

Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge  
im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales  
Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences



## **Assessment Report**

**for the Application of  
the University of Ha'il, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,  
College of Nursing  
for the Accreditation of the Bachelor Program  
"Nursing" (Bachelor of Science, B.Sc.)**

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Hail, Saudi Arabia

**Decision** February 15, 2018

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<sup>1</sup> The expert listed in italics did not participate in the One-Site Visit.

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## 1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) is an interdisciplinary and multi-professional organization. Its mission is to evaluate Bachelor and Master's programs in the fields of health and social sciences, as well as in related domains, such as law or economics. By implementing accreditation and recommendation procedures, the AHPGS contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, the higher education institutions remain responsible for fulfilling the quality assurance, too.

Since 2004 the AHPGS has been a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). In 2006, the AHPGS also joined the ENQA and became a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) --in 2009. Since 2012, the AHPGS has been a member of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). Starting from 2009, the AHPGS has been listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

In carrying out accreditation procedures, the AHPGS follows the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In the present case, the decision regarding the accreditation of the study program is carried out by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission based on the following accreditation criteria<sup>2</sup>:

1. Program aims and learning outcomes
2. Curriculum design
3. Personnel
4. Facilities and learning resources
5. Study process and student assessment
6. Program and quality management
7. Gender equality and equal opportunities

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<sup>2</sup> Approved by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission

The external assessment procedure is carried out in four steps:

### **I. The University's application**

The AHPGS verifies the sufficiency of the documents submitted by the University, namely the self-evaluation report and its corresponding annexes. These are to fulfill the assessment spheres as well as the AHPGS standards. As a result, the AHPGS produces a summary (see Sections 2-5), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

### **II. Written review**

The main documents are reviewed by the expert group assigned by the accreditation commission of AHPGS. This is done in order to verify the compliance of the study program with the applicable accreditation criteria valid in ... (country). Consequently, the experts comprise a short summary regarding the study programs.

### **III. On-site visit (peer-review)**

The experts carry out an external on-site visit at the University. During this visit discussions are held with members of the University, which include University and department administration, degree program management, teachers and students. This provides the expert group with details about the study program beyond the written documents. The task of the experts during the on-site visit is to verify and evaluate the objectives of the program and its projected study results, its structure, staff, material resources, course of studies and methods of assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, students' support), as well as of the program management (program administration, external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, the expert group issues the expert report. This report is based on the results of the visit, the written review of the study programs, and the documents submitted by the University. Finally, the report is made available to the University so that it can issue a response opinion.

The expert report as well as the University's response opinion – together with the provided documents – is submitted to the accreditation commission of the AHPGS.

#### **IV. The AHPGS accreditation decision**

The accreditation commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available in the process of application, namely the University's self-evaluation report, its annexes, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the expert report, as well as the University's response opinion. These documents represent the basis for the commission's decision regarding the recommendation for accreditation of the study program. Consequently, this decision – together with all other documentation – is forwarded to AHPGS Accreditation Commission for it to reach a decision regarding the accreditation of the study program.

## 2 Overview

### 2.1 Procedure-related documents

The University of Ha'il (UOH), also referred to hereinafter as "the University," delegated the task of accrediting its Bachelor study program "Nursing" and "Physical Therapy" to AHPGS.

The University's self-evaluation report for accreditation (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) of the above-mentioned study program (hereinafter referred to as the Self-Evaluation Report or SER) was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS) in electronic format on March 14, 2017. The contract between the University and the AHPGS was signed on December 19, 2016.

On July 25, 2017, the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) pertaining to the Application for accreditation for the study programs to the University. On September 19, 2017, the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter AOQ) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

The present document presents the summary of the AHPGS for the Bachelor study program "Nursing." The first cohort for this program was admitted in the 2011-2012 academic year.

The application documentation submitted by the University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the application request towards accreditation of the Bachelor study program "Nursing" and "Physical Therapy," the following additional documents can be found in the application package (the documents submitted by the University are numbered in the following order for easier referencing):

Specific documents for the Bachelor study program "Nursing":

| <b>Annex</b> | <b>Description</b>              |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 1            | Module Descriptions             |
| 2            | Study Program Curricula Vitae   |
| 3            | B.Sc. Nursing Program Structure |
| 4            | B.Sc. Nursing Study Plan        |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Recent Enrollment Statistics                              |
| 6  | B.Sc. Nursing Curriculum                                  |
| 7  | Recent Graduation Statistics                              |
| 8  | Administrative Hierarchy of Internship Program Management |
| 9  | Nursing Internship Manual                                 |
| 10 | List of Practical Courses                                 |
| 11 | Teaching Matrix   |

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to all study programs submitted to AHPGS for evaluation:

| <b>Annex</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|--------------|--|
| A            | Admission Rules  |
| B            | General University Mandatory (GUM) Course Descriptions   |
| C            | Short CVs Teaching Staff of GUM Courses  |
| D            | Study & Examination Regulations  |
| E            | Memorandum of Agreement between University of Ha'il and Ministry of Health   |
| F            | University Quality Organization  |
| G            | Quality and Academic Accreditation - Terms and Abbreviations   |
| H            | Course Evaluation Questionnaire - Faculty Members  |
| I            | Student Evaluation Surveys   |
| J            | ISO9001:2015 - Certificate   |
| K            | Certificate of Accreditation granted by the Accreditation service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC) to the University of Hail as a "Premier University". |

The application, the open questions (OQ) and the answers to the open questions (AOQ), as well as these additional documents, together build the basis for the present summary. The layout bears no significance, as it solely reflects the agreed standard within the University.



## 2.2 Study program

### 2.2.1 Structural data

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of the University                                | University of Ha'il  |
| Faculty/department                                    | College of Nursing   |
| Title of the study program                            | "Nursing"  |
| Degree awarded  | Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)  |
| Cooperation partner                                   | Saudi Arabia Ministry of Health:<br>King Khaled Hospital, Ha'il,<br>Ha'il General Hospital,<br>Maternity and Children's Hospital, Ha'il,<br>Mental Hospital, Ha'il,<br>Cardiac Center, Ha'il   |
| Language(s) of instruction                            | English,<br>GUM Courses are in Arabic  |
| Form of studies                                       | Full-time, on-campus   |
| Course offering timetable                             | Theory courses: Sunday to Thursday, 08:00-16:00<br>Clinical practice: Sunday to Thursday, 07:30-13:30<br>Internship training: 5 days per week, one of two shifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning shift: 07:30-15:30</li> <li>• Evening shift: 14:30-23:30</li> </ul> |
| Period of education                                   | 8 semesters (4 years), plus 1 year of internship training at a selected hospital   |
| Total number of modules                               | 46 (including Preparatory Year)  |
| Credit Hours (CH) according to the Credit Hour system | 136  |
| Hours/CP  | Theory modules: 1 contact hour per week = 1 CP<br>Clinical modules: 2 contact hours per week = 1   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | CP  |
| Workload  | <b>Total: 8,508 hours</b><br>Theory courses: 1,575 hours<br>Skills lab: 390 hours<br>Clinical hours: 690 hours<br>Self-study: 3,933 hours<br>Internship: 1,920 hours  |
| Launch date of the study program                      | 2011/2012   |
| First accreditation                                   | Program has not yet been accredited   |
| Number of available places in the program             | Approximately 161 students per year   |
| Number of enrolled students to date                   | 484 (since 2013/2014, see Annex 5)<br>Male: 168, Female: 316  |
| Number of graduates to date                           | 603 (AOQ 1)   |
| Particular enrollment conditions for regular students | Saudi nationality; possession of a secondary education certificate or equivalent (not older than 5 years); good conduct; passing a general aptitude test and a scientific scholastic admission test; not currently studying at another university (unless resignation documents are provided); passing the Preparatory Year with a GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale |
| Tuition fees  | Tertiary education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is free for all Saudi nationals. Students also receive monthly governmental stipends until they graduate.   |

Table 1: Structural data of the study program

### 2.2.2 Qualification objectives and employment opportunities

The University of Ha'il strives to improve the quality of service in the local healthcare delivery system by preparing nurses who are equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to practice professional nursing in the local community and who are able to provide competent caring roles for indi-

viduals of different age groups, families and communities at different health care settings. The students are supposed to participate actively in the promotion and maintenance of health and prevention of illness among individuals, families and communities.

