

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



## **Assessment Report**

**for the Application of  
University of Sharjah,  
College of Health Sciences  
for the Accreditation of the Bachelor Study Program  
“Physiotherapy”(Bachelor of Science)  
and the Master Study Program  
“Physiotherapy” (Master of Science)**

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Decision

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## 1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) is an interdisciplinary and multi-professional organization. Its mission is to evaluate Bachelor and Master' programs in the fields of health and social sciences, as well as in related domains such as law or economics. By conducting 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 implementing the quality assurance recommendations made by the AHPGS. 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). Furthermore, the AHPGS has been listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) since 2009.

In carrying out accreditation procedures, the AHPGS follows the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In the present case, the decision regarding the accreditation of the study program is carried out by the AHPGS Accreditation Commission based on the following accreditation criteria<sup>1</sup>:

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 fulfil the assessment spheres as well as the AHPGS standards. With these information, the AHPGS produces a summary (see Sections 2-5), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

## **II. Written review**

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

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

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

Following the on-site visit, the expert group writes the Expert Report. This report is based on the results of the visit, the written review of the study programs, and the documents submitted by the University. Finally, the report is made available to the University for the opportunity to issue a response opinion.

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

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

The accreditation commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available in the process of application, namely the University's self-evaluation report, its annexes, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the Expert Report, as well as the University's response opinion. These documents represent the foundation for the commission's decision regarding the recommendation for accreditation of the study program.

## **2 Information about the University**

The University of Sharjah (UOS) was established in 1997 with the aim and vision to offer comprehensive and multi-disciplinary study programs. Currently, UOS offers 123 study programs at 14 different colleges across multiple academic disciplines. The University has two main campuses in Sharjah as well as campuses in Aldhaid and Kalba. There are currently over 18.000 students studying at UOS. Furthermore, UOS has 39.000 alumni.

Since its establishment in 1997, the University has put research at the top of its list of priorities. One part of the University's strategy is to promote research among all faculty members in all colleges, with the aim of attracting staff with research accomplishments. This stems from the University's understanding of scientific research as the basis of economic, social, humanitarian and medical developments. Many active research institutes, centers and groups have been established over the years and engage in a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary research geared to advance development in the region and beyond.

The University of Sharjah has three research institutes, which namely are "Research Institute of Medical and Health Sciences", "Research Institute of Sciences and Engineering" and "Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences".

The College of Health Sciences, where the Bachelor and Master study programs "Physiotherapy" are located, was founded in 1998. It has become the third largest College at the University of Sharjah with nearly 2.000 students. It was established to educate highly skilled health workers in different specializations to fulfill the needs of the healthcare market in the United Arab Emirates and the neighboring regions. The College currently offers seven Bachelor and four Master study programs, which are all part of the international accreditation procedure by AHPGS. The future plans of the College include the expansion of Master study programs by adding the Master programs "Medical Diagnostic Imaging", "Applied Nutrition" and "Public Health". The College is also planning to launch its first Ph.D. program within the next three years.

The department of Physiotherapy was established in 1999. There are currently no other study programs at this department besides the Bachelor and Master study programs "Physiotherapy". The Bachelor was established in 1999, while the Master was implemented almost 20 years later in 2018.

### 3 Overview

#### 3.1 Procedure-related documents

The University of Sharjah delegated the accreditation of its Bachelor study programs "Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics", "Nursing", "Health Services Administration", "Medical Diagnostic Imaging", "Physiotherapy", "Environmental Health Sciences", "Medical Laboratory Sciences" as well as the Master study programs "Physiotherapy", "Medical Laboratory Sciences", "Adult Critical Care Nursing" and "Environmental Health Sciences".

The Self-Evaluation Report for accreditation (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) of the above-mentioned study programs (hereinafter the Self-Evaluation Report) of the University of Sharjah (hereinafter the University) was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS) in electronic format on April, 28, 2022. The decision regarding the accreditation of a study program is carried out by the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS. The contract between the University of Sharjah and the AHPGS was signed on January, 26, 2022.

