the standards.

It is based on qualitative and quantitative elements which are documented either in the report itself or in its annexes. The self-evaluation report is 38 pages long. The annexes are numerous.

## IV. EVALUATION REPORT

### 1- TRAINING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The PSU's College of Law was established in 2006, as the first bilingual Bachelor of Law program in Saudi Arabia. In the beginning, the College of Law (CL) accepted only female students. Since 2016, male students were integrated in the program. The structure of the Bachelor of Law program includes 60% courses in Arabic and a minimum of 40% courses in English. The Bachelor of Law program offers the students a diversified approach that combines legal education of local laws inspired by the *Sharia* and a comparative law dimension oriented toward the USA legal system. The courses are taught by faculty members having different legal backgrounds and professionals. The program ensures interdisciplinary by offering the students the possibility to follow non-legal mandatory courses.

As such, the Bachelor of Law program of the College of Law is based on an original and coherent vision granting the students the understanding of local law and the international openness. Therefore, it offers a clear benefit.

The bilingual nature of the program facilitates the international mobility for outgoing and incoming students. PSU has signed 15 MoUs with foreign universities. The College of Law signed a MoU with the University of Saarland (Germany) in 2022 in order to allow students to participate to summer schools. It signed also another MoU with the British organization Forte Markets that offers the students the possibility to join the certified boot camps for legal technology opened for young professionals. Furthermore, PSU entered into nine programs at the university level that offer students' exchange and covers around 70% of the student's costs for PSU students accepted to do the study abroad. The Bachelor of Law program is open to international students, but the program has attracted only 26 male and female international students on average on the last 4 years, most of them already residents in the Kingdom. Partnerships with the American Bar Association and Fullbridge result in annual skills programs delivered by international experts in Riyadh. The Moot Program includes student competitions abroad.

However, despite a real effort to develop international partnerships and cooperations, international mobility is limited, until now, to participation of students to summer schools and moot programs. The College should take profit of its advantages, principally its bilingual nature, to further develop student exchanges and mobility action outside summer schools and moot court programs. To enable the students to experience new teaching environments, integration of Law students in the regular teaching programs of partner's universities (at Bachelor level) could be improved. Additionally, the College of Law should work more on incoming mobility and hosting of foreign students since the recent international student visa offers new opportunities.

On the national level, the "Saudi Vision 2030" plan implies a high challenge for the College of Law as the framework has a strong impact on education : a lot of international companies need local Saudian lawyers and the College of Law is totally aware of the demand. Saudi Arabia becoming an important international hub opens up many opportunities for the College of Law students.

Concerning research, the program includes specific learning outcomes and students are required to do many research assignments and similar tasks in order to improve their research skills. The campus library, online library, special webinars and general orientation sessions are used to support them. Research Abstract Competition for Bachelor of Law students with valuable prizes are organized.

Regarding the Faculty research, the College of Law has launched the Governance & Policy Design Research Lab in order to enhance the research and publication capacity of the staff members. A specific policy at the level of PSU has been implemented about publication fees and incentives. Therefore, the output of the College of Law has increased over time. From just three publications by the College of Law faculty members in ISI and SCOPUS databases in 2017, the number has risen to 37 publications in 2021. Publication, participation in conferences and the organization of conferences are supported financially by PSU governance. The Lab organized an international conference in 2021, where 51 papers were presented by 83 researchers from around the world.

Nevertheless, during the visit, the staff explained that the large involvement of the Faculty members in many teaching, administration and community activities prevents them from dedicating time and resources to research activities. The method of indexation of legal publications by some databases such as Scopus is also mentioned as an explanation to justify the limited research Faculty members' activity.

Notwithstanding the fact that the faculty research is strongly encouraged and the evolution of number of publications, the faculty research needs to be developed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Involvement of

the Faculty members in many activities could be reviewed in order to allow them to dedicate more time and resources to research activities.

In terms of relationship with the socio-economic world, the Bachelor of Law program is well connected to socio-economic partners and labour market. It opens real opportunities for students and staff to develop fruitful connections and collaboration with these actors. Additionally, the socio-economic actors are integrated in the teaching, the training and the administration processes.

The Bachelor of Law program benefits from an active support of these partners concerning the Cooperative Education Program (Co-Op), a seven-month internship in leading offices, organizations, and governmental bodies. The Co-Op program is an obligatory part of the last term of Bachelor of Law program worth 10 credit hours. Moreover, an Advisory Board which consists of professionals and experts from practice and the government and Alumni provides input and advice to the College concerning the curriculum. Beside many regular courses which are taught by professionals, the College of Law also provides a professional guest program in which experts from the practice give lectures in class. Several extracurricular activities, like workshops sessions, are conducted in cooperation with socio-economic partners (named MAHARAT ALMUHAMI and ALMAHARAT ALSABAA programs). The College has signed a MoU with Saudi Bar Association to open a legal clinic, still to be launched. Eventually, faculty members are strongly encouraged by PSU to provide community services which are part of their annual evaluation.