The University provided a list of output-oriented descriptions of all skill fields in the program, including overarching skills, following the categories of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These are categorized into Knowledge Skills; Cognitive Skills; Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility; Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills; and Psychomotor Skills (SER 1.3.3).

Knowledge Skills are chiefly concerned with the ability to understand, describe and identify the nursing process, its underpinning/foundational components, the etiologies and the processes of diagnosis and treatment, the hierarchical structure of healthcare management, nursing research principles, the standards of patient privacy and confidentiality, sensitivity to cultural issues, good communication practices with patients and colleagues, health education concepts used to educate people about illnesses, the range of instruments and procedures used in documentation and auditing of healthcare and the main principles of Islamic culture and its applicability in the field.

Cognitive Skills stem from nurses' ability to translate their knowledge into action and the mental processes and skills that go alongside this. This category of skills includes applying concepts of the nursing process to various health conditions, using concepts from multiple disciplines to inform decision-making in nursing, application of nursing values and attitudes in the planning and implementation of nursing care, distinguishing styles of communication with patients and communities, planning health education sessions and programs, explain the dynamics of pathogens and communicable diseases, discussing the research practice, explaining and utilizing elements of leadership and management skills in various roles, auditing healthcare with a variety of perspectives and resources, and reviewing ongoing care plans.

Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility concern the skill of communication in the healthcare field. Nurses are expected to develop the following interpersonal abilities: development of leadership skills, conduction of a professional standard in moral/ethical/legal terms whilst dealing with patients and healthcare professionals, ability to do teamwork and collaborate, deliverance

of evidence-grounded healthcare to patients, taking accountability for one's own actions and behavior, staying up-to-date through professional development, and providing education to patients and their families.

These themes are further expanded upon in the Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills section. Nurses are expected to use the technology and systems available to them to support the safety of their practices, communicate effectively in written and verbal means, using appropriate terminology and methods to document and report information, demonstrating sufficient numerical skills to safely carry out nursing responsibilities, and using appropriate auditing tools to implement practices.

Finally, the Psychomotor section concerns itself with the ability to appropriately and safely operate specialized medical devices, conduct comprehensive health assessments and physical examinations, apply standard protocols and principles of infection control in all healthcare settings, and provide safe and competent nursing care regardless of the specific patient conditions.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health states that nurses constitute about one-third of the nation's total healthcare workforce, and that only 38% of these nurses are Saudi nationals. The Ministry wants to see this number increase. The World Health Organization states that there is a nursing shortage in Saudi Arabia and that the country needs about 170,000 new nurses to offset it. These factors point toward a wide entry point for skills nurses into the Saudi labor market (SER 1.4.2).

### 2.2.3 Modularization and exam system

Students in the program complete a total of 46 modules, including 45 required courses and one elective course. All modules are one semester in length. Exclusive of the practical year (non-credit bearing), students complete an average of 17 credit points per semester.

The following study plan lists the required sequence of courses for the attainment of the degree Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in "Nursing":

| <b>Semester</b> | <b>Course Nr.</b> | <b>Course Title</b> | <b>Total Workload Hours</b> | <b>CP</b> |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
|                 |                   |                     |                             |           |

|                                      |         |                                     |            |           |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1 (Preparatory)                      | PENG001 | Preparatory English I               | 132        | 3         |
|                                      | PENG002 | Preparatory English II              | 132        | 3         |
|                                      | PBIO121 | Preparatory Biology                 | 150        | 3         |
|                                      | PCOS001 | Preparatory Computer Skills         | 104        | 2         |
|                                      | PHYS121 | Medical Physics                     | 150        | 3         |
|                                      | IC101   | Introduction to Islamic Culture     | 94         | 2         |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester Total</b> |         |                                     | <b>762</b> | <b>16</b> |
| 2 (Preparatory)                      | PENG003 | Preparatory English III             | 132        | 3         |
|                                      | PENG008 | Preparatory English IV              | 132        | 3         |
|                                      | PCHM121 | Preparatory Medical Chemistry       | 150        | 3         |
|                                      | PMDC101 | Medical Foundations                 | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | PCSK001 | Communication Skills                | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | ARAB101 | Arabic Language                     | 94         | 2         |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Total</b> |         |                                     | <b>696</b> | <b>15</b> |
| 3                                    | NURS211 | Fundamentals of Nursing Theory I    | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS212 | Fundamentals of Nursing Practice I  | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | PHYL281 | Physiology                          | 200        | 4         |
|                                      | ANT205  | Anatomy                             | 200        | 4         |
|                                      | CHEM203 | Biochemistry                        | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | ARAB102 | Arabic Writing                      | 94         | 2         |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Semester Total</b> |         |                                     | <b>932</b> | <b>19</b> |
| 4                                    | NURS213 | Fundamentals of Nursing Theory II   | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS214 | Fundamentals of Nursing Practice II | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | BIOL281 | Microbiology                        | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | PAT213  | Pathology                           | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | PHRM214 | Pharmacology for Nurses I           | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | IC102   | Islam and Building the Society      | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | ENGL110 | English Writing Skills              | 132        | 3         |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Semester Total</b> |         |                                     | <b>852</b> | <b>18</b> |

|                                      |   |  |            |           |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------------|-----------|
| 5                                    | NURS311   | Basic Adult Care Nursing Theory          | 188        | 4         |
|                                      | NURS312   | Basic Adult Care Nursing Practice        | 312        | 6         |
|                                      | NURS321   | Mental Health Nursing Theory             | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS322   | Mental Health Nursing Practice           | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | PHRM304   | Pharmacology for Nurses II               | 94         | 2         |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> Semester Total</b> |   |  | <b>891</b> | <b>18</b> |
| 6                                    | NURS313   | Advanced Adult Care Nursing Theory       | 188        | 4         |
|                                      | NURS314   | Advanced Adult Care Nursing Practice     | 312        | 6         |
|                                      | NURS331   | Maternity Nursing Theory                 | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS332   | Maternity Nursing Practice               | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | IC103   | Islamic Economic System                  | 94         | 2         |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> Semester Total</b> |   |  | <b>891</b> | <b>18</b> |
| 7                                    | NURS431   | Pediatric Nursing Theory                 | 188        | 4         |
|                                      | NURS432   | Pediatric Nursing Practice               | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS441   | Nursing Leadership & Management Theory   | 141        | 3         |
|                                      | NURS442   | Nursing Leadership & Management Practice | 156        | 3         |
|                                      | IC104   | Islamic Political System                 | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | <b>Elective (one out of the following list)</b> |  |            |           |
|                                      | NUT181  | Nutrition for Nurses                     | 94         | 2         |
|                                      | STAT181   | Biostatistics                            |            |           |
|                                      | PSYC181   | Introduction to Psychology               |            |           |
|                                      | HEED101   | Health Education                         |            |           |
| SOCL181                              | Introduction to Sociology                       |  |            |           |
| MGT181                               | Total Quality Management                        |  |            |           |
| AID103                               | First Aid                                       |  |            |           |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> Semester Total</b> |   |  | <b>829</b> | <b>17</b> |
| ∞                                    | NURS421   | Community Health Nursing Theory          | 141        | 3         |

|                                      |                                   |              |            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| NURS422                              | Community Health Nursing Practice | 156          | 3          |
| NURS443                              | Principles of Nursing Research    | 141          | 3          |
| NURS411                              | Critical Care Nursing Theory      | 141          | 3          |
| NURS412                              | Critical Care Nursing Practice    | 156          | 3          |
| <b>8<sup>th</sup> Semester Total</b> |                                   | <b>735</b>   | <b>15</b>  |
| <b>Internship Training</b>           |                                   | <b>1,920</b> | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Study Program Total</b>           |                                   | <b>8,508</b> | <b>136</b> |

Table 2: Study Plan

The Module Descriptions (Annex 2) contains information about each course's name and code, in which semester it is offered, its number of credit hours, its language of instruction, intended learning outcomes, course contents and assessment methods.