On September, 15, 2022 the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) concerning the study programs accreditation to the University. On September, 29, 2022 the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter AOQ) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

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

Specific documents for the Bachelor and Master study programs "Physiotherapy"

Annex	Description
01	Course Syllabi BA
02	Course Syllabi MA



03	CV for Instructors
04	Teaching Matrix
05	Student Projects BA
06	Student Projects MA
07	Student Course Experience Survey
08	Graduate Exit Survey
09	Advisory Committee
10	Mid-Module Evaluation
11	Alumni Survey

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents concern all study programs submitted for external evaluation:

Annex	Description
A	Cooperation Agreement Mediclinic
B	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & FUH
C	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & Hospital
D	Memorandum of Understanding UOS & Aster
E	Disability Services and Facilities
F	Diversity Equity and Inclusion
G	Institutional Effectiveness Manual 2021 - 2022

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

### 3.2 Structural data of the study program

University	University of Sharjah
Faculty/Department	College of Health Sciences Department of Physiotherapy
Cooperation partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emirates Health Services (formerly Ministry of Health and Prevention)</li> <li>- Zuleikha Hospital</li> <li>- Al Jalila Children's Specialty Hospital</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Esther Health Group</li> <li>- Al Mousa College</li> <li>- Mediclinic Middle East</li> <li>- University Hospital Sharjah</li> <li>- American Hospital</li> </ul>
Title of the study program	BA: "Physiotherapy" MA: "Physiotherapy"
Degree awarded	BA: Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy MA: Master of Science in Physiotherapy
Form of studies	BA: Full-time, on-campus MA: Full-time/part-time, on-campus
Organisational structure	Monday to Thursday from 08:00 am to 07:00 pm
Language of Studies	English (except Arabic language courses and Islamic studies)
Period of education	BA: 8 Semesters MA: 3 Semesters (full-time) 6 Semesters (part-time)
Credit Hours (CH) according to the internal Credit Hour System	BA: 138 CH (equals 234 ECTS Credit Points) MA: 42 CH (equals 71 ECTS Credit Points)
Hours/CP	1 Theory Credit hour = 1 Hour 1 Lab/Practical Hours = 3 Hour
Workload	<p>Bachelor PT</p> <p>Total: 4,780 hours</p> <p>Theory hours: 1,245 hours</p> <p>Practical hours: 1,260 hours</p> <p>Individual work: 1,345 hours</p> <p>Practice: 930 hours</p> <p>Master PT</p> <p>Total: 1,620 hours</p> <p>Theory hours: 345 hours</p> <p>Individual work: 815 hours</p> <p>Practice: 460 hours</p>

CP for the graduation project	BA: 3 CH MA: 9 CH
Launch of the study program	BA: 1999 MA: 2018
Time of admission	BA: fall semester and spring semester MA: fall semester and spring semester
Number of available places on the program	BA: 50 places per fall MA: 10 places per semester
Number of enrolled students	BA: 50 (Spring 2021/2022) MA: 5 (Spring 2021/2022)
Particular enrollment conditions	BA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High school certificate</li> <li>- TOEFL score of more than 500</li> <li>- IELTS score more than 5.5</li> </ul> MA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bachelor's degree with a cGPA of 3</li> <li>- TOEFL score of more than 550</li> <li>- IELTS score more than 6</li> </ul>
Tuition fees	BA: 2,147 AED per credit hour (75.500 Euro in total) MA: 2.541 AED per credit hour (27.000 Euro in total)

Chart 1: Structural data of the study program

#### 4 Expert Report

The on-site visit was carried out on January 23-25, 2023, according to the previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the head office of AHPGS accompanied the Expert Group.

The expert group met on January 22, 2023 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 prior. Furthermore, they prepared the plan of the on-site visit at the University.

During the on-site visit, experts held discussions with the University management, representatives of the College of Health Sciences, the Chair, Vice Chair and the teaching staff of the program "Physiotherapy" as well as with students currently studying in the program and alumni. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar classrooms, libraries, and computer classes. Moreover, experts had the opportunity to examine the equipment and the capacity of the laboratories.

During the on-site visit, the University submitted the following additional documents at the request of the Experts:

- Workload overview for all study programs of the College of Health Sciences

The Expert Report is structured in compliance with 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 Study Program will be described and analyzed in a comprehensive manner below. The documents submitted by the University, the Experts' feedback on the documents, the observations made during the on-site visit, the results of discussions with the representatives of the University, College of Health Sciences and the department of Physiotherapy serve as the foundation for the statements made in the expert report.

## **4.1 Program aims and their implementation**

### **Summary**

The department of Physiotherapy is committed to provide students with challenging and empowering physiotherapy education and training. It blends the traditional and modern educational methods and provides early practical/clinical training opportunities in the clinical skills' labs and at the bed side in hospitals and other clinical sites. The physiotherapy department provides its students with the opportunity to train and work in interdisciplinary teams, conduct research and work as community advocates and partners.

According to the University, employment opportunities for graduates of both study programs are given. With the growing health awareness in the community and expanding healthcare facilities, physiotherapy graduates have various employment opportunities in serving the community in a variety of clinical settings including hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers and health clubs) as well as teaching and research institutes for those who are interested in academia and research. Tables with information about the graduates are given in SER 1.4.2.

