

Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge
im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales
Accreditation Agency for Study Programs
in the Area of Health and Social Science



Assessment Report

**for the Application of
Beirut Arab University, Lebanon,
Faculty of Health Sciences,
Nursing Department
for the Accreditation of the Study Program
Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in "Nursing"**

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Decision	July 25, 2017

¹ The experts shown in italics have not participated in the on-site visit of the University.

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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 healthcare or medicine. 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 criteria²:

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

The external assessment procedure is carried out in four steps:

² Approved by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission

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 below), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

II. Written review

Parallel to the first step, 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 applied accreditation criteria. Consequently, the written reviews of the experts are comprised together.

III. On-site visit (peer-review)

The experts carry out the on-site visit at the University. In the course of the on-site visit, the expert group holds discussions with various members of the University, including the University and college administrative representatives, the program management, teaching staff and a group of students. Such extensive discussions provide the expert group with additional information and a better insight into the structure and content of the program.

The task of the experts during the on-site visit is to verify the rationality of the program's objectives and learning outcomes and their correspondence to the needs of the current and expected labor market situation, to evaluate the sufficiency and effectiveness of the teaching staff, material resources, and methods of assessment (admission requirements, assessment of achievements, students' support), as well as of the program management (program administration, internal and external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, the expert group issues the expert report for the study program. This is based on the results of the on-site visit, the documents submitted by the University and the experts' considerations based on these documents. The expert reports are made available to the University to issue a response opinion.

The expert report, as well as the University's response opinion – together with the application documents – is submitted to the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS for the final decision.

IV. The AHPGS accreditation decision

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available, namely the University's application documents, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the Expert Report and the University's response opinion. These documents represent the basis for the decision of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS, which can be formulated in three ways: accreditation, accreditation with conditions or denial of accreditation.

2 Overview

2.1 Procedure-related documents

Beirut Arab University (hereinafter “the University”) assigned the AHPGS to carry out the accreditation of the bachelor study program “Nursing”.

The University submitted the Self-Evaluation Report (hereinafter referred to as SER) and the relevant annexes of the Bachelor study program “Nursing” to the AHPGS in electronic form on December 9, 2016. The contract for the assessment and the accreditation of the study program (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) was signed by the University and the AHPGS on September 11, 2015.

On February 16, 2017, the AHPGS forwarded the open questions (OQ) pertaining to the application documents of the study program to the University. On March 6, 2017, the University submitted the answers to the open questions (AOQ) and explanatory notes to the AHPGS in electronic form.

This document presents the summary of the study program “Nursing” prepared by the AHPGS.

The Self-Evaluation Report submitted by the University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the SER, the University provided the following documents:

Annex	Description
1	Module Descriptions
2	Nursing Agreement
3	Clinical Training Manual
4	Curriculum Enhancement Policy and Procedures
5	Status Report Volume II
6	Regulations of the Nursing Profession
7	Nursing Simulation Lab Manual
8	Research Project Guidelines
9	Erasmus + Inter-Institutional agreement
10	International Benchmark
11	CVs of the Academic Staff

12	CVs of Clinical Instructors
13	CVs of the Lecturers
14	CV Lab Manager
15	Al Zahraa Agreement
16	BAU Nursing – Certificate
17	Hammoud Agreement
18	Makassed Agreement

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to “Medical Laboratory Technologies,” “Nursing” and “Nutrition and Dietetics,” which are all submitted for external evaluation:

Annex	Description
A	Rules and Regulations
B	BAU Student Manual
C	BAU Strategy 2013-2018
D	Research Policy
E	BAU Code of Ethics
F	BAU Policies and Bylaws
G	Academic Advising for the Undergraduate Programs
H	BAU Guidelines for Effective Student Assessment
I	Institutional Review Board
J	Faculty of Health Sciences Status Report Volume I 2015-2016
K	Faculty Hiring
L	University Centers Offices and Departments
M	Consultancy Agreement
N	BAU Grading Policy
O	Quality Assurance Centre

The Summary, the Expert Report as well as the decision of the Accreditation Commission build the basis for the present Assessment Report.

2.2 Study program

2.2.1 Structural data

University	Beirut Arab University
Faculty/Department	Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Nursing Department
Cooperation Partners	Hammoud Hospital - Sidon; Al-Makassed General Hospital - Beirut; Rafic Hariri University Hospital - Beirut; Al Zahraa Hospital - Beirut
Title of the study program	"Nursing"
Degree awarded	Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)
Form of studies	Full-time
Organizational structure	Monday to Friday
Semester structure	Fall: September Spring: February Duration: 15 weeks + two examination weeks Summer: June (eight weeks)
Language of instruction	English
Period of education	Six semesters + two summer terms
Credit Points (CP) according to the Credit Hour System (CHS)	106 CP
Hours/CP	1 lecture contact hour = 1 credit 2/3 hours of tutorial, practical or clinical classes = 1 credit (Every credit requires 2 hours of self-study.)
Workload	Total: 3,689 hours Lecture hours: 1,201 hours Individual work: 1,165 hours Practical hours: 1,323 hours ³
Launch date of the study program	Academic year 2005/2006
Time of admission	Each winter semester

³ 1,146 hours in actual clinical settings; 177 hours simulated in lab

Number of available places on the program	50 students each year
Number of enrolled students to date	286
Number of graduates to date	132
Number of dropouts to date	52, including 13 who were dismissed from the University for inadequate grades
Particular enrollment conditions	Entrance exam (held twice annually) English test Aptitude test (thinking, skills, scientific knowledge: chemistry, biology, physics) Interview
Tuition fees	The average fee per semester is around \$3,400 Tuition fees are charged per Credit Hour (SER 1.1.11)

Table 1: Structural data of the study program

2.2.2 Qualification objectives and employment opportunities

The University provided a list of intended learning outcomes of the Bachelor study program "Nursing" according to the following categories: knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, professional and practical skills, general and transferable skills (for details, see SER 1.3.3 and Annex 5: pp.8-9).

The main objective of the study program "Nursing" is to graduate distinguished, highly qualified and competent nurses who work in changing and multiple health care settings with expert knowledge and skills (SER 1.3.2; Annex 5). The intellectual skills are acquired through diverse topics offered in different courses that are based on critical thinking and self-learning to improve their ability in problem solving and analytical thinking. The professional skills are gained through the practical courses and the clinical rotations at the hospital. The general and transferrable skills are acquired throughout the program in which students demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team and communicate effectively with nurse colleagues, patients and other health professionals. In terms of cognitive skills, the University assures, that students will gain practice in critical thinking, decision making and problem solving (SER 1.3.2).

In terms of qualification-specific knowledge and competences, the program aims to prepare qualified nurses who contribute to the advancement of the profession by improving knowledge, and by maintaining a high standard of care for the patients they serve. Graduated nurses will be able to perform and communicate effectively within an interdisciplinary health care team in various health care settings, while abiding to the code of ethics for professional practice. The graduates will be able to target all sectors of the population in different life stages, families and communities in different health care settings and levels, as well as policymakers. They will also learn how to apply new international approaches of care such as cultural diversity, social integration, patient advocacy and field visits in addition to participation in vaccination campaigns for mass immunization, and first aid (SER 1.3.2).

With regard to the aspect of social responsibility, the program is expected to educate individuals who are aware of the duties and responsibilities towards the patient as well as other members of the healthcare team (SER 1.3.2). The program seeks to enhance both academic and human development of the students and, thus, aims to create various individual characteristics such as independence, trustworthiness and imagination, self-learning to grow morally, ethically, cognitively and behaviorally (SER 1.3.2).

Graduates of the program "Nursing" are expected to find employment in hospitals, homecare centers, community and primary health-care centers, schools and day care center, industries and occupational health clinics, elderly homes and national and international health organizations. Furthermore, they can work as planners and coordinators, leaders, research participants, communicators, advocates, health educators, collaborators and healthcare providers (SER 1.4.1).