The program consists of a Health Sciences' Preparatory Year, General University Mandatory Requirements, Mandatory College Requirements (covering Medical/Non-Nursing Mandatory Requirements and Nursing/Core Specialty Mandatory Requirements) and Elective College Requirements.

According to the University's "Examination and Study Regulations" (Annex D), all newly admitted students are required to complete the preparatory year program before starting their undergraduate study.

The Health Sciences' Preparatory Year (31 credits) includes six modules pertaining to English language skills, Arabic language skills and communication skills, as well as basic sciences courses in biology, chemistry, medical physics and medical foundation. These modules reinforce skills and knowledge to provide a strong basis upon which to build the study of nursing. In this year, a course in computer skills and Islamic culture are also to be taken. The Health Sciences' Preparatory Year is studied together by students from the College of Medicine, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Dentistry, the College of Applied Medical Sciences, the College of Public Health and the College of Informatics.

The General University Mandatory Requirements (11 credits) comprise five modules ("Arabic Writing," "English Writing Skills," "Islam and Building the Society," "Islamic Economic System" and "Islamic Political System") that are

distributed all along the study course. These modules are mandatory for all students at the University of Ha'il.

The second year of the "Nursing" program is comprised of six intermediate science modules ("Physiology", "Anatomy", "Biochemistry", "Microbiology", "Pathology", "Pharmacology for Nurses I"). Each of these teaches students unique healthcare concepts that are necessary to master the core specialties of nursing. Furthermore, four modules in basic nursing ("Fundamentals of Nursing Theory I-II", "Fundamentals of Nursing Practice I-II") introduce students to the basic knowledge and skills specific to the nursing profession.

In the third year of the "Nursing" program, students are provided with basic knowledge and skills in specific areas of nursing, such as "Basic Adult Care Nursing," "Mental Health," "Advanced Adult Care" and "Maternity Nursing," each of which contains a Theory module and a Practice module. The module "Pharmacology for Nurses II" offers students an understanding of how pharmacological interventions are conducted for various maladies and the nursing considerations that accompany them.

Finally, the fourth year of the "Nursing" program contains further and advanced specialization in nursing areas, such as "Pediatric Nursing," "Community Health Nursing" and "Critical Care Nursing," as well as modules to foster professional development in "Nursing Leadership and Management" and "Principles of Nursing Research."

As the University of Ha'il does not operate its own hospital, the collaboration between the College of Nursing and external hospitals is organized through a "Memorandum of Agreement" between the University and the Ministry of Health (Annex E) in order to give "Nursing" students the opportunity to receive practical training.

During the "Nursing" program, students gain their practical experience in two ways. Firstly, the University conducts its practical modules in skills laboratories (390 hours) and in real clinical settings of partnered healthcare institutions (690 hours) after students have learned the relevant theoretical concepts (AOQ 3 and Annex 10). Secondly, students complete a 48-week internship training year (fifth year of studies) before completing the program, during which their skills are reviewed and fine-tuned before their entry into the workplace. The Health Training Administration is the University's entity that is



responsible to coordinate and facilitate the student training process between health science colleges and affiliated health agencies. All interns and supervisors are guided by the policies and procedures contained in the "Internship Training Manual" (Annex 9). It incorporates clinical skills mandatory for nurses and how interns rotate through different settings within the sanctioned health care facility in order to train these skills. According to the University, an academic coordinator and a clinical instructor work in tandem to ensure that each intern achieves the objectives of clinical training during the placement (SER 1.2.6).

The quality of the internship training year is assured by means of criteria set by the College of Nursing (Annex 9). These pertain to the setting and the qualifications/competences of clinical instructors. All instructors are required to hold the degree B.Sc. "Nursing" and often to have extensive clinical experience. Interns are prepared for the internships by means of an orientation covering hospital policy, health and safety regulations, patient rights, ethical and legal aspects of nursing and service users' advocacy. The College of Nursing is responsible for following up on interns' progress and making decisions about the internship program.

Standard methods of didacticism and assessment (lectures, midterm exams, and finals) constitute the general framework of the study program. Furthermore, the University states that "Nursing" students are exposed to and assessed through methods of role play, group work, case studies, portfolios, diaries, learning laboratory, simulation-based training, and presenting. The one-year Internship Program is assessed through the University's External Exit Examination, prior to graduation (AOQ 5) (SER 1.2.4).

In addition to an outfitting of projectors and smart boards in lecture rooms, the University uses various technical and software platforms. There is a Dean-ship of IT and E-learning which is charged with administering these systems for students' benefit. "Blackboard," a learning management system, is supposed to give students the opportunity to view course content, submit assignments, and contact instructors. Administrative tasks can be performed through the Banner System. Moreover, students can view the library's catalog electronically.

At present, it is not possible for "Nursing" students to participate in mobility exchanges, though the University has stated it is reviewing options to allow

this in the future (SER 1.2.9). Rather, the University ensures the international relevance of its “Nursing” program by adhering to international standards set by the American Association of Colleges of Nurses, the American Nursing Association and the International Council of Nurses. English is the language of instruction for all courses except the Arabic Language and Islamic Studies modules.

Students are introduced to the essential concepts of research in their eighth semester through the module “Principles of Nursing Research.” However, the College of Nursing claims to also invite nursing students to participate in an annual university-wide research competition and to become delegates to seminars, conferences, workshops and colloquia. According to the University (SER 1.2.7), select students can also function as undergraduate student cooperators in University-funded research projects, working alongside faculty members.

According to the University (SER 1.2.3), the process of assessment is implemented through a mix of formal, predetermined examinations and semester-long assessment methods, such as quizzes, presentations, homework assignments, keeping logbooks and participation in discussions. There are at least two major examinations in each module, namely, the midterm and the final examination (AOQ 2).

In theoretical modules, students’ final grades are weighted as follows: 10% quizzes, 20% midterm examination, 50% final examinations, 10% presentations, 5% participation and 5% attendance. In practical modules, the weighting is 20% midterm examination, 40% final examination and 40% freely distributable to a series of assessment methods depending on the characteristics of the module.

In theoretical modules, midterm examinations take place in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester and final examinations in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> weeks of the semester. In practical modules, these dates are one week earlier: midterm examinations occur in the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester and final examinations in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> weeks of the semester.

According to Article 5 of the University’s “Examination and Study Regulations” (Annex D), a student who obtains a failing grade in a required course must repeat the course. Under exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of

the College Council), students may be granted allowance to retake an exam which they were not able to attend (OAOQ 2).

The University uses a Grade-Point Average (GPA) system with a 4.00 scale. 4.00 is a perfect grade, 1.00 is the minimum passing grade and 0.00 is a failing grade. Students' grade in each course is multiplied by the number of CP of that course (weighted), these numbers are summed, and then divided by the total number of CP taken. This allows for students' performance to be quantitatively evaluated over longer periods of time.