The difference between the career paths of the Bachelor and Master graduates are described by the University as follows: The job opportunities for Bachelor students in Physiotherapy include employment at universities/academic institutions as clinical tutors, research assistants or teaching assistants, governmental and private hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, sport clubs.

The Master program graduates will have better opportunities for international academic and clinical positions. At universities in the United Arab Emirates, they are eligible to be appointed as lecturers. At clinical/hospital settings, Master's graduates will be prioritized for leadership positions such as head/in-charge of physiotherapy departments, physiotherapy managers, team leaders, senior physiotherapists, etc. Furthermore, they will be able to pursue their education with PhD/doctoral programs.

### ***Bachelor Study Program Physiotherapy***

The program aims at being recognized at national and international levels as well as to provide students with a high quality comprehensive educational program in Physiotherapy.

According to the University, the goal of the “Physiotherapy” Bachelor program is furthermore to provide preventive and therapeutic services which aim at restoring function and preventing disability arising from disease, trauma or injury. Therefore, the students should be equipped with learning tools that will help them to improve life-long knowledge and skills such as self-learning, critical-thinking and evidence-based clinical learning.

The program objectives and learning outcomes are based on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Emirates which provides the five learning skills ‘Knowledge’, ‘Skill’, ‘Autonomy and Responsibility’, ‘Role in Context’ and ‘Self-development’.

Upon completion of the program requirements, a Physiotherapy graduate should be able to:

- Integrate knowledge and skills in physiotherapy related sciences to provide competent patient-centered care.
- Use evidence-based practice information to provide effective and efficient healthcare based on the changing needs of the community.
- Employ advanced information technology skills in the classroom and clinical settings.
- Participate efficiently in research activity, including publications, presentations, grants and disseminate results at local, national and international levels.
- Communicate effectively with patients, families and other health care professionals to deliver an integrated plan of care.
- Participate in public education and health promotion strategies adopted in the community and the region by respective authorities.
- Apply relevant ethical, legal and social framework to act responsibly toward clients, oneself and colleagues.
- Implement leadership skills and autonomy in physiotherapy practice for personal and professional development.

### ***Master Study Program Physiotherapy***

The program aims at being recognized at national and international levels as well as to provide students with a high quality comprehensive educational program in Physiotherapy.

According to the University, the goal of the “Physiotherapy” Master program is furthermore to provide graduates with the ability to evaluate and provide interventions across musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiovascular, pulmonary and integumentary systems in a safe and effective manner; improve the students’ level of critical thinking and analytical thoughts that add to scientific knowledge in order to aid in health related research relevant to local and regional needs as well as enable them to demonstrate sufficient communication skills and writing patient records to interact effectively in a team that allows personal growth in order for them to be leaders in their chosen career paths.

The program objectives and learning outcomes are based on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Emirates which provides the five learning skills ‘Knowledge’, ‘Skill’, ‘Autonomy and Responsibility’, ‘Role in Context’ and ‘Self-development’.

The students acquire specialized factual and theoretical knowledge of biomedical, social and clinical sciences in the safe and ethical delivery of physiotherapy services in diverse and dynamic settings.

### **Judgement**

The experts inquire about the development of the SPIRIT strategic plan, which is scheduled for 2019-2024. The experts are impressed by the strategic documents of the University, which are also available on the website. The University reports that in terms of internationalization many collaborations were implemented. The College of Health Sciences, where the Bachelor and Master study programs “Physiotherapy” are located, is currently planning cooperations with several hospitals in Germany and would like to send students e.g. to Germany for elective modules in the summer. Currently, it is not possible to award credits for these elective modules outside of the UAE, but the University plans to implement regulations for transferring credits outside of the UAE. The experts appreciate this. Nevertheless, they recommend that the exchange between teachers and students should be further supported. The students also confirm their interest in mobility options.

In terms of research volume at the College, it is reported that of today, 67 research groups have been implemented at various colleges, which also are involving graduate students who should at least publish one Q1 or Q2 paper. With an average of eight publications per person, the university has one of the highest publication rates in the region. The University also reports plans to intensify

cooperation with industry in terms of research activities in order to serve the country. Not only has the University grown by 43% in the last three years, but UAE students now make up about one-third of the student body. University of Sharjah is also now for the first time the health sciences training partner of the Ministry of Defense and is building a good connection with the local community, for example, through a center for healthy aging. The experts positively acknowledge that. The motivation of the University to encourage students for research was visible to the experts. The experts also encourage the University to establish a Ph.D. program to strengthen the research profile and areas of focus.