The University states that a scarcity of nurses is a problem all around the world. In Lebanon there is one nurse for every 567 citizens and 4.5 hospital beds. At the moment there are about 6,000 nurses for a population of over 4.4 million in Lebanon, which is further stretched by the arrival of refugees. Also, many of the best-qualified nurses are migrating out of the country. Therefore, the current and expected situation in the labor market is very good for graduates (SER 1.4.2).

Students may pursue further studies at the Department, as it offers a master of sciences in "Nursing", which was established in the academic year

2009/2010. It includes two majors: medical surgical nursing and critical care nursing (Annex 5: p.1).

2.2.3 Modularization and exam system

According to the regulations of the University, an academic year consists of a fall semester (September) and a spring semester (February) which last for 15 weeks and end with a two week examination period. The summer term (June) spans a period of eight weeks (including one final examination week). The courses offered for the Nursing program are designed to span a period of three years; that is, six semesters and two summer terms.

The University applies the system of credit hours, in which one credit hour is used as a standard to measure and specify the workload of students per semester. One credit hour is equal to one contact hour of lectures and to two or three hours of tutorial, practical and/or clinical classes per week (Annex A).

Every Faculty defines the minimum number of credits required for graduation. These credits consist of **Faculty** and **Departmental Mandatory Courses**, which must be completed by all students in the program as part of the graduation requirements, and **Major Elective Courses**, a set of courses that students can select from in order to fulfill the number of elective credits required in the program.

In addition, there is a set of courses designated by the University to ensure that all students acquire a broader knowledge. These courses include **University Mandatory Courses** and **University Elective Courses**.

The Bachelor study program "Nursing" consists of 43 modules and 106 credits to be covered in three years of studies:

- Mandatory Core Courses (MCC) 84 CP
 - Basic Science courses (BS)
 - Foundational Nursing Sciences courses (FNS)
 - Pre-Clinical Professional courses (PCP)
 - Clinical Professional courses (CP)
- Major Elective courses (ME) 6 CP
- General University Requirements (GUR) 16 CP, divided into:

- University Mandatory Courses (UMC) 7 CP
- University Elective Courses (UEC) 9 CP

The students register for up to seven modules in one semester and can obtain twelve to 18 credits in one semester. All modules have to be completed within one semester or one summer term. The first and second academic year award 38 credit hours and the last year 24 credit hours, along with two summer terms of five to nine credit hours, depending on the number of optional courses attended (SER 1.2.1).

The list of courses offered according to the academic program sheet (Annex 5: pp.14-15):

Semes- ter	Course Nr.	Course	CP
First Semester	NURS 207	Nursing Fundamental and Professional Ethics	3
	NURS 209	Nursing Fundamentals: Practice	2
	NURS 215	Anatomy and Physiology for Nurses	3
	PATH 203	Pathophysiology	3
	BCHM 215	Biochemistry	3
	BLAW 001	Human Rights	1
	ENGL 001	English	2
	Total		
Second Semester	NURS 216	Adult Health Nursing I: Theory	3
	NURS 218	Adult Health Nursing I: Practice	2
	NURS 220	Health Assessment Across the Life Span	2
	BIOL 226	Microbiology	3
	NURS 222	Emergency Care Nursing: Theory	3
	NURS 224	Pharmacology for Nurses	3
	ARAB 001	Arabic Language	2
	Total		
Year 1 Summer	NURS 226	Emergency Care Nursing: Practice	
	--	Elective (General)	
	Total		

Third Semester	NURS 307	Adult Health Nursing II: Theory	3
	NURS 309	Adult Health Nursing II: Practice	2
	NURS 319	Critical Care Nursing: Theory	3
	NURS 321	Critical Care Nursing: Practice	2
	HESC 301	Psychosocial Aspects of Health and Illness	2
	MCOM 003	Communication Skills	2
	--	Elective (General)	1
			Total
Fourth Semester	NURS 310	Adult Health Nursing III: Theory	3
	NURS 324	Adult Health Nursing III: Practice	2
	HESC 302	Research and Evidence Based Practice	2
	NURS 318	Pediatric Health Nursing: Theory	3
	NURS 320	Pediatric Health Nursing: Practice	2
		Elective (General)	1
		Elective	4
			Total
Year 2 Summer	NURS 322	Nursing Practicum	4
			Total
Fifth Semester	NURS 405	Obstetric and Gynecological Health Nursing: Theory	2
	NURS 407	Obstetric and Gynecological Health Nursing: Practice	2
	NURS 409	Mental Health and Illness Across the Life Span	1
	NURS 419	Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing	3
	COMM 201	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	3
		Elective (General)	5
			Total

Sixth Semester	NURS 406	Community and Gerontological Health Nursing: Theory	3
	NURS 408	Community and Gerontological Health Nursing: Practice	2
	NURS 410	Leadership and Management in Nursing	3
	NURS 416	Practicum II and Independent Project	4
	IPEH 512	Interprofessional Education for Health Care	1
	--	Elective	2
	Total		
Study Program Total			106

Tabelle 2: Modulübersicht

The study program requires a final module in the form of guided research study in order to obtain the final degree. It is embedded in module NURS 416 in the scope of four credit hours.

Please refer to the module description (Annex 1) for detailed information on the modules, including the level, amount of assigned credits, language of instruction pursued learning outcomes and skills, content of studies and examinations in every course of the program.

General University Requirement courses (GUR) total to 16 credit hours and can be studied with students from other faculties. They comprise the University Mandatory Courses (UMC) (7cr. Hrs.), including Arabic (ARAB 001), English (ENGL 001), Human Rights (BLAW 001) and Communication Skills (MCOM 003) and University Elective Courses (UEC) (9cr. hrs.). Basic science courses, such as pathophysiology (PATH 203), biochemistry (BCHM 215), microbiology (BIOL 226), epidemiology and biostatistics (COMM 201) can be studied with students from other majors at the Faculty of Health Sciences. Also, the module (IPEH 512) "Interprofessional Education for Healthcare" is an interdisciplinary course which is compulsory for all students at the Faculty of Health Sciences (Annex 5: p.194).

The basic science courses are intended to equip students with the required knowledge preparing them for the core courses which they will take during the more advanced levels of their studies.

Students are phased from simulative into real clinical settings throughout the study program, beginning with 90 simulated hours in the first semester and culminating with 315 hospital clinical hours in the sixth.

The first year courses prepare the students with a sound medical and clinical knowledge base required to comprehend the principles of Nursing, while during the summer semesters practice sessions take place (SER 1.3.4). Throughout the second year, nursing specific courses are implemented. Lastly, in the third year, the assessment and the management aspects of various fields requiring nursing interventions are provided through these semester courses.

The study program encompasses clinical practice integrated into academic courses. Practical experience is achieved through the Nursing Simulation Laboratory (Annex 7) and clinical trainings. Students go through six hours weekly clinical training, designed according to the corresponding course (Annex 3: chapter "clinical training courses"). The University states that scenarios used in simulation were adapted from The National League for Nursing (NLN). According to the University the students are encouraged to utilize evidence-based practice gained from theoretical courses to provide standardized care to patients in different health care settings. The distribution of students to clinical training sites for all clinical courses is organized according to clinical course objectives, clinical instructor to students ratio, hospital floors capacity and students hospital experience (Annex 3: Chapter "Clinical Training Manual Policy and Procedures").

The courses NURS322 "Nursing Practicum I" and NURS416 "Practicum II and Independent Project" are coursed during the second summer term and the sixth semester in actual clinical settings, respectively comprising 24 and 12 hours of weekly clinical training (Annex 5: Chapter 2).

The "Clinical Training Manual" (Annex 3) gives a detailed overview of the amount of practice throughout the whole study program, the responsibilities of course coordinators, lab managers and clinical instructors and the expected learning outcomes (Annex 3: pp. 5-12).

In regard to the support and supervision of the internship, the clinical coordinator (CC) is a faculty member assigned to oversee clinical rotations as a liaison between the nursing program and clinical training sites, the clinical instructor (CI) is in charge of supervising the students on-site and is employed

by the training site and, lastly, the Lab manager (LM) is in charge of the nursing Simulation Laboratory, the communication between CC and CI, and is also a faculty member. Each CI is allocated an average of one to eight students in each clinical setting. Both academic and clinical instructors meet on regular basis to discuss students' progress in training, administrative issues, students' problems, as well as the improvement of the student experience within the healthcare setting (SER 1.2.6; Annex 3: pp. 7-9).