Students wishing to transfer to the University from an external higher education institution (HEI) are governed by the University's "Examination and Study Regulations", Article 42-45 (Annex D). All transfer applications are submitted to the Admission and Academic Standing Committee and the college council which reviews the courses taken by the student outside the University based on the recommendations of the departments which offer equivalent courses. The courses evaluated as equivalent will be transferred to the student's record but will not be included in the calculation of his cumulative GPA.

The academic record of a student transferred from one college to another within the University of Hail includes all the courses he/she has studied together with the grades and the semester and cumulative GPA's obtained throughout his period of study at the University (ibidem, Article 47).

Because of the healthcare nature of the "Nursing" program, it is a requirement that students be physically fit. However, the University states that chronic illnesses are not criteria for exclusion, and students with disabilities and chronic illnesses can still enroll in the program as long as their illness or its symptoms does not expose them, their patients or their coworkers to any kind of physical or psychological risk (SER 1.2.3). A committee of members from the College of Nursing and the University's Healthcare Services is in charge of making this determination. In alignment with the Ministry of Social Welfare's (MSW) objectives, the MSW cooperates with Ha'il University and provides financial support for special needs students, administrators and staff and relevant infrastructure (OAOQ 6).

#### **2.2.4 Admission requirements**

Admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are listed in the Admission Rules (Annex A) and Article 3 of the "Study & Examination

Regulations" (Annex D) of the University of Ha'il. In order to be accepted to the study program, students must complete the admission process for UOH and the program's requirements, the foremost of which is having Saudi nationality or having been born to a Saudi mother. For regular students, applicants must hold a secondary education certificate (high school diploma) or its equivalent that is not more than five years old. Passing scores on the General Aptitude Test and the Scholastic Achievement Admission Test, as well as the Health Sciences Preparatory Year, are required. Applicants must display good conduct and, if they were already admitted to another university, be able to present official resignation documents.

University of Hail maintains a bridging program for applicants who have previously obtained an intermediate degree in nursing from a nursing educational institution (AOQ6). They subsequently enroll in the "Nursing" program to upgrade their diploma degree to the Bachelor level. For them, registration in the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties is mandatory, as is English proficiency and a passing score on the entrance examination.

## **2.3 Study conditions and quality assurance**

### **2.3.1 Human resources**

According to the University, the workload in the "Nursing" program is managed by ten assistant/adjunct professors, 18 lecturers and six teaching assistants on the male campus, and by three associate professors, 22 assistant/adjunct professors, 24 lecturers and 14 teaching assistants on the female campus (AOQ 7 and Annex 11: Teaching Matrix).

The full teaching load of all regular academic staff members is ten hours for professors (currently none employed in the study program), 12 hours for associate professors, 14 hours for assistant professors and 16 hours for lecturers and instructors.

Instructors and lecturers must hold a Master's degree. Assistant/adjunct professors hold a Doctorate degree. To be appointed to the level of associate professor, a doctorate degree, four years' experience in the faculty of a recognized university and a group of scientific research published in refereed journals is required. Being appointed to the level of a full professor requires a Doctorate degree and at least eight years' experience in the faculty of a recognized university, including at least four years after promotion to the level of

associate professor as well as scientific research published in refereed journals (OAOQ 7). The faculty's qualifications are documented in the CVs submitted by the University (Annex 2).

Considering the total of 183 male and 400 female students in the "Nursing" program, this corresponds to a 2.86 student-to-faculty ratio in the male section, and a 2.38 ratio for the female section (SER 2.1.1).

According to the University (SER 2.1.3), faculty members at the College of Nursing are regularly invited to lectures, trainings, seminars, workshops and research colloquia through the Vice Deanship or the Deanship of Quality and Development, through the University's affiliated hospitals or through other universities. Faculty members who attend local and international conferences, workshops, symposia and research fora have their registration fees, transportation and accommodation costs paid for by the University.

In addition, the "Nursing" program includes administrative human resources. The study program coordinator (the Head of Department), the clinical skills and laboratory coordinator, the students' registration and schedule coordinator and the quality assurance coordinator (all members of department staff).

### **2.3.2 Facilities**

The College of Nursing is divided into male and female sections at the University of Ha'il. The University states that both sections are equipped with lecture halls, main halls, skills laboratories, computer laboratories, faculty offices, administration offices, non-teaching personnel offices and a staff lounge. Wi-Fi access is available throughout the facility. Lecture halls and main halls are equipped with seating and electronic media and are approximately 80 and 175 square meters in size, respectively. Smart boards, white boards and projectors are provided.

Skills laboratories contain furnishings, equipment and apparatus for students' practical training in line with the specific field of the laboratory: the Fundamentals of Nursing Practice Laboratory, the Basic Adult Care Nursing Practice Laboratory, the Critical Care Nursing Practice Laboratory and the Maternity & Pediatric Nursing Practice Laboratory. There are five nursing skills laboratories in the male section and six such laboratories in the female section (AOQ 9).

The male and female campuses at the University each contain a library, both of which contain books, journals, indices, videos, electronic media and software for professional use. The University states to also hold subscriptions to more than 300 databases and periodicals through the Saudi Digital Library (OAOQ 8). The library is open from 08:00 to 14:00 on Saudi weekdays.

The faculty members in the College of Nursing request new textbooks and reference materials on a department level. These requests are discussed in a Department Council, the decisions of which are then subject to approval by the College Council. The Deanship of Libraries then procures the materials.

The Deanship of Information Technology and E-Learning is responsible for ensuring that students have access to the technology they need.

### **2.3.3 Quality assurance**

The University of Ha'il has established a quality assurance hierarchy (Annex F) which chains from the University Rector to the Vice Rector of Quality and Community Services and the Deanship of Quality and Development. Below this on the same tier are the Strategic Planning Administration, the Skills Development Administration and the Quality and Accreditation Administration, the latter of which further contains a Quality Assistant Unit, an Academic Accreditation Unit, an Intended Learning Outcomes Assessment Unit and an ISO Unit. The University of Hail went through a certification process for ISO 9001:2015 at the German TÜV SÜD and obtained its certificate for three years (2017-2020) (Annex J). Furthermore, the University of Ha'il was accredited by the English Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC) and was granted the status of a "Premier University" for a four-year accreditation period from March 2017 to March 2021 (Annex K).

Moreover, the University has created a Vice Deanship of Quality and Development within the College of Nursing, which is empowered and charged with:

- Establishing units within the College of Nursing involving members from the male, female and satellite campuses,
- Coordinating with these units to address all concerns related to quality assurance in clinical, academic, research and management contexts,
- Periodically updating, evaluating and enhancing modules under the guidance of Heads of Departments and Quality Coordinators in each depart-

ment, in order to ensure that the objectives of each module align with those of the “Nursing” program and the University,

- Implementing various quality assessment mechanisms, viz.
  - Course specifications,
  - Course reports,
  - Internal and external auditing of course specifications, course reports and course files,
  - Surveys of students, alumni, faculty and non-teaching personnel,
  - External auditor feedback,
  - Program specification and report.

The overall feedback from the Vice Deanship of Quality and Development guides the individual departments to formulate action plans and module enhancement. The Vice Deanship of Quality and Development has as its central aims the short-, medium- and long-term goals and plans of the University.

At the end of each academic year, the Course Coordinator integrates all information regarding potential improvement of the courses in the “Nursing” program, gathered from course reports submitted by instructors and students (Annexes H and I). With a goal of enhancing course objectives, content, teaching strategies and assessment methods, the Course Coordinator leads meetings with all instructors and forwards the recommended course improvements to the Heads of Department.

The questionnaires for students’ evaluation do not cover the evaluation of the students’ workload.