**To conclude, the Bachelor of Law program is based on a coherent and original vision granting the students the understanding of local law and the international openness. It offers an unquestionable added value to the legal education in the country. The bilingual character of the program facilitates the mobility of the students and provides the College of Law with a real advantage to further develop partnership and cooperation with foreign academic institutions. The Co-Op program establishes appreciated links with the socio-economic actors and facilitates the integration of the students in the job market. With regard to student research, the academic program includes many students' research activities. As for faculty research, despite strong encouragement and a fast evolution of number of publications, the faculty research needs to be more developed both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. In this regard, the involvement of the Faculty members in many activities could be reviewed in order to allow them to dedicate more time and resources to research activities.**

## 2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The structure of the study program and the teaching methods used are adapted to the target knowledge and skills. The whole program consists of a Preparatory Year program (PYP), the University requirements, the College requirements and the Departments requirements. In total, including the PYP, the program lasts 5 years. However, though the duration of the Bachelor's degree is limited<sup>2</sup>, most of the students need six or more years to complete the program (PYP included) instead of five. Only 47% of students complete the program in the minimal time as stated in the Annual Program Report, p. 6. The financial conditions for tuitions have just evolved this fall: they are now based on credits (with a minimum/maximum number per semester depending on the student's grade point average) instead of semesters. The goal is to accelerate the curriculum for students.

The PSU website presents in details the missions and goals of the Bachelor of Law, the 8 program learning outcomes, the study plan and the courses description from PYP to the Co-Op training. The objectives of the law program, in terms of knowledge and skills, are well known to students and teachers thanks to the Program Learning outcomes mapping. Similarly, the objectives of each course, in terms of knowledge and skills, are communicated to students thanks to the Course Learning outcomes. The Examinations and Grades Guidelines state that 40 % of the mark depends on the final exam, and 60 % depends on other assessments such as oral and practical examinations. The students seem satisfied with the evaluation, which is "fair" according to the panel met during the visit.

The Bachelor of Law program allows for a progressive specialisation of students during 4 years. The admission, after the PYP, relies on two kind of required skills i.e. English skills and legal skills (Introduction to legal terminology I and II), and no entrance exam.

The program is organised according to a study plan: courses are compulsory or optional, but in any case, they can only be taken if the prerequisites are passed. At the end of the program, in the fourth and final year, the student can specialise by choosing from 4 tracks: Advanced Saudi Law; Commercial Law; International Law

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<sup>2</sup> Limitation to one additional period equal to one-half of the period determined for the student graduation in the original program period, unless the University Council provides an exception. Article 20 (b) of the Rules and Regulations of the Undergraduate Studies



and General Law. This system of tracks is very relevant and original: it distinguishes the program from other law programs in the Kingdom. The students can declare a « minor » in addition to their « major » field of study on condition that they have a good level (the conditions are clearly set out in Article 5 of Study system).

It was found during the visits that all the elements - study plan, examination procedures, rules, etc. - are perfectly accessible and known to the students. To help students to choose their elective courses or tracks, organise his or her schedule, choose a minor, each Bachelor student is provided with an academic advisor (1 academic advisor for each 30 students for administrative and pedagogical matters). Moreover, all teachers are requested to offer office hours. If the student has academic difficulties, he or she can drop courses (conversely, he or she can add courses), can ask for course substitution, can ask to change a section or can repeat a course. Student success is also favoured by the great availability of the teaching staff. Moreover, changing College within PSU is also facilitated by the structure of the degree (PYP, University requirements, possibility to choose a "minor").

The international dimension of the Bachelor of Law program offered by PSU is a strategic choice to enable graduates to continue their postgraduate law studies in different universities around the world or to be employed in international company, law office or public organisation. The content of the curriculum has an international dimension: some courses are taught under Common Law (for example LAW 112 - Law of Tort); the curriculum offers courses of international law and also an "International Law Track". But above all, the program is bilingual Arabic-English. Among the compulsory courses, 35% are taught in English. However, the percentage of courses taught in English can be higher if, among the elective courses, the student chooses courses in English (knowing that among the elective courses, 70% are taught in English). If students do not have the required level of English as during the PYP, they follow intensive English courses. The level of English is also improved through several extra-curricular programs: for example, the moot competitions in English at international level and the summer law courses in Europe.

The moot court competitions, organised in English or Arabic, at local, regional or international level, as well as the summer law courses, promote the international mobility of students. More generally, outgoing international mobility is encouraged by the College of Law. Partnerships have been created with foreign universities to enable students to study for a semester or a year abroad. This possibility is not used by students who explained during the visit that they prefer to stay at PSU. It is possibly at Master's level that they consider studying abroad. With a view to encouraging students to do part of the Bachelor of Law abroad, the College of Law could, in particular, conclude new partnerships in order to increase the attractiveness of outgoing mobility.