The Nursing Department utilizes "i-connect" to deliver an online course NURS317 "Change in Healthcare" which gives students the opportunity to participate in different self-directed learning activities in groups (Annex 5: pp. 211-214).

The University highlights that there is an increasing movement within the Department of Nursing to transition from didactic, teacher-centered methods to more active, student-focused ones, in which students are more engaged in the learning process. The intended learning outcomes are delivered via a variety of teaching methods, such as interactive lectures, role play, team based learning, case studies, group discussions, problem-based learning, Inter-Professional Education, simulation.

Regarding the internationality of the study program, all Faculty and Department courses are taught in English. Also, throughout the first semester students are expected to take the module English (ENGL 001) in order to bring their English knowledge to the same standards (SER 1.2.8).

Students are expected to be able to pursue further studies outside of Lebanon. Thus, the University states to have enhanced the curriculum based on suitable benchmarking with nationally and internationally accredited curricula (SER 1.2.8, Annex 10). The University also claims to be involved in many international projects, mainly with European Union institutions within the frameworks of TEMPUS and ERASMUS MUNDUS projects. In the past, BAU has participated in "Egypt-Lebanon-EU Mobility Exchange Network" (ELEMENT), 2011- 2015; "Program for Excellence Academy Cooperation Exchange" (PEACE), 2012-2016; and "Program for Excellence Academy Cooperation Exchange" (PEACEII), 2012-2016. In addition, BAU has signed an inter-institutional agreement through Erasmus plus starting in 2017 with the Pavia University in Italy (SER 1.2.9; Annex 9).

In the current strategy (Annex C), BAU encourages such projects and is working to encourage international student mobility, to support the exchange of international staff, and to facilitate the procedures for credit transfer. The University states that no Nursing students have yet taken advantage of the opportunity to participate in an exchange, but that the Department would be eager to cooperate with such students and assist them in planning their studies (AOQ 22).

According to the University, mainly two courses within the Nursing Program contribute to the integration of research activities of the students: HESC 302 "Research and Evidence Based Practice" in the fourth and NURS 416 "Practicum II and the Independent Project" in the sixth semester. Firstly, students are introduced to the basic concepts of performing research and professional methodologies in writing a research project. NURS416 gives the student the opportunity to conduct a research study in different fields of nursing following the research project guidelines (Annex 8). Moreover, the University states that Faculty members are increasingly integrating research into their curricula by presenting relevant examples of current research in lectures (SER 1.2.7). For more details on the integration of research at the University, please refer to BAU's "Research Policy" (Annex D).

The University adopts a continuous assessment approach to assess and/or measure students' achievement of each course's intended learning outcomes throughout the whole semester. The different assessment methods are summarized as follows: written exams, quizzes, practical exams, reports, seminars, presentations and classroom discussions, logbooks, team-based learning, problem-based learning, student's self and peer evaluation through portfolio, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and mock colloquiums (entry to practice exam). The University states that students are informed at the beginning of each course about the type and the timing of each assessment and their weighing through the course specification and layout. For more information on student assessment please refer to "BAU Guidelines for student assessment" (Annex H) and "BAU's "Rules and Regulations" (Annex A).

Students who were not able to attend the relevant final course examination or fulfill some of the course requirements because of conditions beyond their control can apply to receive an incomplete grade "I" for that course no later than a week from the date of the course's final exam. This is only feasible if

they have attended and completed at least 80% of the course requirements and with the approval of the course instructor. The unfinished course requirements must be met by the end of the first week of the following semester. The minimum passing grade for Faculty and University requirement courses is "D". In case of having a "D-", the student will have to repeat the course. Courses may be repeated as many times as necessary to obtain a passing grade as long as students are not subject to dismissal from the University due to their GPA. Otherwise, a failing grade "F" will appear for that course on the student transcript (SER 1.2.3; Annex J: chapter "Evaluation and Grading System").

According to University regulations, the course instructors are asked to present at least two written exams during the semester and one final examination at the end of the semester. Should a course include laboratory session, at least one written exam is required in addition to the practical examinations. All assessments carried out during the semester will count towards 60% of the grade while the final exam in the 16th week of the semester will count 40%.

The evaluation and grading system of the University is described in the "Rules and Regulations for Undergraduate Programs" (Annex A). The University differentiates between the Course Grade Point Average (GPA), the Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) for the whole period of studies (Annex A, V). The student performance is assessed based on a letter grade (A-F) and grade point average system (4.00 perfect, 1.00 minimum passing, 0.00 failure). All assessments add up to a total of 100 marks and the students' score is translated into a grade point average (GPA) and a letter grade. Please refer to Annex B: VII.13. The minimum passing grade for Faculty and University requirement courses is "D". In case of having a "D-" the student will have to repeat the course.

The University assures that it has a non-discriminatory policy with regard to disability. Individual cases are forwarded to the department and the department council makes recommendations in their regard to the faculty council based on the degree of disability and the program requirements (SER 1.2.3).

Transfer terms and regulations are listed in Annex B "Student Manual" section 9, VII. Based on recommendations of the Department and the Faculty Councils, in coordination with the Student Affairs Department, and upon the University Council's approval, students are exempted from any courses previously

taken in another university or faculty. The following conditions must apply for a transfer to be accepted:

- the transferred courses are comparable in scientific content and in the number of credits;
- the student has passed the courses with a GPA not less than C or its equivalent;
- the course completion date is not more than five years in the past; and
- the total transferred credit hours do not exceed 50 % of the total number of credit hours required to obtain the relevant major degree.

2.2.4 Admission requirements

Admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are listed in the "Rules and Regulations for the Undergraduate Programs" (Annex A). In order to be accepted to the study program, students must complete the admission process for BAU and the program's requirements (Annex A: admission requirements):

- Hold the official Lebanese Secondary School Certificate or its official equivalent issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Education & Higher Education.
- Pass an entrance exam as well as an interview.
- Pass the BAU English Language entrance exam with a grade not less than 60%, TOEFL Exam with a minimum score of 500, IELTS Exam with a minimum score of 5 or the SAT I writing with a minimum score of 380. Should the English exam not be passed, the student will have to enroll for an intensive English course provided by the University.
- Go through a physical assessment, laboratory results, and entrance interview.

The Nursing program admission requirements demand students joining the program to be physically healthy because of the nature of practice and responsibilities of the nurse towards the patients. This requirement is fulfilled through the physical assessment, laboratory results, and an entrance interview. The University points out that chronic illness is not among the exclusion criteria and students can be accepted in the program on the condition that

their illness or its symptoms would not place them or their patients in any kind of physical or psychological danger (SER 1.2.3). The University states that decisions regarding such cases are taken on the merit of individual case by the department (SER 1.5.2).

2.3 Study conditions and quality assurance

2.3.1 Human resources

The University states that a total of 12 faculty members are needed to complete the instruction of the program (SER 2.1.1).

The University assures that a total of four full-time assistant professors and one lab manager are responsible for professorial teaching in the study program. The expected teaching load for the core academic faculty is about an average of 15-24 contact hours per week. Part time faculty teaching hours will be based on the type of agreement with the university (SER 2.1.1). Further policies on duties and responsibilities of the Faculty number according to the rank and position are specified in the "BAU policies and bylaws" (Annex F: chapter III) and in the "CVs" (Annex 11, 12, 13 and 14). In addition, there are a total of seven adjunct professors. For detailed information on the teaching staff please consult the "Status Report: Volume II" (Annex 5).

There are four assistant professors and one lab manager in the program; the student-to-staff ratio is 13:1. If adjunct faculty members (who work full time in another faculty of the university and participate in teaching of the nursing program) are included in this calculation, the ratio is 5:1 (SER 2.1.1).

In regard to further human resources the department counts with a clinical coordinator in the scope of clinical practices and a course coordinator who assigned for one or several courses of the study program to ensure development of syllabi and course content that is consistent with the program intended learning outcomes (SER 2.2.1).