The “Banner system,” provided by the Deanship of Admission and Registration, is said to provide students with details about their studies, including academic requirements, number of credit points earned and left to earn, the complete academic plan, their attendance records, their grades and their cumulative GPA. Administrative tasks, such as adding or dropping courses and managing schedules, can also be performed by students through “Banner.”

According to the University (SER 1.6.4), the “Nursing” program and its practical relevance is primarily analyzed by various stakeholders, including alumni and their immediate professional supervisors. Areas of assessment include reliability of graduates’ professional conduct, level of their self-improvement over time, performance in trainings (if applicable), and their employers’ overall

satisfaction to their level of professionalism, skills and attitude. These data are analyzed by the Quality Assurance Unit and transformed into recommendations for improving the “Nursing” program, which are then forwarded to the Vice Dean of Quality and Development and, in turn, the College Council.

In order to guide all quality activities at the University, the University’s Quality and Accreditation Administration published several manuals, primarily in Arabic language (OAOQ 4). In order to simplify all operations concerning quality for non-Arabic speaking staff of the university, a handbook was translated clearing the concepts and definitions in quality assurance at Ha’il University (Annex G).

According to recent enrollment statistics provided by the University (Annex 5), in the past three years, a total of 484 students (316 female, 168 male) enrolled in the “Nursing” program, while 186 male and 417 female students graduated from the program since it started (Annex 7).

Academic counseling and student support are provided to students, beginning with an orientation into the “Nursing” program. Regularly scheduled consultation hours are available to students in need of guidance, and students are claimed to benefit from an open-door policy for instructors, Heads of Department and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs. For students in particular need of assistance (those underperforming academically), the College of Nursing has set up a specialized committee which closely monitors such students, assesses their status and performance, and develops and implements a reinforcement plan. Moreover, faculty members serve as academic advisors to students. The College of Nursing also hosts seminars to gear graduating students for their career paths and to give them direct contact and rapport with potential employers.

According to the University (SER 1.6.9), equal opportunity for students is strictly upheld by the University in its procedures of admission, recruitment and employment. Discrimination based on gender, culture, age or socio-economic status is forbidden.

The University claims to follow the regulations set by Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Social Welfare regarding support for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses (OAOQ 6).



## 2.4 Information about the University

The University of Ha'il was founded in 2005, having originally opened its doors in 1988 as the Ha'il Community College. It currently has an enrollment of roughly 40,000 students across 43 study programs (thereof 39 Bachelor programs) and the following 15 Colleges:

- College of Applied Medical Sciences,
- College of Arts and Sciences,
- College of Business Administration,
- College of Community,
- College of Computer Science and Engineering,
- College of Dentistry,
- College of Education,
- College of Engineering,
- College of Medicine,
- College of Nursing,
- College of Pharmacy,
- College of Preparatory Year,
- College of Public Health,
- College of Sciences,
- College of Shariah Law.

In 2008, the University established the Institute of Research and Advisory Services (IRAS) with the mission to provide and promote training, knowledge transfer, family consultancy services, economic consultancy, academic services and studies and research to both the public and the private sector.

The College of Nursing was established in 2011 and solely offers the Bachelor study program "Nursing." The College states that its vision is to grow into one of the "colleges of excellence" in Saudi Arabia (SER 3.2.1); its next major step is the completion of the construction of a University of Ha'il Hospital in 2018, in which "Nursing" students will have many new clinical learning areas. According to the University, the program's student intake capacity could then be substantially increased.

### **3 Expert Report**

#### **3.1 Preliminary remarks**

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (hereupon, the AHPGS) was commissioned by the decision of University of Ha'il/Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hereupon, the University) for the accreditation of the study programs "Nursing" (Bachelor of Science) and "Physical Therapy" (Bachelor of Science).

The on-site visit evaluation of the study program "Nursing", as well as of the study program "Physical Therapy", offered at the University of Ha'il, was carried out on December 4-5, 2017, at the University of Ha'il/Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The documents of the university, the feedback from the experts to the documents and the results of the discussions with the representatives of the University during the on-site visit serve as basis for the statements made in the expert report.

The following experts were appointed by the accreditation commission of the AHPGS for the evaluation of the study program:

#### **As representatives of higher education institutions:**

##### **Prof. Dr. Christian Grüneberg**

University of Applied Sciences for Health Care Professions, Bochum,  
Germany  
Professor of Physical Therapy

##### **Prof. Dr. Steve Strupeit**

University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany  
Professor of Nursing Sciences

##### **Prof. Dr. Birgit Vosseler**

University of Applied Sciences St. Gallen, Switzerland  
Professor of Nursing Sciences

##### **Prof. Dr. Mieke Wasner**

SRH University of Applied Sciences, Heidelberg, Germany  
Professor of Physiotherapy

**As student representative:*****Mrs. Franziska Jagoda***<sup>3</sup>

*Nursing Studies at University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany  
Bachelor Degree in Nursing*

The on-site visit of the experts is carried out in accordance with the *Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programs and for System Accreditation* (determined by the decision of the Accreditation Commission, of December, 2009 in the version of February 20, 2013, Drs. AR 20/2013) as well as the *Criteria for the assessment and accreditation procedures of study programs at foreign higher education institutions* developed by the AHPGS. After the announcement of the accreditation decision, the expert report will be published as a part of the final Assessment Report.

**3.2 Basic information about the study program**

The main objective of the bachelor study program "Nursing" offered at the College of Nursing of the University of Ha'il is to prepare professionals in Nursing who provide nursing care to individuals at different age levels with various health problems in different health care settings and who participate actively in the promotion and maintenance of health and prevention of illness among individuals, families and communities. The study program requires the obtainment of 136 credit hours (CH) according to the international credit hour system. One credit hour is equal to one contact hour of lectures or two hours of laboratory or clinical training hours per week. The total workload of the program constitutes 8,508 hours, of which 1,575 hours relate to theoretical modules, 390 hours are spent in skills labs, 690 hours are training in clinical settings, 3,933 are hours of independent study, and 1,920 hours have to be absolved in a 48-weeks rotary internship at the end of the studies. The bachelor study program "Nursing" is a full-time study program with a regular duration of four years / eight semesters plus one year of rotary internships. The program curriculum consists of 46 courses, of which 12 are to be taken in a preparatory year and one is an elective course.

Admission requirements of the program include the possession of a Saudi Secondary School Certificate (Scientific Track), or its equivalent, and passing the General Aptitude Test as well as the Scholastic Achievement Admission

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<sup>3</sup> The expert shown in italics did not participate in the on-site visit of the University.

Test for scientific tracks, obtained from the Saudi National Center for Assessment in Higher Education. Upon completion of the study program, students are awarded with the academic title "Bachelor of Science in Nursing". The average students' intake in the "Nursing" study program is 160, with approximately 55 study places for male students and approximately 105 study places for female students. Admission takes place every September. The first batch of students has been admitted to the program in the academic year 2013/2014. Up to now, 484 students (168 male and 316 female) have graduated from the program. The main language of instruction is English. No tuition fees are charged to Saudi nationals. Students also receive monthly governmental stipends until they graduate.

### **3.3 Expert Report**

The on-site visit was carried out on December 4 and 5, 2017, according to the previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the head office of the AHPGS accompanied the expert group.

The expert group met on December 3, 2017, for preliminary talks prior to the on-site visit. They discussed the submitted application documents and the results of the written evaluation as well as the uprising questions. Furthermore, they prepared the plan of the on-site visit at the University.

In the course of the on-site visit, experts conducted discussions with the University management, the Deanship of Quality and Development, representatives of the College of Applied Medical Sciences and the College of Nursing and the Chair, Vice Chair and the male and female teaching staff of the programs "Nursing" and "Physical Therapy" as well as with male and female students currently studying in the programs. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar classrooms, library, and computer classes on the male and female campus. Besides, the experts had the opportunity to see the equipment and the capacity of the laboratories at the male and at the female campus.