From the experts' point of view, the Bachelor as well as the Master study program "Physiotherapy" focus on specific qualification objectives. These objectives cover professional and interdisciplinary aspects and particularly refer to the domain of academic competences, competences necessary for a qualified employment, skills of social commitment and personal development.

### **Decision**

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

## **4.2 Structure of the study program**

### **Summary**

The module description/course syllabi cover the following aspects: class timing, venue, faculty, course description, prerequisite, credit hours, course learning outcomes, teaching strategies, course activities and assignments, team-based learning sessions, course work policy, class attendance policy, evaluation method, grading, recommended text, other recommended references. Furthermore, a table of academic weeks and assignments due dates is offered (Annex 01).

The College of Health Sciences has established a clinical training unit that assists and oversees the clinical placement of students across all departments. Those involved in training, like course instructors, clinical tutors and dietitians) attend nutritional conferences and workshops that are accredited with continuous professional development and continuous medical education. There are regular meetings held between the program clinical training coordinator and the faculty clinical tutors involved in the training courses.



The University of Sharjah emphasizes the use of modern teaching strategies that focus on the involvement of students in the learning process. The courses are delivered comprehensively through diverse teaching strategies in classroom, laboratory and clinical practice sessions. The faculty employs a combination of teaching and learning methods to facilitate the learning process in an effective manner. In addition to the conventional method of delivering lectures, emphasis is laid upon participatory approach through group discussion, individual or team-based activities and project work or case studies. Some teaching methods include lecture, team-based learning, group discussion, projects, laboratory experiments audiovisuals and guest speakers (SER 1.2.4). All faculty members of the Physiotherapy department are using black board as the main platform through which they deliver their lectures and teaching materials. In addition, Zoom and Microsoft Teams are used to give live lectures (1.2.5).

Research is integrated into teaching at the University of Sharjah by sharing new research and knowledge as well as constantly updating courses to include up-to-date findings in the field of study. This includes recent published clinical cases, discussion of new information/research/updates posted on professional websites, discussion of new technologies, etc. Assignments are based upon recent research data, as the University states.

Regarding incoming or outgoing students, the program adopts the policy for admission of transfer students from other universities, colleges or departments of University of Sharjah (SER 1.2.9).

### ***Bachelor Study Program Physiotherapy***

The program comprises 44 modules, out of which six modules are university requirements, seven modules are college requirements and 29 courses are program requirements. Furthermore, there are two elective modules on the university level. The university and college requirements are common to all departments at the College of Health Sciences.

There are between five and six modules in total provided for each semester. All modules have to be completed within one semester. The Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" offers between 15 and 18 credit hours (CH) per semester. According to the University bylaws and regulations, the study load per student per

semesters ranges between a minimum of 12 credit hours, a maximum of 18 credit hours and an absolute maximum of 21 credit hours.

The list of modules offered in the Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy":

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Sem.</b>	<b>CH</b>
0201102	Arabic Languages	1	3
0202121	English for Medical Sciences	1	3
0500150	Biology	1	4
0500161	Introduction to Health Sciences	1	2
1426155	General Chemistry for Health Sciences	1	4
			<b>16</b>
0104100	Islamic Culture	2	3
0500160	Human Anatomy and Physiology	2	4
1411100	Introduction to Information Technology	2	3
1430107	General Physics for Health Sciences	2	4
	University Elective (1)	2	3
			<b>17</b>
0503253	Pathophysiology	3	3
0505250	Therapeutic Modalities	3	3
0505251	Biomechanics and Kinesiology (1)	3	2
0505252	Histology	3	1
0505253	Therapeutic Exercise	3	3
0505254	Anatomy (1)	3	4
	University Elective (2)	3	3
			<b>19</b>
0502265	Introduction to Radiology	4	2
0505260	Physiotherapy for Respiratory and Cardiovascular Conditions	4	4
0505261	Clinical Practice for Respiratory and Cardiovascular Conditions	4	2
0505262	Assessment in Physiotherapy	4	2