The University has regulations for the hiring and retention of the teaching staff (Annex K). Depending on the needs of the academic program, the head of the department submits a request with justification to hire faculty member with a definite specialty and research background. The request has to be approved by the University council. BAU continuously monitors the performance of both

academic and non-academic staff to ensure that their qualifications and capabilities fit the positions requirements (see Annex F: chapter III.).

The University assures to focus on the academic staff development to enhance the capabilities of its staff by providing them, whenever possible, with professional-development workshops and training courses that are usually organized by the Deanship of Academic Development and Quality (SER 2.1.3; Annex D). According to the University, BAU also encourages the participation of academic and non-academic staff in Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programs to give them the opportunity to recognize new practices that enhance their skills, performance and attributes. All faculty members are also encouraged to attend national and international conferences, symposia and workshops, by giving them financial support for transportation, registration fees and living allowance for the event duration as well as to publish their scientific research works in top ranked journals (SER 2.1.3; Annex D: goals).

2.3.2 Facilities

The Department of Nursing is part of the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), located in the fifth floor of the Hariri building, and shares the area with the Physical Therapy Department. The FHS is situated on the fifth and sixth floors, with a total of six classrooms, teaching offices, dean's office, registrar's office, student affairs office, faculty members' offices, Biomedical laboratories, Nutrition and Dietetics Laboratory and outpatient clinic, Nursing Simulation Laboratory, physical therapy outpatient clinics, quality assurance room and Medical Sciences Library. The Hariri building also hosts two other medical sector facilities, Medicine and Pharmacy (Annex 5: chapter VI).

The classrooms and lecture theaters are all equipped with data-shows, PCs and sound system, which provide a dynamic and interactive environment for utilization of various multimedia forms. In addition, the University has a secure academic website, which provides students, Faculty and administrative staff with an intranet and internet services. The website also provides a portal to access databases and the library web page (SER 1.2.5).

For carrying out the practical training during the study program, the Faculty of Health Sciences provides five laboratories: Nursing Simulation Lab (Annex 7: "Nursing Simulation Lab Manual"), Anatomy Lab, Biomedical Lab, Zoological Lab and the Organic Chemistry Lab. The detailed equipment of the laboratories

is listed in the department's status report (Annex 5: chapter VI). The department can also make use of the Faculty's Simulation Lab which provides the necessary material for the study program.

The University counts with eight libraries spread among the Beirut site, Debbie site, and Tripoli branches. The Medical Sciences Library is located on Beirut and on Tripoli campus and serves students of all Medical Sector Faculties of the University. The library can accommodate 114 users in Beirut Campus and 72 users in Tripoli campus at the same time which can benefit from the photocopying, printing and scanning machines available to serve users' needs. Interlibrary loan services are also available (SER 2.3.2; Annex J: p. 60-61).

The Library of Health Sciences contains 792 books, 11 dissertations and 150 multimedia inventories in the Beirut Campus (Annex J: p. 60). The inventory can be found in physical or electronic format. Students also have access to several electronic library full-text databases such as: Science Direct, Scopus, Access Medicine, CINAHL Plus and MEDLINE Complete (Annex J: chapter 5, SER 2.3.2).

At the faculty level, the library committee, which is chaired by a member of the Nursing department, ensures the preparation of the list of needed books and periodicals for the library upon the faculties' requests to satisfy students' learning needs. The library acquisition department will process and follow up on purchasing and receiving the books. The bibliographic information of new books will be catalogued. An electronic list of new arrivals will be issued to faculties concerned to be distributed to faculty members. Then books will be delivered to the Medical sciences library (SER 2.3.2).

The University library has an agreement with the Lebanese Academic Library Consortium (LALC) since 2011, to attain better prices from suppliers for electronic resource subscriptions (SER 2.3.2).

Opening hours extend between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, on Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Students have access to the multi search database "EBSCO", which enables them to inquire in other databases. This service is offered free of charge to all faculty, staff and registered students through the BAU portal system "I-connect". Through this portal, students can add or drop their courses, manage their schedules, look up information about examination, their grades and cu-

mulative GPA. Furthermore, "I-connect" allows students to check their emails and keep online communication between them and their instructors. This tool also enables instructors to send their students announcements regarding exams, assignments and can safely upload the lecture notes. This system provides remote and on campus access to the electronic library using subscription credentials. Mobile access is also available using the QR-code Reader App (SER 2.3.2; SER 1.6.7).

A computer lab, offered by the University, is also available for students to allow them internet access. Recently, BAU is providing wireless internet for all its registered students, available in the main building of Beirut campus (SER 2.3.1).

2.3.3 Quality assurance

Beirut Arab University has a Quality Assurance Center (QAC), whose main function is to evaluate the academic performance of different faculties and to facilitate the improvement of the educational process within the institution (Annex O). Every Faculty of the University has a Quality Assurance Unit that is supervised by the Faculty dean.

The quality assurance system of the University includes the following procedures:

- Course evaluation questionnaires, in which students evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, conducted online through I-connect,
- Students' satisfaction survey (Exit Survey), in which students evaluate the availability of learning resources and the support offered by the University and its units,
- Preparation of the staff development program in order to improve the qualifications of the academic staff members,
- Academic staff-members evaluation, which is monitored by the dean of the Faculty ,
- The University's Quality Assurance Committee carries out site visits of each Faculty once per semester in order to monitor the academic performance with a special focus on undergraduate programs and the experiential learning ones. The Committee of the QAC prepares a visit report and forwards it to the University President, who then sends a copy of the report to the relevant dean to take appropriate actions.

In 2015, the University attained the institutional accreditation by a German accreditation agency (SER 3.1.1).

In the Nursing Department, the curriculum has been achieved and enhanced based on international benchmark standards (Annex 10). This continuous enhancement is supervised by the FQAU and the UQAC, which perform regular internal auditing to assess the academic performance of the department and make sure the curricular changes are compatible with the University rules, regulations and policies.

The University claims to seek excellence in research. Due to this, the University has established a deanship for graduate studies as well as an Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Annex I), which are committed to apply BAU research policy (Annex D).

The Department of Nursing assures that quality assurance is monitored by "everyone". All members of the department are expected to be involved in curriculum planning and development, meeting monthly at the departmental council to discuss departmental issues and concerns including curricular enhancement, staff members' issues, students' issues and quality assurance related issues (SER 1.2.6).

At the beginning of the academic year, a course coordinator is assigned under the supervision of the dean. By the end of each semester, a course report is written related to each course offered during the relevant semester. This report includes statistical information about students' attending, students' assessment and examination results, topics taught and their relevant hours, used teaching and learning methods, administrative constraints, course enhancement suggestions and an action plan for the following year. Any recommendations regarding revision of the course intended learning outcomes, the assessment method, modification of the course content; requirements for special tools/equipment for implementing the course objectives or any other difficulty faced during the semester are stated in the course report. The course report is then submitted by the termination of the course. Noted issues will be discussed in the departmental council and then raised at the Faculty council. The course report will also be analyzed by the UQAC representatives during their regular visits to the Faculty every semester to evaluate the academic performance (SER 1.6.3).

Other measures taken for the purpose of course evaluation and enhancement are through feedbacks from stakeholders who are members of the Faculty Advisory committee as well as feedback from the students. Moreover, BAU has also included student representatives in the faculty's committees and councils, to ensure their participation in decision-making, to get their feedback and to ensure their satisfaction (SER 1.6.3).

According to the University, practical relevance of the study program is assessed through feedback obtained from students during their rotations at different hospitals and the evaluation of the instructors from the rotation sites regarding their satisfaction with the students' performance. In addition, the Nursing department under goes follow-up studies on graduated students working in various settings, which showed that most Nursing graduates are working in hospitals, private clinics and healthcare centers, and that none are unemployed. The feedback and comments of the stakeholders, who are members of the Advisory Committee of the Faculty, are also of utmost priority to assess the study program. The feedback and follow-up data are collected and discussed in the Faculty Council (SER 1.6.4).