In the course of the on-site visit, the University submitted the following additional documents upon the requirement of the experts:

- "Quality and Academic Accreditation – Terms and Abbreviations"
- "Key Performance Indicators of the University of Hail – Definition, Patterns, Importance"

The expert report is structured in compliance with the accreditation criteria of the AHPGS approved by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS on September 30, 2015 in the version of July 21, 2015. The study program will be described and analyzed in a comprehensive manner below. The documents submitted by the University, the experts' feedback to the documents, the observations made during the on-site visit, results of discussions with the representatives of the University, the Colleges and the Departments serve as the basis for the statements made in the expert report.

### **3.3.1 Program aims and their implementation**

The Bachelor study program "Nursing" pursues specific qualification objectives. The study program's main objective is to prepare competent professional nurses who can meet the rapid changes in the health field and are capable of serving in different health sectors in a comprehensive and a professional manner. The program is also designed to prepare nurses with a sense of responsibility and professionalism and to work and communicate effectively within a multi-disciplinary health care team to meet the needs of the society and the region, while accounting for professional ethics. The defined students' learning outcomes by the College describe the accumulated knowledge, cognitive, interpersonal, communication and practical/psychomotor skills that students develop during the course of the study. These range, among others, from knowledge about the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing processes, the treatment and management of common disorders and life threatening problems, nursing's moral, ethical and legal standards, the principles of communication with a variety of patients, the research principles in nursing, up to skills for planning health education sessions, using methods of leadership and management, and the safe operation of specialized medical devices. The experts highly appreciate the holistic approach towards the patient/client that is taught to the students.

Thus, the experts conclude that these objectives cover both professional, and extraprofessional and interdisciplinary aspects and specifically refer to the domain of academic competences, necessary employment qualifications, skills of social commitment and personal development. The learning outcomes of the study program are well-defined and correspond to the pursued academic degree.

The University's effort to contribute to the advancement of nursing and health care in Saudi Arabia in particular is also shown through the offered bridging courses for nursing assistants with the former „Diploma“, a two-year non-academic qualification. Although being a temporary offer until all interested lower qualified nurses upgraded their qualification to the Bachelor level, the experts consider this option an important issue in the development of the profession that fits to the University's strategy on the one hand and to the needs of society and health care on the other hand.

Overall, the study program has been developed, and is currently being implemented, according to the national legal requirements. Nevertheless, the program representatives are well aware of international standards in academic nursing education. In order to foster the correspondence with international standards, the experts recommend relating the qualification framework to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (CanMEDS), the International Council of Nurses (ICN) or the Principal Relevant Objectives and Framework for Integrated Learning and Education in Switzerland (PROFILES).

Although results of graduates' surveys were not presented, the University outlined clearly the society's need for the profession. As the rapid developments in Saudi Arabia also influence the national health sector and cause a high number of job vacancies which are supposed to be covered with Saudi nationals for fostering the national job market, graduates from the "Nursing" Bachelor program are most likely to be employed as nurses in public and private hospitals, community health centers, school clinics, birthing centers or rehabilitation institutions.

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.2 Structure of the study program**

The Bachelor study program "Nursing" is a full-time study program with a regular duration of four years / eight semesters plus one year of rotary internships. The program curriculum consists of 46 courses, of which 12 are to be taken in a preparatory year. To the experts this appears as a very detailed curriculum, consisting of a large number of more or less isolated courses. A modular structure is not yet fully implemented. The experts recommend considering modern curriculum design in the further development of the University's "Nursing" programs.

However, the combination and sequence of the courses of the study program are consistent with the earlier described specified qualification objectives.

The study program requires the obtainment of 136 credit hours (CH) according to the international credit hour system. One credit hour is equal to one contact hour of lectures or two hours of laboratory or clinical training hours per week. The total workload of the program constitutes 8,508 hours, of which 1,575 hours relate to theoretical modules, 1,080 are practical hours (360 in skills labs and 690 in clinical settings) and 3,933 are hours of independent study. The final internship year comprises another 1,920 hours of training.

The program consists of a Health Sciences' Preparatory Year, General University Mandatory Requirements, Mandatory College Requirements including physiology, anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, pathology and pharmacology, and Nursing/Core Specialty Mandatory Requirements. Moreover, the College offers a list of College Electives to be chosen from in the seventh semester. The Health Sciences' Preparatory Year contains English language skills, Arabic language skills and communication skills, as well as basic sciences courses in medical physics, medical foundations and biology in order to reinforce skills and knowledge to provide a strong basis upon which to build the study of Nursing. A course in computer skills and Islamic culture are also to be taken. The Health Sciences' Preparatory Year is studied together by students from the College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Dentistry, the College of Public Health and College of Informatics.

Thus, the experts conclude that students are provided with specialized and program-specific knowledge on the one hand, and interdisciplinary knowledge as well as professional, methodological and general competences on the other hand, although research skills should be implemented earlier in the course of studies to support the development of a scholarly attitude in the students. The experts acknowledge the very detailed course files with its contents and aims. This allows a high level of transparency and facilitates the implementation of equal standards in the male and the female track of the study program. Moreover, it was shown that the staff incorporates current issues and developments to their teaching.

However and taking into account the qualification objective of providing health care to individuals over the life span, the experts determine that the curriculum leaves room for improvement by a more visible integration of dementia and palliative care and, thus, considering already future needs of the society. Although being addressed in the qualification objectives, the experts see further room for enhancement regarding the training and qualification for nursing care in settings beyond hospitals. Topics such as home care and community health care should be addressed prominently in theoretical courses and practical training.

As the teaching staff explains on site, the curriculum already contains approaches to interprofessional education (IPE) in the health care sector. But currently, the focus on teambuilding and IPE lies in the internship year and is supposed to be intensified as soon as the own University hospital is ready to operate. As the College of Nursing and the University of Hail with its variety of health-related colleges in general dispose very good preconditions for IPE and as IPE becomes a more and more significant issue in health care, the experts strongly encourage the University to strengthen IPE training in the curricula.

The experts appreciate that the University of Ha'il currently focuses on academic qualification on Bachelor level and that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and, thus, the University encourage the Bachelor graduates to acquire further professional qualification abroad. But as the College of Nursing is offering a very comprehensive and detailed nursing education, disposes of excellent professional and infrastructural conditions and as the University of Ha'il as well as Saudi Arabian universities in general are graduating an increasing amount of nurses, the experts encourage the University and the College representatives to take "Advanced Nursing Practice" into account when developing an option for further academic qualification on a Master's level. Also in order to guarantee international recognition in a sustainable way, the experts recommend developing programs for qualification on Master's, PhD or "Doctor of Nursing Practice" (DNP) level. This may be also a good chance to implement and foster international cooperations.

Professional practical skills are gained through the practical hours related to the respective theoretical courses, and clinical rotations at the hospital. Additionally, the majority of courses are often completed with a practical exam



part. As a whole, the students spend 360 practical contact hours in the laboratories/skills labs at the University. During the four years of study, students spend another 690 hours in real clinical settings. The finalizing internship year in the fifth year comprises another 1,920 hours of clinical practice in hospitals. Overall, the experts appreciate the impressively high total number of clinical practice of 3,000 hours. However, these clinical training hours appear very unevenly distributed as only 690 hours are spent in clinical settings during the first four years of study while the majority of hours are completed within the last internship year. Although comprising a high workload, the final internship year is not credit-bearing as it is not formally part of the studies but part of the legal recognition/licensing process as nurses according to the Saudi Arabian health system. On site, the program representatives outline new possibilities of more flexible inclusion of clinical practice into the study programs as soon as the University's planned own hospital is ready to operate.