As for incoming mobility, it is almost non-existent insofar as the foreign students enrolled are in fact resident in the Kingdom. The national laws related to residence in the Kingdom explain this situation but the creation by the October 2022 law of the new study visa will perhaps encourage PSU to develop a policy of incoming mobility. The bilingual nature of the program makes it particularly suitable. The College of Law aims to facilitate the international mobility for outgoing and incoming students. Number of non-Saudi students may therefore increase in the coming years, despite the Arabic background needed as 65% courses are still taught in Arabic.

The content of the program is in line with the needs of the socio-economic sector and has been since its creation. It should be remembered that the Bachelor of Law was initially created for female students only, in view of the reforms that have progressively opened up the legal professions to women. In the same way, it is the socio-economic context (in particular the strong presence of international firms) which justified the choice of a bilingual program. Since the creation of the Bachelor of Law, the content of the program has evolved to take into account the evolution of society and the needs of the socio-economic sector (for example, Company Law; Commercial Law ; Arbitration Law). The consistency between the content of the program and the needs of the market is further reinforced by the fact that many practitioners (lawyers, judges, etc.) are involved in the program as lecturers. Since 2019, the College of Law has set up a professional guests' program. This alignment between the content of the program and the needs of the market facilitates the employability of the graduates which rises to 85% one year after graduation.

The employability of graduates is further enhanced by other elements. First, beyond legal knowledge, the program allows graduates to acquire legal skills. Several courses are based on the practical approach. The program also allows to acquire additional skills. The first of these are the language skills, since at least 35 % of the program is taught in English. Other additional skills can be mentioned, such as communication skills (COM 201), Legal writing skills (LAW 230, LAW 231), Psychology (PSY 101), corporate governance (LAW 381), etc. Second, the program allows students to be placed in a professional situation. The professional situation is particularly developed in the framework of the Moot Court (LAW 380, semester 5) and during the compulsory internship (semester 7). These modules are placed at the end of the curriculum, which allows students to mobilise all the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies. The internship, which lasts 7 months, is particularly effective as most students are subsequently hired by the company or organisation in which the internship was carried out. Other activities organised by the College of Law but extracurricular also enable students to be confronted with



real-life situations. This is notably the case with the Law clinic, in collaboration with the Saudi Bar Association thanks to a memorandum of understanding. Finally, it should be noted that the College of Law has concluded a large number of partnerships with actors in the professional world including 40 companies, law offices and governmental institutions. The networks set up benefit to the students.

**To conclude, the objectives of the Bachelor of Law are clearly defined and the program corresponds perfectly to the defined objectives. The program is built according to the logic of progressive specialisation both because it is based on a system of pre-requisites and because it leads to a choice of four tracks during the last year. The program has two major and very positive features. Firstly, its strong international dimension principally as it is bilingual Arabic-English. Secondly, the program has a strong professional dimension which results in a very good rate of professional integration of graduates. In general, the program is very well structured, consistent and it offers flexibility to the students. Students are well supported to use this freedom of choice. But, on the other hand, the absence of a limit in the duration of the Bachelor leads some students to take a long time to complete the program.**

### 3 – ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The Bachelor of Law at PSU is an attractive and performant program. The program is experiencing a growing number of students for the last four years (from 588 enrolled in fall 2018 to 814 in 2021) while the number of non-Saudi students remains stable (20 students).

Attractiveness of the program for the students is due to several reasons. First, the Bachelor of Law was, when launched in 2006, the first bilingual program in Saudi Arabia. PSU has now to compete with other universities that do so but it seems that the College of Law reputation is still based on the bilingual character of the program. English is the language of work at the University: faculty members and students are all bilingual as the panel was able to observe during the visit.

Then, one other main reason for the attractiveness of the program is the Cooperative training, the "Co-Op", which is a major part of the teaching during the last year of the program, just before graduation. This 7-month internship allows high employability and represents a real added value for PSU and the College of Law whereas in other universities internships last no more than 4 months. Students are aware of the advantages of the Co-Op program on the job market and that is one of the reasons why they choose PSU. Indeed, students can put the oral and written skills acquired during the Bachelor to immediate use in the job market.

Moreover, the working environment at the College of Law allows favorable conditions: the small size classes – 22 students on average (sometimes more but never more than 35) – enable close relations between students and faculty members. Students pointed out advantages of a private school : they have time to discuss with the professors after class, faculty members have 5 hours of office hours per week, students are assigned an academic supervisor during the Co-Op training, etc. In addition, there is a Student Advisory Board at the University Level with a representative from each College but students are not really aware of it as the College of Law has set up an open door policy which allows students to reach easily the Dean, the Chair and all the faculty members.

The College of Law analyses precisely student success and job market integration. 3 key performance indicators are monitored:

1. students who completed the program in minimum time in each cohort
2. students who enter the program and successfully complete first year
3. and graduates employability.