The University states that it surveys all students at the end of each course and uses results from these course evaluations to provide instructor feedback and improve the quality of teaching. Student evaluations are also made use of in the clinical rotations (AOQ 11).

The University assures, that all relevant information in concerning the study program is published on the Universities website. Information posted includes but not only limited to the mission and vision of the department, program overview with course descriptions, degree requirements and study plan. Also, the I-connect system provides information to the students about their academic requirements; in terms of number of credit taken/left, the complete academic plan and their grades.

In concern with the support of students at the University, every faculty member is assigned as an academic advisor to a group of students providing them with counseling and guidance. The academic advisor assists in course selection and helps solve any issues or problems his/her advisees might encounter throughout their enrollment.

The dropouts during the study process (AOQ 21) are reasoned by the transfer to other major study programs, the delay in earning required credits requested for the upper level, the student's withdrawal from the program, or their final dismissal from the University.

All newly enrolled students attend a number of orientation sessions organized by the Student Affairs Deanship with the participation of the staff member of the Faculty. New students also receive a student file, brochures and a CD containing information about the Faculty and departments, requirements for graduation, duties and rights and the registration for University, Faculty and Department mandatory and elective courses.

Students are also introduced to the BAU's "Code of Ethics" (Annex E), a document that is meant to determine the basic ethical standards for the conduct of persons active within the context of the University, to adhere to the freedom of scientific research and teaching, to promote social responsibility and equality amongst individuals regardless race, religion, family status, gender, age, physical disability or social status and to encourage creative thinking and constructive criticism. In case of violation of the University's Code of Ethics, the dean of the Faculty issues a Misconduct Citation to the student's breach of the University's customs and rules, and/or performing prohibited acts as mentioned in the Code of Ethics and Conduct. If three misconduct citations are issued throughout the enrollment period, students may be suspended by the University Council (Annex A: Rules and Regulations, XII/10).

In regard to the promotion and concept of equality, the University assures that diversity is one of the seven core values of the institution. According to the University's "Code of Ethics" (Annex E), the tolerance and respect of differences of others is to be promoted. In its strategic document for 2013-2018, the University states that the facilities for students with physical disabilities have to be secured.

2.4 Information about the University

Beirut Arab University is a private non-profit institution of higher education that was founded by the Lebanese El-Bir and Ishan Society in 1960 with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Law. Other faculties were established in the course of the following years, the last one being launched in 1995. The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) was established in 2008 to meet the rising needs

of the local community for professionals specialized in health sciences and is the most recent addition to the Beirut Arab University (Annex J). It hosts the departments of Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Physical Therapy and Medical Laboratory Technology.

The University campus is located in the center of Beirut, Lebanon. The Faculty of Health Sciences is situated on the 5th and 6th floors of the Hariri Building, which is an annex of the main campus that was constructed in 1978. In the recent years, the University has established three branch campuses in the cities of Debbie, Tripoli and Bekaa. At the moment, there are a total number of 8,659 undergraduate and 1,161 postgraduate students enrolled at the University. The University consists of the 10 following faculties, which together offer 42 undergraduate and 87 postgraduate study programs:

- Faculty of Human Sciences
- Faculty of Law and Political Science
- Faculty of Business Administration
- Faculty of Architecture-Design and Built Environment
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Pharmacy
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Dentistry
- Faculty of Health Sciences

The University assures to be an educational institution classified as a non-profit organization. It is described, that BAU's budget and expenses rely mainly on students' tuition fees and all other types of administrative fees that contribute to about 90% of the University's income. BAU has also delivered its stream of revenues in order to develop a new funding model in the light of a highly competitive market. The revenue streams are detailed as follows: BAU specialized clinics (the dental clinics, the nutrition and dietetics clinic); consultancy services, laboratory testing and experimentation; Center for Continuous Professional Development (CCPE); Governmental funds for scientific research projects at BAU such as those coming from the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS); Philanthropic funding coming mainly from donating bodies. Moreover, the European Union (EU) provides funding through the Tempus Program. In addition, the University has invested in the banking market seek-

ing additional revenue opportunities. According to the University, the initiative was successful, adding a substantial amount of revenues. All funds are directed to finance BAU activities including salaries and the development process in different fields (SER 2.3.1).

The Department of Nursing was established in the academic year 2005/2006. At the time being there are a total of 68 registered students. At the department offers a Bachelor of Science in nursing, a master's of science in nursing, which was established in the academic year 2009/2010.

In spring 2015 a bridging program was introduced based on Order of Nurses in Lebanon (ONL) recommendations to maintain quality in nursing education. It allows students who hold a Technique Supérieur (TS) with a minimum average 12/20 to complete at least 50% of required university credit hours to upgrade their degrees from TS to BS.

Since spring 2013-2014, all students of the Medical Sector Faculties have started participating in Interprofessional Education for Healthcare course (IPEH512) as a mandatory requirement for graduation. In IPEH, students encounter clinical case scenarios and try to solve problems using evidence-based practice along with students from other medical fields including medical doctors, pharmacists, dentists, Medical Lab Technologists, physical therapists and Nutritionists and dietetics. Through interactive learning, students will explore ways in which their professions can work together in order to optimize patient's care while respecting each other's roles and responsibilities.

The department works on developing continuously and has provided an extensive list of its current projects (SER 3.2.1).

The University has an official research policy (Annex D) and it considers the contribution to the development of research to be one of its main strategies (Annex C). The research facilities of the University include the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is responsible for the assurance of protection of humans and animals involved in research or related activities (Annex I). Furthermore, the University has a Research Centre for Environment and Development, the Centre for Continuous Education, the Academic Development Centre and other (see Annex L). The University also provides specialized laboratories in each Faculty according to the requirements of specializations.

3 Expert Report

3.1 Preliminary remarks

The Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Health and Social Sciences (hereinafter AHPGS) was commissioned by Beirut Arab University (hereinafter the University) to accredit the study program Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in "Nursing."

The on-site visit evaluation of the study program B.Sc. "Nutrition and Dietetics," as well as the study programs B.Sc. "Medical Laboratory Technology" and B.Sc. "Nursing," offered at Beirut Arab University, was carried out on May 16 and 17, 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon.

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 bases for the statements made in the expert report.

The following experts were appointed by the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS for the evaluation of the study program.

As representatives of higher education institutions and of professional practice:

Prof. Dr. Georg Abel

University of Applied Sciences of Health and Prevention, Saarbrücken, Germany
Professor of Nutritional Sciences

Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Friedrich Hofmann, MD

Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany
Professor emeritus of Occupational Physiology, Occupational Medicine and Infection Protection;
Member and former Chair of the Permanent Vaccination Commission of the Robert Koch Institute

Prof. Dr. Johannes Keogh

Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Professor of Nursing Sciences

Prof. Dr. Kathrin Kohlenberg-Müller⁴

Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Professor of Clinical Nutrition

Ms. Beate Methke

University Hospital Freiburg, Department of Immunology, Germany

Medical Technical Assistant

Dr. Martina Plaumann, MPH

Federal Centre for Health Education, Cologne, Germany

Director of the agency of the National Prevention Conference

Prof. Dr. Birgit Vosseler

University of Applied Sciences, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Dean of the Department for Health Care and Vice President of the University;

Professor of Nursing Sciences

As a student representative:

Ms. Franziska Jagoda

University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany

Master studies in Nursing Sciences

According to the *Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programs and for System Accreditation* (determined by the decision of the Accreditation Commission, of 08.12.2009 in the version of 20.02.2013, Drs. AR 20/2013), the task of the experts in the accreditation procedures is to evaluate the education concept of a specific study program as well as to estimate the possibility of its successful implementation. This concerns, in particular, qualification objectives of the study program, its conceptual integration into the system of education, the concept of the study program, feasibility of the content and scope of studies, the examination system, study-relevant collaborations, personnel, material and space resources, transparency and documentation, application of the results of quality assurance for further development of the study program (it is especially important to present the analyses and evaluation results of student workload, academic accomplishments and employment of graduates, which are to be documented and taken into account within the framework of continuous development of the study program), as well as the provision of gender equality and equal opportunities. The experts should also take into consideration and verify whether study programs with special profiles (e.g.