Apart from disposing excellently equipped skills labs (see Criterion 5), the University has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health in order to realize the clinical internships at suitable Saudi Arabian hospitals. Expectations on students' qualification and the structure of the internships are clearly defined in the "Nursing Internship Manual". The experts also appreciate that one responsible from the University's side and one from the clinical setting are assigned to supervise students during their internship.

Standard methods of didacticism and assessment (lectures, midterm exams, and practical as well as written finals) constitute the general framework of the study program, though the University states that the College of Nursing emphasizes interactive, exploratory teaching techniques. Nevertheless, the experts would like to strengthen the idea of a student-centered study program, encouraging students to take an even more active role in creating their own education process and developing a scholarly attitude. The experts already acclaim the activity of the „Nursing Club“, a student initiative which supports student activities (e.g. poster presentations and participation at program-related conferences etc.) and public relations work for the study program. Thereby and as a consequence of an appropriate student-teacher ratio, students receive the support and guidance they need for the organization and accomplishment of assignments and the learning process in general.

The study program has a course-related examination system. Its implementation, including the grading system, course load regulations, repetition of courses and exams, assignments of academic status (good standing, academic warning, academic probation) and transfer of credits, is regulated in the University's "Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulation & the UoH Rules for their Implementation".

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.3 Admission and Feasibility**

Admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are listed in the University's "Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulation & the UoH Rules for their Implementation". In order to be admitted to the Bachelor study program "Nursing" at the University of Hail, students must have the secondary school certificate or its equivalent from inside or outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Besides a record of good conduct, an Aptitude Test Certificate (ATC) obtained from the Saudi National Center for Assessment in Higher Education is also required. All newly admitted students are required to complete the preparatory year program before starting their undergraduate studies. To be placed to the „Nursing“ study program, students must pass the Preparatory Year with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

As the Preparatory Year comprises medical foundations as well as foundations in medical biology, biology and medical physics in order to compensate deficiencies from secondary school, the experts determine an appropriate admission procedure and requirements that correspond to the standards of the study program.

The admission requirements are properly documented and made publicly available.

The experts determine a relatively high amount of exams to be passed during the „Nursing“ study program as each of the 46 courses require passing a midterm and a final exam, often comprising a practical and a theoretical part. To compensate, the University observes the students' performance by collecting and generating the cumulative and semester Grade Point Average (GPA). Students with a GPA less than 2.00 out of 4.00 receive an academic warning. Students with a GPA less than 1.00 out of 4.00 are put under academic probation. To facilitate the amount of exams, the type as well as the time of the

different examinations is defined and communicated to the students transparently and at the beginning of the course. The experts confirm that the University takes measures to guarantee the feasibility of the study program. The amount of student workload is appropriate. As a whole, the organization of the education process ensures the successful implementation of the study program.

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.4 Examination system and transparency**

The University uses a continuous assessment process to ensure the quality of education for its students. This is achieved by evaluating the performance of the student through a series of exams and tests that are scheduled during the academic semester. The experts appreciate the implementation of an "exit exam" after the fourth year of studies in order to be admitted to the internship year. Students in the "Nursing" program are not required to write a Bachelor thesis but have to submit a written proposal that is comparable to small empirical studies or systematic reviews and shows an appropriate level of academic qualification. In order to equalize with international standards, the experts recommend extending this written proposal to a proper bachelor thesis in order to conclusively prove academic competences.

In the experts' opinion the study program requires a very high amount of exams which causes a high workload not only for students but also for the teaching staff (see also Criterion 3). Discussing the issue on site, apparently staff as much as students are satisfied with the exam procedures and see clear benefits in the current practice. The transparent information of examination methods and of the examination schedule at the beginning of each term makes the great number of assessments during and at the end of each semester manageable.

Thus, the experts conclude that the examinations, although numerous, serve to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved or not. These examinations are focused on students' knowledge. To compensate the high workload through the great amount of exams, the experts recommend implementing a greater variety and flexibility in examination methods and focusing stronger on a competence-oriented examination design. In that regard, also the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

(CanMEDS) may afford orientation. In addition and referring to international standards, the experts recommend the implementation of bachelor thesis in order to foster the academic level of the study program.

The study program has a system of assessment, conversion and recognition of students' competences and credits acquired and completed at other higher education institutions documented in the University's "Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulation & the UoH Rules for their Implementation". The bridging program enables upgrading their former professional achievements in physical therapy to upgrade their qualification to an academic level.

The requirements to students' performance in examinations are regulated and published. The frequency of examinations, as well as their organization, is appropriate.

The University's "Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulation & the UoH Rules for their Implementation" contain regulations in compensation measures for students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses.

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.5 Teaching staff and material equipment**

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of the College of Nursing shows a very high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as further development of the study program they are responsible for. The expert group comes to the conclusion that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the university and faculty administrations.

The teaching staff of the program "Nursing" comprises ten assistant/adjunct professors, 18 lecturers and six teaching assistants on the male campus, and by three associate professors, 22 assistant/adjunct professors, 24 lecturers and 14 teaching assistants on the female campus. The University points out that the teaching staff is constantly amended in accordance with the department's needs but depending on the availability of sufficiently qualified professionals.

The experts appreciate the University's efforts and its success in establishing a complete, appropriately qualified and sustainable teaching body, despite the partial lack of specialists in the country. As a consequence, the department

benefits now from a highly engaged international faculty, commanding an appropriate level of English for teaching.

However, the experts see room for enhancement by complementing the teaching staff with a professional in dementia and palliative care for a firm ongoing development of the program taking into account future health care needs of the society.

Regarding the employment process, the qualification and experience of the teaching staff is closely evaluated prior to the appointment decision. The experts have admitted that the instructors involved in study programs reveal a high level of competency in the relevant field.

New teaching staff is thoroughly briefed about the program and their teaching responsibilities before they can start working.

Students evaluate performance of all teaching and other staff periodically.

The experts find the amount of human resources allocated to the program to be sufficient to carry out its functions. The teaching staff within the Bachelor program "Nursing" is in possession of academic and technical credentials and experience adequate to their jobs. The University informs its employees about opportunities for personal and professional development in clear ways, and actively encourages their participation in workshops, training courses, and conferences intended to further their ability which is confirmed during the talks with the staff on site.

On site, the experts were shown around the University's and the Faculty's premises at the female and at the male campus. The experts were impressed with the quality of the laboratories and clinical areas used to train students in the Bachelor program "Nursing." The skills labs are equipped with all relevant high technology devices and a variety of low and high fidelity body simulators, including neonatal, children and maternity simulators. It was ascertained by the experts that the Bachelor study program "Nursing" has ample available teaching facilities at its disposal. The laboratory infrastructure and the equipment are suitable to guarantee a high level of teaching and research.

However, the experts determined that, although disposing the same well-equipped skills labs as the male campus, the premises at the female campus was characterized by spatial scarcity and a slim infrastructure in comparison

with the vastness of the male campus. The experts acknowledge that the University is still in a phase of development and that the development plans incorporate amplification plans for the female campus, too. Nevertheless, the experts would like to underline the evidence and necessity to guarantee the same standards and quality in equipment and facilities for male and female students, once the University reaches the phase of full operation.

The University hosts a library at each of the two campuses, the male and the female one. The libraries offer ample print and internet resources for academic research. Besides, every department hosts another small program-specific library with the most central reference books. From the experts' point of view, the learning resource materials and associated services are consistent with the requirements of the programs and the courses offered by them. Even so, also in this regard it has to be mentioned that the libraries as much as the self-study premises at the female campus show spatial scarcity and a very basic level of quality in equipment and infrastructure; an issue that should be cleared up with the further development of the University.