0505263	Biomechanics and Kinesiology (2)	4	3
0505264	Exercise Physiology	4	2
0505265	Anatomy (2)	4	4
			<b>19</b>
0505350	Physiotherapy for Musculoskeletal Conditions (1)	5	4
0504252	Biostatistics	5	3
0505351	Physiotherapy for Medical / Surgical Conditions	5	2
0505352	Clinical Practice for Musculoskeletal and Medical / Surgical Conditions	5	5
0505353	Neuroscience	5	2
0505354	Orthotics and Prosthetics	5	2
			<b>18</b>
0503262	Clinical Pharmacology	6	3
0505360	Physiotherapy for Neurological Conditions	6	4
0505361	Physiotherapy for Musculoskeletal Conditions (2)	6	4
0505362	Clinical Practice for Neurological and Musculoskeletal (2)	6	5
			<b>16</b>
0500450	Introduction to Research	7	3
0505450	Physiotherapy for Pediatrics	7	4
0505451	Physiotherapy for Obstetrics and Gynecology	7	2
0505452	Clinical Practice for Pediatrics / Obstetrics and Gynecology	7	4
	University Elective (3)	7	3
			<b>16</b>
0505460	Physiotherapy for Geriatrics	8	2
0505461	Integrated Physiotherapy Clinical Practice	8	6
0505462	Selected Topics in Physiotherapy	8	3
0505463	Research Project	8	3
	University Elective (4)	8	3

			<b>17</b>
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>138</b>

Tabelle 2: module overview bachelor

The following modules are offered as elective modules. Students must choose two courses:

<b>General Education &amp; Course Domain</b>	<b>Courses Title</b>	<b>Courses Number</b>	<b>Cr.Hrs</b>
Humanities Social and Arts	Islamic Civilization	0203100	3
	Human Rights in Islam and International Declarations	0602246	
	Introduction to Arabic Literature	0201140	
	History of the Sciences among Muslims	0203200	
	History of the Arabian Gulf	0203102	
	History of Medical & Health Sciences	0900107	
	Arts & Medicine	0710109	
	French Language	0202130	
	Fundamentals of Islamic Education	0206102	
	Introduction to Psychology	0206103	
	Introduction to Economics*	0308150	
	Introduction to Business Administration*	0302150	
	Media in Modern Societies**	0800107	
	Personal Finance	0308131	
	Analytical Biography of the Prophet	0104130	
Islamic System***	0103103		

<b>General Education &amp; Course Domain</b>	<b>Courses Titles</b>	<b>Courses Number</b>	<b>Cr.Hrs.</b>
Natural & Health Sciences	Astronomy and Space Sciences	1430101	3
	Man and the Environment*	0401142	
	Health and Safety*	0503101	
	Health Awareness and Nutrition**	0507101	
	Fitness and Wellness***	0505101	
	Biology and Society	1450100	
	Artificial Intelligence ****	1502233	

\* Not for Civil Engineering students and Environmental Health students

\*\* Not for Clinical Nutrition students

\*\*\*Not for Physiotherapy students

\*\*\*\*Not for Computer Sciences and Computer Engineering Students

Modules in the first year are common between the departments at the College of Health Sciences. The first year comprises essentials of health sciences including chemistry, biology, physics, human anatomy and physiology as well as Arabic, Islamic culture, English for medical sciences and IT. The goal of the first common year is to provide students with basic communication, critical thinking and problems solving skills, to foster the students' ethical values in research and

presentation of materials as well as to enhance the students' ability to work independently or in teams.

The study plan is designed to allow the progression of skills starting from a basic foundation year till the fourth year of graduation. In the second year, the students will be introduced to physiotherapy core courses to develop integrated knowledge and skills in physiotherapy related sciences like advanced anatomy, physiology, assessment, modalities, therapeutic exercises, etc. to provide competent patient-centered care. Also, they will learn how to apply relevant ethical, legal and social frameworks to act responsibly towards clients, themselves and colleagues. In year three, the curriculum includes clinical practice for major fields in physiotherapy such as cardiopulmonary, neurological, musculoskeletal and surgical conditions. Also, specific sciences as pre-requisite for clinical practice in depth in the fourth year is taught. Students learn how to solve multiple-step problems through different inductive, deductive and symbolic modes of reasoning. Application skills: apply, use, practice, demonstrate Physiotherapy skills required in practice as well as proper communication. In the fourth and final year, students continue their clinical practice in depth with a wide spectrum. For example, the curriculum includes clinical practice of neurological condition in pediatric and geriatric cases, obstetrics and gynecology cases, etc. Students learn how to apply ethical standards in research and presentation of materials, including proper verbal citations through graduation research project.

The "Physiotherapy" program provides clinical training and both governmental and private hospitals as well as clinics in the United Arab Emirates. The clinical training is delivered on a rotational basis by preceptors from the clinical facility, department clinical tutors and course instructors from the University. The "Physiotherapy" Bachelor study program offers 990 hours of supervised clinical practical courses throughout the study plan which execute cardiorespiratory, musculoskeletal, medical-surgical, neurology, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, geriatrics and sports rehabilitation learning objectives. The clinical training manual can be found in Annex 02.