⁴ The experts shown in italics have not participated in the on-site visit of the University.

dual, part-time, occupational or distance learning study programs) comply with the relevant criteria and requirements.

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 08.12.2009 in the version of 20.02.2013, 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 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 of Science study program “Nursing” offered at the Nursing Department, Faculty of Health Sciences, Beirut Arab University is to provide Lebanon, the Arab world and others with competent professional nurses who work in changing and multiple health care settings. 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 community and the region, while accounting for professional ethics and being committed to life-long learning.

The study program requires the obtainment of 106 credit points (CP) according to the University’s credit hour system referring to the US American credit hour system. One credit hour is equal to one contact hour of lectures or to two or three hours of tutorial, practical and/or clinical classes per week. Every credit requires two hours of self-study. The workload of the program constitutes 2,790 contact hours, of which 1,095 are lecture hours and 1,695 are laboratory and clinical hours. Additionally, the program requires around 3,180 hours of independent study. The language of instruction is English.

The bachelor study program “Nursing” is a full-time study program with a regular duration of three years/six semesters and two summer terms. It consists of minimum 43 courses to be covered in three years of studies:

- 4 are University Mandatory Courses (7 credits),
- A minimum of 3 are University Elective Courses (9 credits),
- 5 are Basic Science Courses (15 credits),

- 28 are Core Nursing Courses (69 credits),
- 3 are Major Elective Courses (6 credits).

Admission requirements of the program include a secondary school certificate or its equivalent. International applicants have to provide an equivalence certificate from the Equivalence Committee of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which should confirm that their secondary school degree is comparable to a Lebanese one. In addition, students must pass an entrance exam, an interview and the BAU English language exam. Students are informed about the amount of the tuition fees in advance. Because of the nature of practice and responsibilities of the nurse towards the patients, students must go through a physical assessment and laboratory examinations to proof the required physical health. Upon completion of the study program, students are awarded with the academic title "Bachelor of Science in Nursing." There are 50 study places available annually in the program. Admission takes place every fall semester. The first batch of students was admitted to the program in the academic year 2005/2006.

3.3 Expert Report

On December 12, 2016, the application documents of the University were made available to the expert group for written evaluation. The expert group assessed the Bachelor study program "Nursing" based on the above mentioned *Criteria for the assessment and accreditation procedures of study programs at foreign higher education institutions*.

The on-site visit was carried out on May 16 and 17, 2017, according to the previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the head office of AHPGS accompanied the expert group.

The expert group met on May 15, 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 questions that had been raised. 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 and representatives of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Departments of Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, and Nutrition and Dietetics, and the teaching staff of the program "Nursing" as well as with students currently studying in the three programs to

be accredited. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar classrooms, laboratories, the outpatient clinics, the library, computer classes, the cafeteria and the premises for student activities on Beirut Campus. Moreover, the experts had the opportunity to see the Debbeh Campus of Beirut Arab University which comprises the Faculty of Architecture, the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Science.

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

- Beirut Arab University Research Report 2015-2016,
- Access to all documents concerning quality assurance at the Faculty of Health Sciences, such as entrance exams, internship reports, meeting minutes, etc.

The expert report is structured in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* of AHPGS, which were approved by the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS on September 30, 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, the results of discussions with the representatives of the University, Faculty of Health Sciences and the Department of Medical Laboratory Technology, and the students serve as the basis for the statements made in the expert report.

3.3.1 Program aims and their implementation

The study program's main objective is to prepare competent professional nurses who can meet the rapid changes in the health field with excellence and international standards and are capable of serving in different health sectors in a comprehensive and a professional manner. In line with the worldwide phenomenon, Lebanon lacks a sufficient number of qualified nurses. 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 community and the region, while accounting for professional ethics and being committed to lifelong learning. The defined students' learning outcomes by the Department describe the accumulated knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, and attitudes that students develop during the course of the study. These range from knowledge

about the fundamentals of basic medical sciences, social and behavioral sciences, including biology, microbiology, biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, epidemiology and biostatistics as well as psychology and sociology policies through applying the role of the nurse in improving health through holistic individualized and centered care, health promoting activities and palliative care, designing the variation of health care teams according to individual needs and health care settings, knowing evidence based practice and designing research processes to be utilized in the delivery of health care, and using reasoning skills in prioritizing actions and decision making in nursing practice up to deliver. The experts highly appreciate the holistic approach towards the patient/client that is taught to the students.

Thus, the program is outfitted with courses in the areas of Basic Sciences, Foundational Nursing Sciences, Pre-Clinical and Clinical, as well as Major Electives and those courses required by the University.

In order to provide the students with broader knowledge in general, but also skills and attitudes that are considered essential to facilitate effective interprofessional collaborative practice, the Faculty applies interprofessional education of its health related study programs which was explained to the experts in a more detailed way on site. Additionally, the University requires a set of non-program specific mandatory and elective courses on University level for all students, among them Arabic and English language skills, a human rights introduction and communication skills.

As evidenced in the University's supporting documents and by the on-site visit, the University has developed the Bachelor study program "Nursing" in accordance with the relevant national legal guidelines and requirements.

On site, the University showed its strong commitment to personal development and social responsibility of the students and to enhance independent thinking and a comprehensive awareness to enable the students to make informed and socially responsible choices in agreement with their academic, professional and life goals. The University comprehensive Human Rights Center is a University initiative that assists students and accordingly their communities to a better understanding of their rights through raising awareness in the course of formal and non-formal methods thus complementing their education all through university years and years after.

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

3.3.2 Structure of the study program

The Nursing program consists of theoretical and clinical components that begin with the basic sciences and nursing and ethical fundamentals during the first year in order to provide students with a sound medical and clinical knowledge base required to comprehend the principles of nursing. These fundamentals are followed by the pre-clinical professional and clinical professional courses mainly during the second and third year. After the introduction to basic sciences such as anatomy and physiology for nurses, pathophysiology, biochemistry microbiology and pharmacology for nurses, which are in parts taught commonly for students of the health sciences and medicine study programs, the study program covers more specific clinical knowledge starting with the theory and practice of adult health nursing, emergency and critical care, and pediatric nursing. To enhance the understanding of health behavior, patient motivation and satisfaction as well as decision making in seeking health care, the students are, additionally, introduced to psychosocial aspects of health and illness and evidence-based practice starting from the second year of studies. In the course of the third year of studies, students are provided with theory and practice in further fields requiring nursing interventions, such as obstetric and gynecological health nursing, psychiatric and mental health nursing, community and gerontological health, assessing (mental) health across the life span. The last year of studies also comprises courses, such as "Leadership and Management in Nursing", and applying research methodologies, which are meant to facilitate the transition of the students to a future professional nursing career.

The provided course handbook reveals a coherent structure and continuously increasing complexity of learning material and students' competence level, with the focus on specialization courses in the final stages of the education. The experts found that the number of course modules is appropriate for the achievement of the study program's objectives. They are structured in such a way to build upon prior knowledge and skills and are meticulously planned by topic on a weekly basis. Moreover, it was shown that the staff may incorporate current issues and developments to their teaching.

Supplementing the program-specific subjects, University mandatory courses (7 credits), that focus on Arabic culture and Arabic language, Human Rights as

well as English and communication skills, are obligatory for all students enrolled at the University.

The Faculty of Health Sciences follows and implements a strong interdisciplinary and interprofessional approach which is firmly incorporated to the curriculum through the course "Interprofessional Education for Healthcare". The Faculty's explanations on site showed the staff's efforts on the one hand and the successful implementation on the other hand of the interprofessional approach in health care, reaching even into the University's outpatient clinic by now.