The number of students who successfully complete first year increases since 2017, except for 2019-2020, due to the Covid pandemic.

The PSU website also presents statistics : ratio student/faculty member ; percentage of students who completed Co-Op ; number of students ; number of graduates, etc.

Furthermore, PSU has a Center for Statistics and Information that conducts and coordinates surveys. These surveys are sent to all the stakeholders: students, advisory board, alumni and employers. Results are properly analysed by this Center as recommendations and improvements made by the College of Law must be fact-based. For instance, a general track was opened in 2022 which allows students to choose and combine courses from the other three specialized tracks. This improvement comes from recommendations made by the stakeholders and analysed by the Curriculum Committee.

Moreover, the College of Law has different accounts on several social media platforms (Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Instagram) which are used to communicate about the events organised at or by PSU. The alumni network works well : networking events are regularly organized. During the visit at PSU, a visiting professor from

Georgetown University was giving a lecture and the College of Law organized a networking event with faculty members, alumni, students and employers. These different committees and networks allows PSU to maintain a high level of education by sticking to the requirements of the job market.

**To conclude, the program appears attractive, performant and relevant to the panel. Students are aware of the advantages offered by the Bachelor of Law even before their admission, due to a great communication and networking events. The knowledge and skills acquired during the program are immediately put to use in the job market thanks to a well-managed Co-Op training. The employability rate of 85%, both in the private sector and in the public sector, proves the relevance of the program and shows that the teaching is in line with the socio-professional world the graduates are destined to integrate. Student success is well-monitored and the Bachelor of Law, both at College level and at PSU level, analyses the quality of job market integration with the help of the dedicated Center for Statistics and Information and the Curriculum Committee.**

#### 4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The structure or organization of the College of Law fulfills all the international requirements. The Dean leads the College with the assistance, for all academic matters, of the Chair of the Law program, and many committees. As we see, the relationships are good between the Dean and the Chair. The College of Law hosts a lot of councils and committees: College Council; Advisory Board, which forge links with the economic sector; Quality Assurance Committee; Students Affairs Committee, etc. As we understand, the late evaluation from the national body called NCAAA suggests in 2016 to improve the representation of women in the Advisory board, and it was done. It is obvious that the College of Law attaches great importance to internal and external evaluation: the full accreditation received in 2016 is completed with an annual report and of course with the Hcéres international review in 2022. Otherwise, the French experts' panel noticed during the visit that some minutes from the Advisory Board were only in Arabic: we obtained the English version the day after. This means that the administrative resources are high and sufficient.

Quality Assurance is overall a major concern at PSU and especially at the College of Law. The quality of courses is assured by a robust Course Evaluation Survey (CES). As we could observe during our stay, the students evaluate the courses every semester and the staff will take in consideration the survey annually to improve the quality of the courses and, at least, to decide to reconduct, or not, the working contracts of the professors. Here are some improvements recommended by the students: division in two of successful courses, reduction of certain courses (for example Criminal Law I, II and III to Criminal Law I and II). Ethics and Integrity are well protected and the students are submitted to a Code of conduct which rules cheating in examinations or plagiarism. We observed also that the students are perfectly aware of the courses taught by any professor before the beginning of the academic year, so they could choose in full knowledge. We add that the quality of courses is acquired both on female and male campuses through efficient coordination processes.

Students enjoy a very nice working environment. Buildings are new, classrooms are well equipped, libraries have been restored, we counted four auditoriums, perfectly adapted to conferences and symposiums, together with the sport halls, swimming-pools, medical centers, etc. Digital resources are impressive through Edugate, Moodle, Google Drive. The Central Library offers a variety of services and facilities. Among the most important services are the new arrivals display, access to the library catalog and materials using a QR code, access to books on Kindle, the use of E-dictionaries, and the provision of plagiarism detection services. The library also provides referencing and citation services and several digital tools. Additionally, the Digital Library allows access to databases on and off campus.

Actually, the only concern we must point out touches the faculty members, i.e. the teaching staff (divided into lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors. They were 32 full-timers six months ago, and they are 36 right now (plus 11 part-timers). The ratio of students to teaching staff is acceptable, being precised that the ratio is calculated on the base of the 800 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Law program and not of the 1 200 students enrolled both in the PYP and the College of Law. Otherwise, almost 80 % of them are Phd holders. But we add two remarks. First, only 4 faculty members are full professors, i.e. 10 % of the whole. Secondly, the teaching load is heavy: it is between 9 and 20 hours per week, depending on the status. And the administrative work is also heavy, it includes essentially 5 or 6 office hours. Research work suffers the consequences: the number of publications is unquestionably too low. Some progress has been made during the last three or four years: the SCOPUS indicator has increased from 4 to 37 and it is necessary to take into account all others publications, for example in Arabic legal journals. But the ambition of PSU and above all of the College of Law claims a considerable effort. For sure, the research work is encouraged (fees, awards), but the professors

suffer from the burden of the tasks imposed to them. The Deanship is fully aware of that and plans to lower the number of teaching hours required from professors who publish a lot (around 12 hours).