As research is an important component at University of Sharjah, research skills are found in nearly all the physiotherapy core courses. These skills either reflect the nature of the course or are allocated in the different assignments directed towards active student learning strategies. This can be seen in "Biostatistics" (variable identification, sampling, hypothesis testing, data analysis), "Introduction into

research” “PT for MSK 1 & 2” as well as “PT for Medical and Surgical Conditions”. While the introductory courses prepare the students to plan and develop the research proposal, the “Student Project” course includes refining the proposal, implementing the study and research report writing. An example of some recent student research projects can be found in SER 1.2.7. As the University states, many undergraduate student projects have been published in peer reviewed international journals and have been the recipients of students grants from the University of Sharjah.

### ***Master Study Program Physiotherapy***

The program comprises 12 modules, out of which two are elective ones (out of five).

There are between two and four modules in total provided for each semester. All modules have to be completed within one semester. The Master study program “Physiotherapy” offers between nine and twelve credit hours (CH) per semester. According to the University bylaws and regulations, the study load per student per semester ranges between a minimum of six credit hours, a maximum of 12 credit hours for full-time students and between three and six credit hours for part-time students. Full-time and part-time students study together in the same courses. Out of the 54 currently registered students, 46 of them study in full-time and 8 of them study in part-time.

The list of modules offered in the Master study program “Physiotherapy”:

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Sem.</b>	<b>CH</b>
0505511	Biostatistics	1	3
0505512	Advanced Clinical Reasoning	1	3
0505513	Research Methodology & Protocol Development	1	3
	Elective Course (1)	1	3
			<b>12</b>
0505521	Motor Control & Learning	2	3
0505522	Advanced Clinical Practice (1)	2	3
	Elective Course (2)	2	3
	Elective Course (3)	2	3

			<b>12</b>
0505611	Advanced Clinical Practice (2)	3	6
0505699	Thesis (Dissertation 1)	3	3
			<b>9</b>
0505699	Thesis (Dissertation 2)	4	6
	Elective Course (4)	4	3
			<b>9</b>
	Total:		<b>42</b>

Tabelle 3: Modulübersicht Master

The following modules are offered as electives (all of them comprise 3 Credit Hours):

- Advanced Physiotherapy for Neurological Conditions,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Musculoskeletal Conditions,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Geriatric Conditions,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Pediatric Conditions,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Women’s Health,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Sport Injuries,
- Advanced Physiotherapy for Cardiopulmonary Conditions.

The research, biostatistics and clinical reasoning courses are mandatory courses for all students as they are the backbone required for the critical appraisal, data analysis, scientific writing clinical application and evidence-based critique skills required throughout the course work and thesis development.

In the Master study program, no further clinical practice is offered as it is stated as an academic research program.

All courses in the Master study program “Physiotherapy” are designed from an evidence-based perspective and assignments require students to apply critical reasoning using latest scientific research analysis. In addition, before the thesis discussion, students have to publish at least one paper in a peer reviewed journal as a first author. The purpose of this Master’s thesis course is to enable students to explore in depth a particular substantive area in relation to their area of physiotherapy practice. The course provides an opportunity for students to gain research experience and promotes the ability of critical thinking when interpreting results. The student will conduct a scholarly piece of work that yields information

related to physiotherapy practice. The course is based on utilizing at least one particular research design, which may involve primary data, use of secondary data, or systematic literature review.

## **Judgement**

The Bachelor study program as well as the Master study program “Physiotherapy” have a course-based structure and a course-related examination system. Descriptions of the modules are embedded within the course syllabi for each program. The course syllabus contains information on the course code, the credit hours, pre-requisite(s), the semester and year, the instructors name as well as his or her phone number, office location, mail address and office hours, and the lecture times. Furthermore, the course description, the learning outcomes, the alignment of course student learning outcomes to program student learning outcomes and the weekly distribution of course topics/contents are presented. Regarding the assessments, the assessment tools, the course outcome assessment plan, the teaching and learning resources and the attendance policy are described. Finally, a note on plagiarism and cheating is placed at the end. The experts value the detailed syllabus, which enables students to prepare adequately for individual lectures as well as scheduled examinations.

The combination and succession of the courses of the study program are consistent with the specified qualification objectives (described earlier). It is assured that students receive the support and guidance they need for the organization and accomplishment of assignments and the learning process in general. During the round of talks, the experts inquire about interdisciplinary taught modules, as the programs at the College of Health Sciences offer good opportunities for this in their estimations. The University reports that in the area of elective modules, students are sometimes taught together and partly complete the practical courses together using a mobile clinic. On the Master’s level, interprofessional research education projects are implemented. Nevertheless, the experts see room for improvement related to interdisciplinary teaching and learning at the College of Health Sciences. The University agrees. The experts recommend that the curricula of the various study programs be reviewed in this regard. According to the experts, it would also be helpful to focus on international recommendations like the CANMEDS model, which also emphasizes the importance of interprofessional competences. Furthermore, the experts recommend to focus more on current and future issues as well as direct access,



digitalization, (digital) health literacy and prevention regarding common disease of burden.