Professional practical skills are gained through the practical courses that start early at the second semester of the program and the clinical rotations at the hospital. Starting the second semester, each semester comprises 14 weeks of clinical training with six to 23 practical contact hours in the laboratories/skills labs or in real clinical settings. The clinical training hours for each week are designed according to the corresponding course and, thus, awarded with credit hours. As the *Nursing Simulation Lab Manual* does for the practical hours to be held in the Faculty's skills lab, the *Clinical Training Manual* first of all defines learning outcomes of the clinical internships and ensures through clinical training policies and procedures that every student experiences clinical rotations in the fields of adult and pediatric health nursing, in emergency and critical care nursing, in obstetric and gynecological health nursing, in psychiatric and mental health nursing, in community and gerontological health nursing, and in leadership and management. Apart from disposing excellent equipped skills labs (see Criterion 5), the Department of Nursing has signed cooperation agreements with four Lebanese hospitals in order to realize the clinical internships. On site, the experts had the opportunity to confirm a successful and well conceptualized arrangement of internships, also through talks with representatives of the cooperating hospitals and laboratories.

Thus, the experts conclude that the study program aims at providing students with specialized and interdisciplinary knowledge as well as professional, methodological and general competences.

As a whole, the study program comprises 43 courses. Students are allowed to register, per semester, a number of credit hours that vary between a maximum of 18 and a minimum of 12 credit hours. All courses are completed within one semester. The regular study period is three years/six semesters and

two summer terms. Summer terms serve primarily to study University and Major Elective courses in order to gain general competences and to complete an individual professional profile by supplementing the compulsory curriculum.

On site, the University explained of their credit hour system again and showed the equivalence of the 106 credits with a European Bachelor program; workload calculations are comparable as every credit requires two hours of independent study. From the experts' point of view, the program curriculum and its qualification objectives comply with the requirements of the higher education level.

Furthermore, it was found that the University is attempting to transition away from traditionally didactic, teacher-centered methods to more active ones which encourage students to engage in the learning process and actively shape their courses of studies. As such, it was determined that the University encourages its students to take an active role in the creation of the educational process.

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

3.3.3 Admission and Feasibility

Admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are listed in the University's *Rules and Regulations for the Undergraduate Programs*. In order to be admitted to the Bachelor study program "Nursing," students must complete the admission process for BAU, which entails holding the official Lebanese Secondary School Certificate or its official equivalent and passing an entrance exam as well as an English exam. Students who fail to meet the English requirement must sign up for an intensive English course at BAU. The Faculty of Health Sciences defined, due to the nature of the practice, environment and responsibilities of nurses, to make students perform certain medical tests and to be physically fit. However, on site the University pointed out that every student's physical condition is assessed individually in order to accept every student whose symptoms do not place them or their patients into physical or psychological danger. In case that a student may not live up to the physical and psychological requirements of the nursing profession, the Faculty strives to find an adequate alternative study program. The experts find these requirements fitting and proportional to the study program; therefore, it

was determined that the admission and student selection procedures correspond to the standards and learning objectives of the study program.

As every university in Lebanon, Beirut Arab University demands tuition fees. The University's aim is to provide a quality educational system with affordable tuition fees according to the students' economic situation. On site, the students confirm a very competitive price policy at BAU and the University's efforts to provide financial aid and scholarships. Among others, students that have siblings enrolled at the University during the same semester are eligible for a discount on their overall tuition fees. Children of University staff are exempted from tuition fees. Additionally, BAU provides direct financial support under defined conditions to students experiencing hardship in the form of tuition fees reductions. Furthermore, very skilled and talented students have the chance to apply for BAU's scholarships and awards. The students on site also indicate that assisting jobs at University institutions, such as the library, are distributed among students experiencing economic shortage. From the experts' perspective it can be confirmed that the tuition fees are well considered. The opportunities for economic release are remarkable.

The experts determine a relatively high amount of exams to be passed during the "Nursing" study program as there are two continuous written assessments in every course plus a final examination at the end of the course/semester. Thus, the University observes the students' performance by collecting and generating the Course Grade Point Average (GPA), the Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) and the Cumulative Point Average (CGPA). BAU uses the Point Averages to guarantee feasibility. Students with a SGPA and a CGPA less than 2.00 receive an academic warning and are prevented from registering for more than 12 credit hours in the following semester. Additionally, BAU launched an *Assessment Booklet* in order to provide teaching staff with practical guidelines to implement a competence oriented testing strategy, employing the full spectrum of test types. Asking the students on site about their workload, they consider the workload and the amount and the examination cycle appropriate. 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 feasibility of the study program is guaranteed and the amount of student workload is appropriate. As a whole, the organiza-

tion of the education process ensures the successful implementation of the study program.

Beirut Arab University aspires to be among the higher education institutions that stand out in the domain of academic advising. Thus, BAU launched a concept about academic advising in order to guide students as to how to handle course selection, social issues and psychological problems. All information relevant to the "Nursing" study program is published on the University's website, and students are able to access their internal records and study details through the i-connect system. Furthermore, advisors and counselors are available to students who find themselves in need of academic or administrative assistance. Every faculty member holds the position of academic advisor to a specific group of students. The students on site confirm a very well working consultation and advising system. The teaching staff is easily approachable and students are provided with academic support and guidance required for the accomplishment of the program-related assignments. Students are also provided with social support required for the organization of the learning process.

The University has a non-discrimination policy for disabled students, and accepts and supports them on a case-by-case basis. The council of each department is responsible for making such decisions. Therefore, it was determined that students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses receive compensation with regard to the requirements of the study process.

From the experts' point of view, the requirements of this 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 and graduates. This is achieved by evaluating the performance of the student through a series of exams and tests that are scheduled during the academic semester in the faculties. The continuous assessment is carried out in the 7th and 12th week of the semester; the final course exam is taken in the 16th week at the end of the course/semester. The minimum passing grade for faculty and university requirement courses is "D". Such courses will be included in the CGPA. In case of having a grade "D-", the student must repeat the course. In case of a failed mandatory course, the student can repeat it until he/she passes. Failed elective courses can be re-

peated or replaced by another elective. Students may repeat any course(s) they passed only once to improve their CGPA. The evaluation and grading system is determined in BAU's Rules and Regulations.

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 students and staff are satisfied with the exam procedures and see clear benefits in the current practice. The transparency at the beginning of each term makes the great number of assessments during and at the end of each semester manageable. The examinations are coordinated with the "Nursing" program specific learning outcomes, and consist of multiple assessment methods including written exams, quizzes, practical exams, reports, seminars, presentations, discussions, and the evaluation of other submitted materials such as logbooks and portfolios. Moreover, the Faculty's excellent infrastructure and equipment (see Criterion 5) allow students' evaluation through Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE), too.

Students of the "Nursing" study program are not explicitly required to elaborate a bachelor thesis. But the program requires an independent project for completion and award of the degree. This part is covered in the final semester by the module NURS 416 "Practicum II and Independent Project" where the students conduct a research study, related to the students' practical experiences. Faculty members provide guidance throughout the project. Furthermore, students have to present their research paper and are evaluated by the department committee, based on constructive criticism of paper and presentation. As a consequence, the experts confirm that the study program requires the students to apply research methodology and to train academic writing and, thus, prepares the students for further studies on Master level.

As a whole, the experts conclude that the examinations, although numerous, keep the students focused on their studies and serve to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved or not.

The University accepts transferring credits from external higher education institutions (HEIs), provided that four conditions are met: (1) the transferred courses are similar in content and credits to those to be replaced; (2) the transferred courses were passed with a C or better; (3) the courses were completed less than five years ago; and the total number of transferred credit

hours does not exceed 50 % of the total credit hours required to graduate. These requirements are enumerated by the University's "Student Manual." The experts appreciate that the University has a system of assessment, conversion and recognition of students' competences, credits and periods of study acquired and completed at other HEIs. Moreover, the experts appreciate the Faculty's bridging program. In spring 2015, the bridging program started based on *Order of Nurses in Lebanon* (ONL) recommendations to maintain quality nursing education, which allow students who hold the Technique Supérieur (TS) with a minimum average 12/20 to complete at least 50% of required university credit hours to upgrade their degree from the Technique Supérieur to a Bachelor of Science. The experts encourage the University to develop such systems also for the acceptance, conversion and recognition of achievements earned in other non-academic contexts and professional areas.