**To conclude, academic program management and continuous improvement meet almost all international academic requirements. The College of Law's structure, quality assurance, working environment, general atmosphere, links between students and professors, or between professors, study plan all satisfy the standards expected from an ambitious University and College of Law. The only concern is the research work and the publications, but the headship has the intention to remedy this slight weakness in the very next future.**

## V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the impression given by the self-evaluation report, the appendices and the visit are very positive.

The campus, infrastructure and equipment are modern and functional. They provide good working conditions for both professors and students. The visit also showed that the atmosphere in the College of Law is particularly pleasant. The faculty members are highly motivated and committed to their various tasks and make themselves very available to the students. For their part, the students are quite attached to the PSU College of Law and are delighted to study there.

During the visits, students and alumni explained that they chose PSU's College of Law because of its good reputation. It is true that the employability rate of graduates is high. This is no coincidence, as the College of Law does everything possible to promote the professional integration of its graduates.

It should be noted that, since its creation, the College of Law has taken into account the economic context and developments in the Kingdom (opening up legal studies to women and choosing a bilingual English-Arabic program). Subsequently, the College of Law has continued to adapt its policy and program according to these developments. Thanks to its quality policy and efficient management, the College of Law is constantly improving. All of the College's councils, the collaboration of external partners (either academic or from the professional world) and student evaluations contribute to the continuous improvement of the training. For example, the Curriculum committee is in charge of adjusting the program continuously.

As a result, the program is in line with the needs of the job market. This is essential since one of the main objectives of the Bachelor of Law is the professional integration of graduates directly after obtaining the Bachelor. Several means are used to achieve this objective. Indeed, the program allows students to acquire the necessary knowledge, but also to acquire practical skills. In addition, students are regularly confronted with the reality of professional life (compulsory internship of 7 months, moot court, law clinic, etc.). We can also mention that the College of Law has concluded numerous partnerships with partners who recruit students for internships and then after graduation.

The Bachelor program is comprehensive in terms of knowledge and skills, both legal and additional. The quality of teaching is very good as students are normally taught in groups of 22, which facilitates learning. The program has strong distinctive features.

- First, it is a bilingual program which allows the student to follow at least 35% of the courses in English. This strategic choice is very interesting given the economic context, especially since only four universities offer a bilingual bachelor of law degree, only one of which is in Riyadh. This choice is also likely to encourage international student mobility. Despite the incentives put in place by the College of Law, students do not go abroad for part of their Bachelor's degree. Perhaps the conclusion of new MoUs with foreign universities would make international mobility more attractive.
- Second, the program is based on a progressive specialisation system, which allows the student to choose a track in the final year. This system, which is very original, is particularly relevant in a country where the rules of law are of varied origin (Saudi Law, Common Law, International Law).
- Third, the program is very flexible. The freedom of the students in the choice of subjects, in the possibility of choosing a minor, of giving up a course to finally do it later, are positive points which favor a personalized program. Students are very well supported in their choice thanks to the academic advisor and the availability of the teachers. However, there are two difficulties with this system that need to be addressed. On the one hand, teachers are very busy and their various tasks do not always allow them to do enough research. On the other hand, some students sometimes take too long to complete their Bachelor's degree.

In conclusion, the knowledge and practical skills that the Bachelor's degree provides through the content of the program and the teaching methods are very satisfactory. Indeed, they allow the set objectives to be achieved: to allow graduates to continue their studies in a Master's degree in the Kingdom or in a foreign university, or to allow graduates to enter directly into the job market in a qualified position.

## STRENGTHS

- Fair and equal treatment of both male and female students at the academic level and at the level of campus life
- The bilingual nature of the program, which corresponds to the program's objectives
- Good integration in the job market thanks to the networks with professional actors and the internship policy
- Strong professionalization aspect of the program which allows the acquisition of practical skills in accordance with the objectives of the program
- Excellent quality of infrastructure and working conditions for both professors and students
- Proximity of faculty and students.