The experts further inquire about the graduation project process. The teachers report that the graduation project is written in group work. A maximum of four students work together and present their scientific work in the form of a poster at the end. The experts recommend that the University considers examining the students individually in the form of a thesis to make it more internationally comparable. The experts also recommend that the University translates its internal credit hour system into the European Credit Transfer System and attach it as an appendix to the diploma to ensure international compatibility.

The arrangement of internships in the study programs allows acquisition of credits. During the interviews, the experts learned that the training coordinator in the department is responsible for managing students' internships in terms of placement and agreement with training agencies. The coordinator also follows up on the technical issues with regards to the quality of the experience and fulfillment of the training requirements. Once a student is registered in the internship program, he/she will have access to the students' internship e-portfolio. The students submit a training portfolio in each of the practicum courses, which is a part of their clinical assessment. The effectiveness of the practical training program is evaluated in detail for each student via a series of visits, evaluation and verification reports submitted by the students, their practical training managers and evaluated by the practical training academic supervisor. The experts appreciate that supervisors from both the University and the clinic are assigned to oversee students during their clinical placements. The students confirm the support and good supervision during the internships.

Furthermore, the experts acknowledge the very detailed course files with its contents and aims, which allows a high level of transparency. In the experts' opinion, the structure of the curriculum seems to make the workload manageable. Nevertheless, the curriculum appears very detailed, consisting of many isolated courses and, therefore, a lot of examinations. Thus, the experts recommend revising the module manual and suggest combining some modules to reduce the number of examinations.

## **Decision**

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

### **4.3 Admission and Feasibility**

#### **Summary**

The full admission requirements and any conditions for provisional admission for the undergraduate and postgraduate programs are published at the University's website.

Upon admission to University of Sharjah and prior to course registration, all admitted students must demonstrate a level of English proficiency consistent with the requirements of the College of Health Sciences. Students can choose one of the following exams for proof of proficiency:

- Paper-based TOEFL (minimum score 500)
- International TOEFL (minimum score 61)
- IELTS (minimum score 5.0)
- EmSAT (minimum score of 1225)
- PTE (minimum score of 42)

If the required score of English language skills is not met, students are assigned to the "Intensive English Language Program" (IEP). The program offers 20-25 hours per week of intensive English practice.

The programs apply to the University's internal credit hour system. Thus, students' performance is evaluated based on the results of a Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). GPA is calculated by dividing the sum of the grade points (with 4 being the best achievable grade and 0 being the worst) received in all courses registered during one semester by the total credit hours of the same courses. CGPA is calculated by dividing the total credits received from all courses a student has completed since joining the program by the sum of the credit hours of these courses. According to the University regulations, students with a GPA score of at least 2.00 are considered to have successfully completed the respective course. To successfully complete the whole program, students have to pass all obligatory examinations with the minimum grade of 2.00 CGPA score.

### ***Bachelor Study Program Physiotherapy***

To be admitted to the “Physiotherapy” Bachelor program, the following requirements must be fulfilled:

- Completion of secondary education or an equivalent level with the required average no earlier than three years prior to joining the University
- The applicant should not have been expelled from the UoS or any other institution for academic or disciplinary reasons.
- The applicant should be medically, physically and mentally fit to be admitted to the University with the desired major.

### ***Master Study Program Physiotherapy***

To be admitted to the “Physiotherapy” Master program, the following requirements must be fulfilled:

- The student must hold a bachelor’s degree from a recognized university with a minimum grade of good and a cGPA of 3.0. Students with a cGPA of 2.0 to 2.99 may be admitted conditionally provided that they register up to 6-9 credit hours in the first semester of their study and obtain a “B” average.
- The degree must be in a major that enables the student to study the master’s program and students from majors different from the master’s program may be admitted upon the recommendation of the department and the college as well as the approval of the council and after studying the prerequisite courses assigned by the department.
- Attendance in the bachelor’s degree must be not less than 75 % of the total hours required for graduation
- The student must obtain 550 points on the TOEFL test or 6 on the IELTS. A student may be admitted conditionally if he/she obtains 530 points or better on the TOEFL provided that the student enrolls in an English language course and receive a TOEFL score of 550 at the end of his/her first semester of study. The student will be expelled from the program if these two conditions are not met.
- The students must submit a letter of approval by his/her employer if he/she is employed.