As stated above, the University's non-discrimination policy protects those with disabilities or chronic illnesses from suffering discrimination and provides them a framework within which to submit actionable claims or to receive support from the University. However, due to the healthcare nature of the study program and out of concern for the health of the students and patients therein, the experts understand that students with illnesses which jeopardize the physical or mental health of others must be excluded from the program, notwithstanding the non-discrimination policy.

The University maintains a website and an internal database through which information about available study programs, admission requirements, examination regulations, measures taken for students with disabilities, current events and activities at the University, student grades, course selection, and other academic and administrative matters can easily be obtained in a clear and readily accessible way.

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

3.3.5 Teaching staff and material equipment

Responsible for the professional teaching in the Bachelor study program "Nursing" are five full-time core academic faculty members, all holding a PhD in nursing. The core academic faculty carries an expected teaching load of 15-24 contact hours per week. Part-time teaching hours are based on the individual agreements with the University. Teaching hours are also reduced for staff

with administrative tasks, such as for the dean. To cover the teaching load and the variety of taught disciplines, ten members of the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Psychology are associated to the Department of Nursing to contribute to the teaching of the program. In addition, the Department employs a laboratory manager, holding a Master degree in Care and Emergency Nursing and a PhD in Education. For the instruction in clinical settings, the Department assigned 19 instructors.

The experts find the amount of human resources allocated to the program to be sufficient to carry out its functions. The lecturers, laboratory and clinical instructors and professors within the Bachelor program "Nursing" are in possession of academic and technical credentials and experience adequate to their jobs. The University has set requirements for the different positions in its *Policies and Bylaws* and its guideline for hiring new faculty. 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. Additionally, the University's mission emphasizes fairness and equality in recruitment of employees at all levels; this accountability ensures a degree of transparency that fulfills the experts' requisite criterion.

On site, the experts were shown around the University's and the Faculty's premises. The experts were impressed with the quality and vastness 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 and maternity simulators. Both through the University's submission of floor plans of its laboratories, simulation rooms and other technical infrastructure and through the experts' tour of the University's facilities during the on-site visit, 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. Moreover, during the on-site visit and the inspection of the laboratories, it was found that safety and security measures, such as safety instructions, fire extinguishers, puncture-safe disposal boxes, proper storage of chemicals and other material etc., are in place.

From the experts' point of view the new outpatient clinic that BAU is implementing has to be highlighted. It is not only meant to provide low-cost community health services but also to practice the interprofessional approach towards health care.

The University hosts several libraries at its various campuses; relevant for the Bachelor study program "Nursing" is the Medical Sciences library on Beirut campus which was visited by the experts on site and is shared by students of all medical sector faculties, including pharmacy, medicine and dentistry. It contains ca. 4,700 printed books, 10,000 e-books, 110 theses, 200 visual media and access to e-journals and full-text databases such as Science Direct, Scopus, Access Medicine, CINAHL Plus, MEDLINE Complete, etc. The University's policy for acquiring new library materials takes into consideration the ongoing advancements on the level of academic curricula while keeping in mind research needs. There is a faculty-level Library Committee which ascertains which materials are in students' need, and purchases and receives same. From the experts' point of view, also the yearly budget for purchasing new items is more than adequate.

Thus, the experts conclude that the University has adequate funding to ensure that the accessibility of material equipment, space and learning resources for all participants of the study program, including all practical elements contained therein, is guaranteed.

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

3.3.6 Quality assurance

From the experts' point of view, Beirut Arab University has a well-structured system of quality assurance spread across all of its units. The University's Quality Assurance Center (UQAC) has been established at the University and is supervised by the University President. At each faculty of the University, a Quality Assurance Unit has been established (FQAU) and is supervised by the faculty dean. Students are involved in each faculty's Quality Assurance Unit. Quality assurance rooms are prepared in each faculty, in which all relevant documents are kept readily accessible for the responsible staff members. The Quality Assurance Units are in charge of monitoring the development of the faculties, their programs and regulations. Twice annually, the BAU Quality Assurance Committee visits each faculty.

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 carries out internal and external quality assurance procedures on a cyclical basis, among them course evaluations, student satisfaction surveys and exit surveys. At the end of each semester, a course report is written containing statistical information about student attendance, assessment and examination results, topics taught, didactic methods, suggestions for course enhancement and an action plan for the next semester. The students on site report that, apart from the anonymous written evaluations, the teaching staff is easily approachable in case of any support needed or claims to be made. The results of the internal quality assurance management system are applied for the continuous development of the study program. In doing so, the University takes into consideration the quality evaluation results as well as the analyses of students' workload, their academic accomplishments and feedback from graduates. The quality assurance processes at the University involve all tiers of involved individuals, including students, instructors, administrators, alumni and trustees. The curriculum of the Bachelor study program "Nursing" has been enhanced and developed based on international benchmarks and standards. All members of the Department of Nursing must be involved in curriculum planning, monthly departmental meetings and addressing issues on multiple levels within the department. The FQAU and UQAC engage in continuous internal auditing to both assess academic performance/growth and to ensure compatibility with University regulations and objectives. Additionally, the Institutional Review Board and the Deanship for Graduate Studies uphold BAU's quality assurance policies in research capacities.

The experts conclude that the University has a documented and published concept of quality assurance, and that the University collects, analyzes and applies information related to the management of internal quality assurance.

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

3.3.7 Gender equality and equal opportunities

BAU has committed itself to its strategy of providing an embracing environment for academic creativity and development, installing explicitly the concept

of social responsibility, while respecting diversity and multicultural understanding. According to that mission, the University presents itself on site as a very tolerant and open minded institution that strives to provide students with a broad education that includes social responsibility a better understanding of their rights (see Criterion 1). The University aims at providing higher education to all applicants, regardless of sex, nationality, religion, or social/familial background. To put that into practice, BAU is known for offering study programs for a well-considered and reasonable price (see Criterion 3). Furthermore, the University provides scholarships for talented students, as well as need-based student assistant jobs and tuition fee reductions for siblings.

On site, the experts had the opportunity to speak to male and female students of different nationalities and different religious backgrounds. The students report to have chosen BAU not only for the competitive tuition fees but also because they knew they would be supported and tolerated by teachers and students alike, regardless of their individual backgrounds. Both staff and students highlighted the absence of discrimination in any regard as a remarkable feature of BAU. This indicates how strongly issues of “equal opportunities” are anchored in the institution’s vision and mission.

Regarding students with disabilities, the University has ensured easy access for wheelchairs; ramps and passages are available. As BAU explicitly welcomes all students, regardless of potential disabilities or chronic illnesses, the University and the respective instructors strive to provide individual solutions in examinations according to the student’s disablement.

The experts conclude that the University has taken actions on the provision of gender equality and promotion of equal opportunities for students with particular living circumstances.

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

3.4 Summary

The overall impression of the University is very positive. Beirut Arab University presents itself convincingly as an open-minded and dynamic institution with willingness to import new ideas and recommendations for further enhancement. A number of additional favorable characteristics and achievements of the study program were demonstrated by the management of the University, the representatives of the faculty, those of the department as well as of the

student body, such as interdisciplinary education, correlation between theory and practice, an excellent infrastructure and a strong commitment to personal development and social responsibility. As a whole, the study program provides excellent conditions for practical trainings through extraordinarily equipped skills labs and operating in the University's outpatient clinic. The Nursing program, thus, prepares qualified nurses who are capable of serving in different health sectors in a comprehensive and a professional manner and applying an interprofessional and holistic approach towards their patients which has to be appreciated.

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 Beirut Arab University fulfills the above assessed 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.

4 Decision of the accreditation commission

The decision of the Accreditation Commission of 25 July 2017

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 May 16-17, 2017, according to the previously agreed-upon 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 study program requires the obtainment of 106 credit hours (CH) according to the University's credit hour system. The regulated study period in the program "Nursing" is three years/six semesters and two summer terms. The study program comprises 43 mandatory courses, covering mandatory and elective University courses, basic science courses and core nursing as well as major elective courses. The bachelor study program "Nursing" is completed with the awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Science."

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

The bachelor study program "Nursing" is accredited for the duration of five years, until September 30, 2022.