Overall, the experts conclude that the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.6 Quality assurance**

From the experts' point of view, the University of Ha'il has a well-structured system of quality assurance spread across all of its units. The University of Ha'il has established a quality assurance hierarchy which chains from the University Rector to the Vice Rector of Quality and Community Services to the Deanship of Quality and Development. At each department of the University, a Quality Assurance Unit has been established. Quality assurance rooms are prepared in each department, in which all relevant documents are kept readily accessible for the responsible staff members. Moreover, every college disposes a student council in order to involve students in the processes. Twice annually, the Deanship of Quality and Development visits each college.

On site, the experts got a detailed introduction into the work of the Deanship of Quality and Development which guides the University's colleges and departments closely through quality measuring processes. For this reason, the Deanship of Quality and Development elaborated a large variety of manuals which offer a systematic way of informing staff and students about proce-

dures and key performance indicators. The experts highlight especially the defined process for implementing new study programs.

The Deanship of Quality and Development carries out internal and external quality assurance procedures on a cyclical basis, among them among them course evaluations and student and teaching staff surveys. At the end of each semester, a course report is written and course specifications may be amended according to the evaluation results.

Students' workload is assessed and regulated through the Grade Point Average (GPA). Students with a GPA less than 2.00 out of 4.00 have to reduce their workload until they are able to improve their performance again.

On site, the experts had the opportunity to visit the Quality Assurance Unit's room and accessed all documents, such as meeting minutes, questionnaires, internship reports and evaluations, admission procedure and entrance exam documents etc.

The University reports that, in 2017, the University was granted the MENA Award for the best internal quality management system in the Middle East. Moreover, the College of Nursing has been determined the best performing college at the University of Ha'il through the assessments of the Deanship of Quality and Development.

The experts conclude that the University has a well-established, documented and published concept of quality assurance in education process, teaching and research, which serves as the basis for the quality-oriented development and implementation of the study program.

The results of the internal quality assurance management are applied for the continuous development of the study program. In doing so, the University takes into close consideration the quality evaluation results as well as the analyses of students' workload, their academic accomplishments and feedback from graduates.

Nevertheless, the experts determine that the quality management system is strongly concentrated on quantitative surveys. Little has been reported regarding definite measures and actions for quality enhancement derived from the evaluations. As a consequence, the experts strongly recommend implementing

and strengthening also qualitative dimensions and evaluations, e.g. group discussions or so-called "Round Tables".

This would as well allow more student participation. The experts acknowledge that the University already implemented first arrangements for student participation, such as student councils in every college and the student clubs in every department. However, students on site did not seem to be very aware of possibilities to influence and take part in development and decision processes at the University. As from the experts consider students' personal development and civic commitment an essential part of academic education, the University should expand the promotion of student participation and encourage students to take more action in the creative processes at the University.

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

### **3.3.7 Gender equality and equal opportunities**

The Department of Physical Therapy has both female and male students and assures that it provides equal admission, education, examination and participation opportunities for both groups of students. The University of Ha'il demonstrates its commitment to the provision of equal opportunities for all students, within the cultural boundaries of the local society, and shows impressive openness for diversity and social developments.

The experts acknowledge that female as much as male staff and students have been and are participating in national and international conferences.

However, as mentioned in Criterion 5, the quality of facilities and the availability of space still show differences between the male and the female campus which should be eliminated along with the further development of the University's implementation. During the on-site visit, the experts have also gained the impression that the communication and exchange of information between the male and the female campus could be improved. The expert group encourages the University to use the full potential of communication possibilities between the male and the female campuses of the University and, that way, promote the exchange of experiences and ideas for the further development of the study program.



To enable every young Saudi with a secondary school certificate to attend higher education, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia grants full scholarships to all male and female students. Additionally, the female campus disposes a nursery for the female students' and staff's children.

Moreover, the experts appreciate the possibility to attend a bridging program for lower qualified professionals in order to upgrade their degree to an academic level and, thus, the University's contribution to ease lifelong learning.

Taking into account the societal norms and cultural context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.4 Summary**

The overall impression of the University is very positive. The University of Ha'il presents itself convincingly as an open-minded and dynamic institution, within the cultural boundaries of the local society, with willingness to import new ideas and recommendations for further enhancement. The experts find that the University strongly benefits from its dedicated, involved and interested Rector who is aware of challenges but keen on pushing forward the University's development and enhancement.

The experts positively emphasize the facts that a new building of the College of Applied Sciences is currently under construction and that the University is planning to build its own hospital in the near future.

A number of additional favorable characteristics and achievements of the study program were demonstrated by the management of the University, the representatives of the college, those of the department as well as of the student body, such as a high amount of practical training hours, an excellent infrastructure, a multi-disciplinary and multi-national teaching team, a very thorough and comprehensive curriculum, and a strong commitment to quality assurance. The objectives of the study program meet the requirements of the current job market of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Based on the information from written documents and the results of the on-site visit, the experts came to the conclusion that the study program "Nursing" offered at the University of Ha'il fulfills the above described criteria. Hence, the experts decided to submit a recommendation to the Accreditation

Commission of the AHPGS for a positive decision regarding the accreditation of the study program.

For the continuous development of the study program, the experts have outlined the following recommendations:

- The qualification framework should also be related to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (CanMEDS), the International Council of Nurses (ICN) or the Principal Relevant Objectives and Framework for Integrated Learning and Education in Switzerland (PROFILES).
- Research skills should be introduced earlier in the course of studies and a bachelor thesis as a final prove of academic competences should be implemented.
- Dementia care and palliative care as well as nursing care in settings beyond hospitals should be more prominently addressed.
- Prevention and health promotion through physical therapy should be included or emphasized in the curriculum.
- IPE training should be expanded.
- Further academic qualification options, such as Master of Science in Nursing, PhD or Doctor of Nursing Practice, should be developed with a focus on "Advanced Nursing Practice".
- Clinical training hours should be distributed more evenly over the years of study.
- The idea of a student-centered study program, encouraging students to take an even more active role in creating their own education process and developing a scholarly attitude, should be developed and implemented.
- A greater variety and flexibility in examination methods as well as a competence-oriented examination design should be implemented.
- The teaching staff should be complemented with a professional in palliative care.
- More qualitative dimensions and evaluations should be applied.
- Student participation at the University should be expanded.
- Differences between the male and the female campus should be eliminated and same standards and quality in equipment and facilities for male and female students should be assured along with the further development of the University's implementation.

- The full potential of communication possibilities between the male and the female campuses of the University and the possibilities of exchange of experiences and ideas for the further development of the study program should be used.

## **4 Decision of the accreditation commission**

### **The decision of the Accreditation Commission of February 15, 2018**

The resolution of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS is based on the University's application, as well as the expert review and the on-site visit covered in the expert report.

The on-site visit of the University took place on December 4-5, 2017, according to the previously agreed schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the Accreditation Criteria developed by the AHPGS. The Accreditation Criteria are developed by the AHPGS in close accordance with the existing criteria and requirements valid in the Federal Republic of Germany and based on the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group.

The regulated study period in the program "Nursing" is four years/eight semesters at the University followed by a 48-weeks internship. The study program comprises 45 compulsory courses and one elective course out of seven. Twelve courses are taught in the preparatory year and 34 during the main period of studies. The main language of instruction is English. The bachelor study program "Nursing" is completed with awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Science" (B.Sc.). The first batch of students has been admitted to the program in the academic year 2013/2014.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS considers that all Accreditation Criteria are fulfilled and adopts the following decision:

The study program "Nursing" is accredited for the duration of five years, until September 30, 2023.

For further development and enhancement of the study program, as well as of the University as a whole, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS supports the recommendation articulated in the expert report.