## WEAKNESSES

- Heavy workload of professors (teaching and administrative activities) which does not favor research activity despite active encouragement from PSU
- Still insufficient cooperation agreements with foreign universities
- The number of female graduates is decreasing. This is a point of attention for the College of Law, especially since neither the file nor the list provided any insight into the situation.
- Absence of a firm time limit for obtaining the Bachelor's degree leading to sometimes long delays in completing the curriculum (sometimes 6 or 7 years, including the PYP).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The College of Law should continue its policy of encouraging research. Indeed, this policy exists but the results are still insufficient, probably because teachers have many tasks. In particular, teaching hours and office hours require a lot of time. The recruitment of more full professors or associate might help to boost research.
- The international dimension of the program is claimed, but international mobility could be improved. As the College indicates that the continuation of studies in Master's degrees in foreign universities is an objective, more students should go abroad for part of their Bachelor's degree. Again, the College of Law has developed a policy of encouraging international mobility, but it is not very effective. The College should consider how to improve the existing means, perhaps by concluding new MoUs with foreign universities.
- The great flexibility offered by the program is a very positive point because it allows the student to create his/her own personality in relation to the courses chosen, to his/her schedule and to his/her level of success. On the other hand, some students sometimes take too long to complete their Bachelor's degree. The College should perhaps consider the duration of the Bachelor's degree, which is currently not limited. The College could, for example, start thinking about the absence of compensation (overall average grade point calculated on courses in one semester) and the possibility of repeating all the courses until they are passed or on the absence of minimum credit hours to be taken each semester.
- The College provides real equality between male and female students, both in terms of teaching and structures. Although the student campuses are separated, there are some common spaces, such as the cafeteria and the auditorium. The College of Law should continue to promote common spaces.



## VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



**February 27, 2023**

**Dr. Maria Bonnafous-Boucher**  
**Director of the Europe & International Department**  
**Hcéres**

**Dear Dr. Maria Bonnafous-Boucher,**

On behalf of the College of Law, its faculty members and administrative staff, I would like to express deep gratitude for the evaluation of our Bachelor of Law program by HCERES. As the only Law College in Saudi Arabia with full accreditation of the Bachelor of Law by the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA), our interest in obtaining international accreditation was to find new ways to improve and develop our program and our institution. The accreditation criteria and methodology of HCERES enabled us to analyze our program and activities from a new perspective and to develop further ideas and strategies for our development.

The learning and development process started immediately with the exploratory mission by HCERES to PSU and with the receipt of the new HCERES 2022 evaluation standards for international study programs. The analysis of our program and activities in the self-evaluation report in line with the HCERES international standards demanded a deep screening of all areas of our program as well as revisiting some of our strategic goals and partnerships. The methodology of the standards differs in several points from the national accreditation standards, and this is exactly the experience that we were looking for.

We are grateful for the experience during the in-person visit by the respected Expert panel members. It gave us the opportunity to show our campus and our facilities. But even more so, the Committee members, as well as ourselves, got to witness the experience and feedback of our faculty members, administrative staff, students, alumni, and stakeholders from the perspective of the HCERES standards. In addition, we learned about our strengths, activities that should be continued and supported even stronger, as well as areas for improvement. In response to the conclusions and recommendations of the Expert panel, we would like to make the following comments:

- The Expert panel's evaluation report correctly established the facts based on the self-evaluation submitted by the College of Law and the on-site visit.
- We are grateful that the Expert panel identified several strengths of the Bachelor of Law program that PSU and the College of Law have worked hard for, especially the equal opportunities for male and female students, the integration in the job market, excellent infrastructure, and proximity of faculty and students.
- We appreciate even more the conclusions on the weaknesses and recommendations and we wish to comment on them individually:
  - a) Heavy teaching load of the faculty members in combination with admin duties is something that the College of Law has recognized as an area for improvement. The recruitment committee is working actively with the full support of the University and the College of Law.

The most effective solution to decrease the teaching load is recruiting new faculty members while retaining the existing ones, and the College of Law is successfully following this strategy. From 2017 to 2022, the number of faculty members increased from 26 to 32, which was the time at which the self-evaluation report was written. At the time of the HCERES visit the number of full-time faculty was 36. Nevertheless, the College of Law has recognized the need for the recruitment of more excellent faculty members. Between October 2022 and January 2023 five new faculty members with PhDs joined the College, thereby raising the total number of faculty members to 41. As a result, not all faculty members have to actively participate in the work of administrative committees. CL will also improve the policy to decrease the number of office hours required per faculty. The public call for further recruitment is still open, and the recruitment committee receives CVs of potential applicants every week. It is also planned to increase the number of administrative staff accordingly.

- b) The College of Law agrees with the conclusion that the current cooperation agreements with foreign universities are insufficient and has recognized this as a challenge and opportunity for academic growth. At the time of the writing of the self-evaluation report, the MoU with the Europa Institute from the University of Saarland (Germany) had been signed and was immediately set into motion with the two summer schools organized in Germany with the participation of our Bachelor of Law and Master of Commercial law students. The College of Law continued to explore further strategic partnerships with foreign universities and signed a new MoU in November 2022 with Boston University School of Law targeting exchange at the level of master and bachelor students, summer schools, and further academic cooperation such as visiting professors (see <https://www.psu.edu.sa/en/CL/news/493>). In February 2023 the College of Law reached an agreement with Duke University School of Law to organize summer courses for our students, which would be honored with credits and recognized within the Bachelor of Law program. Another partnership with King's College London School of Law is now underway, aiming at academic exchange and summer programs. The College of Law agrees that this is an important path for academic growth and will continue to follow it more intensively in the future. The CL will conduct a student survey about the universities they recommend for the Program Semester Abroad. These strategic partnerships with foreign universities shall further respond to another recommendation made by the Expert Panel on the comparably low numbers on students' mobility. The College of Law agrees that the Bachelor of Law program has great potential for the mobility of students considering its number of courses offered in the English language. The partnerships with the Europa Institute of the University of Saarland, University of Boston School of Law, Duke University School of Law and King's College London School of Law will certainly already contribute to higher outgoing mobility. The incoming mobility has been a challenge in previous years as there was no possibility of a student visa. The newly introduced student visa creates a huge opportunity for the College of Law to establish programs on incoming mobility as it is within its strategic plans to do so as soon as possible.
- c) We agree with the Expert Panel that the submitted cohort data reveals a decreasing number of female graduates as a weakness and that no explanation was given. The



reason for the decreasing numbers lies in the fact that the latest cohort data available reflects only the years of enrollment prior to the year 2017, as these students graduated by the year 2023. The number of graduated female students decreased from 95 for the cohort of 2014 (graduated by 2022) to 76 graduates for the cohort of 2016 (graduated by 2022) and this is in line with the then decreased number of enrolled female students from 114 in 2014 to 88 in 2016. In 2016 the LL.B program was reformed, and since then, the number of enrolled female students continuously grew from 86 in 2017 to 174 in 2021. Thereby the number of graduated female students will be on the rise as well in the years to come, but simply these cohorts have not graduated yet. Should the enrollments drop for either male or female students, CL will be looking into the reasons and propose adding more scholarships.

- d) It remains a challenge that some students simply take longer to graduate, as correctly observed by the Expert panel members. It is further correctly concluded that this challenge has so far been attempted to be resolved by offering high flexibility of the program. One further measure has been introduced, namely, since the start of the academic year 2022/2023 students pay their tuition fees per credit hour. The aim of this measure is that students should not withdraw from courses too easily and stay motivated to pass the courses in their first participation. In the academic year 2022/2023, PSU has also taken a stricter approach toward students whose GPA is below the required average to graduate for longer than three terms and who were not able to raise their GPA despite full support from their academic advisors and several official warnings from the College. Several students have not been allowed to continue their studies due to such reasons. The limit for the number of years of undergraduate studies is, as per the Rules of Undergraduate Studies, set to one additional period equal to one-half of the period determined for his/her graduation in the original program period, unless the University Council provides an exception. The CL is committed to insisting on a stricter and more effective implementation of the limit, with the student facing warnings about the possibility of exclusion from the College. The College of Law does agree that further methods need to be applied to decrease the average study period, such as the ones proposed by the Expert Panel, and will certainly include new policies at the university level to achieve the set goal. PSU is focused on excellence in education, and it takes into account that for some students, it simply takes longer to reach the required level of the skills and knowledge that the PSU College of Law graduates are desired for in the market. This shall, however, not prevent the College of Law and PSU from continuing to improve its policies, such as policies regarding academic advising and monitoring of student's leave, with the goal of shortening the study period. One important challenge for the students is the bilingual program as the language requirements in legal studies are very high and studying in two languages requires additional effort from the students.
- e) The College of Law agrees with the observation that the research output per faculty member needs to be increased. We also note that the Expert Panel has recognized the significant efforts that have already been conducted by PSU by establishing financial rewards and support for publications. Additionally, with the establishment of the College of law research lab the number of research units has steadily increased. The committee has further noted that besides the numbers of SCOPUS database publications, that PSU



statistics focus on, the College of Law faculty members have many more publications in non-SCOPUS databases and in the form of books and books chapters that are not reflected in the PSU statistics but are visible from the faculty CVs. The College of Law aims to support PSU in its strategic plan to increase the number of SCOPUS publications, which leads to overall lower numbers of publications by the College of Law, as simply the number of legal journals in the SCOPUS and ISI database is comparably low and requires a longer period of time for publishing than the traditional legal journals. This is an even greater challenge for faculty wishing to publish in Arabic language as there are currently almost no legal journals in Arabic language in these databases. This remains to be a challenge not just for the PSU College of Law but for all law colleges in countries whose focus is on the ISI and SCOPUS publications. The challenge may be overcome if more legal journals accomplish joining the databases or more support is given to publish outside of SCOPUS and ISI, but the current trend indicates that publishing in these databases will remain a priority. One step already taken is a possibility for the law faculty to publish by March 2023 in a special edition of a law journal that is listed in SCOPUS (<https://ajee-journal.com/announcement>). In addition, CL organizes an international conference with the possibility of papers to be published in SCOPUS in March 2023 (<https://www.psu.edu.sa/en/CL/events/event-320>). The recruitment committee is also focused on hiring new faculty members with experience in publishing in SCOPUS and ISI databases, including full professors or associate professors, in order to increase the research output.

- f) The College of Law is grateful that the Expert Panel has recognized the equal opportunities for male and female students, as this is one of the most important goals for the College of Law and PSU as a whole. The on-site visit has given the opportunity to the Expert panel to see the common spaces for male and female students and the common spaces grow as the need for common activities grow on the market and in line with PSU policy and the Saudi Vision 2030.

We hope that our comments prove that we truly appreciate your evaluation and recommendations. We have already learned a lot from the process thus far and we will continue to strive for improvement of our program. We are looking forward to working with HCERES again soon and remain open to any questions.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Abdulaziz Altuwaijri**  
Dean, College of Law



Europe and International department

## ACCREDITATION DECISION

### **Bachelor of Law**

College of Law

Prince Sultan University

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**March 28<sup>th</sup> 2023**

## SCOPE OF THE ACCREDITATION GRANTED BY HCÉRES

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

The Accreditation Commission issues an opinion about the accreditation of the program after examining the file. The Hcéres President takes the decision based on the Commission's opinion and the final evaluation report of the program. This accreditation decision, taken in plenary session, is the result of a collegial and reasoned process.

The decision issued by Hcéres regarding the accreditation of the program corresponds to the awarding of a label to the evaluated entity.

This decision is independent of the accreditations carried out by the French State and therefore does not entail recognition in France of the Institution's diplomas.

**Decision No.2023-17 on the accreditation of the Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Sultan University - College of Law - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.**

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

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

Considering the Decree No. 2021-1536 of November 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 on the organisation and operation of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the Board's deliberation No. 2022-5-02 of September 29<sup>th</sup> 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (Except for doctorates/PhDs);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of March 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement No.20220207 – Prince Sultan University with the Prince Sultan University for the evaluation/accreditation of the Bachelor of Law ;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission of March 20<sup>th</sup> 2023,

**Decides:**

**Article 1**

Noting that the Bachelor of Law delivered by Prince Sultan University meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2022, as follows:

**ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION**

The Bachelor of Law program is based on a coherent and original vision granting the students the understanding of local law and the international openness. It offers an unquestionable added value to the legal education in the country. The bilingual character of the program facilitates the mobility of the students and provides the College of Law with a real advantage to further develop partnership and cooperation with foreign academic institutions. The Co-Op program establishes appreciated links with the socio-economic actors and facilitates the integration of the students in the job market. With regard to student research, the academic program includes many students' research activities. As for faculty research, despite strong encouragement and a fast evolution of number of publications, the faculty research needs to be more developed both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. In this regard, the involvement of the Faculty members in many activities could be reviewed in order to allow them to dedicate more time and resources to research activities.

**ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM**

The objectives of the Bachelor of Law are clearly defined and the program corresponds perfectly to the defined objectives. The program is built according to the logic of progressive specialization both because it is based on a system of pre-requisites and because it leads to a choice of four tracks during the last year. The program has two major and very positive features. Firstly, its strong international dimension principally as it is bilingual Arabic-English. Secondly, the program has a strong professional dimension which results in a very good rate of professional integration of graduates. In general, the program is very well structured, coherent and it offers freedom to the students. Students are well supported to use this freedom of choice. But, on the other hand, the absence of a limit in the duration of the Bachelor leads some students to take a long time to complete the program.

**ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 3: ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAM**

The program appears attractive, performant and relevant to the panel. Students are aware of the advantages offered by the Bachelor of Law even before their admission, due to a great communication and networking events. The knowledge and skills acquired during the program are immediately put to



use in the job market thanks to a well-managed Co-op training. The employability rate of 85%, both in the private sector and in the public sector, proves the relevance of the program and shows that the teaching is in line with the socio-professional world the graduates are destined to integrate. Student success is well-monitored and the Bachelor of Law, both at College level and at PSU level, analyses the quality of job market integration with the help of the dedicated Center for Statistics and Information and the Curriculum Committee.

#### ACCREDITATION CRITERIA 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Academic program management and continuous improvement meet almost all international academic requirements. The College of Law's structure, quality assurance, working environment, general atmosphere, links between students and professors, or between professors, study plan all satisfy the standards expected from an ambitious University and College of Law. The only concern is the research work and the publications, but the headship has the intention to remedy this slight weakness in the very next future.

#### Article 2

The Bachelor of Law delivered by the College of Law of Prince Sultan University is fully accredited for a period of 5 years as from the present decision.

#### Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations and comments :

- Faculty research needs to be more developed both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. The College of Law should continue to encourage research activities, and use it to achieve a better impact on training.
- The maximum duration of training between four and six years needs attention. It may be an advantage for the students, but also may be a disadvantage in terms of international attractiveness for incoming students and more generally speaking in terms of students mobility.
- It will also be necessary to ensure that sustainable cooperation agreements are established at international level.
- The College provides real equality between male and female students, both in terms of teaching and structures. Although the student campuses are separated, there are some common spaces, such as the cafeteria and the auditorium. The College of Law should continue to promote common spaces.


#### Article 4

The Director of the Europe and International Department is responsible for the execution of this decision, which will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2023



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