Additionally, the department runs an interview of all applicants to ensure that they satisfy these criteria.

## **Judgement**

The admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are properly documented and made publicly available. As the first year of study comprises medical foundations as well as basic communication, critical thinking and problems solving skills, the experts determine the admission procedure and requirements to be appropriate, as they correspond to the standards of the study programs.

The experts draw attention to the relatively high number of exams to be passed during both of the study programs. The University states that the system of midterm and final exams is determined by the government. In order to prepare students for the level of difficulty and volume of exams, the type as well as the time of the different examinations is defined and communicated to the students transparently through the course syllabus at the beginning of each course. The experts confirm that the University takes good measures to guarantee the feasibility of the study programs despite the high workload. The organization of the education process ensures the successful implementation of the study programs. Experts appreciate the fact that students with disabilities or chronic illnesses are offered compensatory measures when writing exams, such as extra time or writing the exam in another room.

On site, it became obvious that the teaching staff follows an “open-door-policy”. In the first week of each year, students undergo an orientation which familiarizes them with available support services and where the colleges and departments are introduced.

As another support mechanism, an academic advisor is responsible for a small number of students from the beginning of each semester. Students are supported through advisors, course coordinators or personal tutors with their registration process, selecting a study program, financial and personal issues and their performance during the semester. If the students have problems besides academic issue, a social support unit is installed at the University. The experts find the support services at the University to be exemplary and conducive to the health and success of the student body.

## **Decision**

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

## 4.4 Examination system and transparency

### Summary

Most of the modules in the Bachelor and Master study program “Physiotherapy” require two exams: The midterm and the final exam along with quizzes, assignments and class presentations as a part of continuous assessment.

All assessments and exams are directly linked to the course learning outcomes as well as the program learning outcomes. The following tools and methods are used for assessing the specific outcomes of the courses offered:

- Examinations (theoretical, laboratory, clinical),
- professional skills in laboratories,
- assignments and course work (group discussion/participation, quizzes, presentations),
- student projects,
- student graduation projects,
- clinical practice evaluations
- course evaluation by faculty
- course evaluation by student

The course syllabus must state the number and dates of exams to be given during the semester. The instructor is responsible for preparing clearly written and properly weighted exam questions in the line with the course content, language of instruction, learning outcomes and allotted exam time stipulated in the course syllabus.

If a student misses the exam due to exigent circumstances beyond the student’s control, the student may submit a petition to the dean of the concerned college. The dean will then inform the registration department to record an incomplete grade ‘I’ to the course. The student can take a make-up exam to replace the ‘I’ before the end of the add/drop period of the following semester.

The grading scheme is as follows:

%	Letters	Grade Point
90-100	A	4
85-89	B+	3.5
80-84	B	3
75-79	C+	2.5
70-74	C	2
65-69	D+	1.5
60-64	D	1
Below 60	F	0

The disability resource center sends departments and academic advisors' recommendations and also advises students with disability. These recommendations include duration of exams, translation services and extension of the due dates and times during exams, peer mentoring, use of adaptive technology, use of hearing aids and translation services as needed.

All information relevant to the programs offered at the department of Physiotherapy are transparently published on the website of University of Sharjah.

### **Judgement**

The University uses a continuous assessment process to ensure the quality of education for its students. The study programs have a course-related examination system. Its implementation, including the grading system, course load regulations, repetition of courses and exams is regulated and transparent for the students. From the experts' point of view, the examination serves to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved. These examinations are focused on students' knowledge and competences. Nevertheless, in the experts' opinion, the study program includes a very high number of exams which causes a high workload not only for students but also for the teaching staff. The transparent information of examination methods and of the examination schedule at the beginning of each term makes the high number of assessments during and at the end of each semester manageable. An examination can be repeated once. Students who cannot attend the test due to health issues or other unforeseen circumstances are allowed to take the test on another agreed day. If the examination is failed twice, students must redo the course in the following semester. Thus, the experts conclude that the examinations, although numerous, serve to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved or not and are focused on students' knowledge. The requirements for students' performance in examinations are regulated and published in the course syllabus. The frequency of examinations, as well as their organizations, is appropriate.

The University guarantees that students with disabilities or chronic illnesses receive compensation regarding time limits and formal requirements of the study process, as well as all final and course-related performance records.

Information concerning the study program, process of education, admission requirements and the compensation regulations for students with disabilities are documented and published on the website.

### **Decision**

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

## **4.5 Teaching staff and material equipment**

### **Summary**

Currently, the Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" has 15 teaching staff members (two assistant professors, five assistant professors, one lecturer and seven clinical tutors). The faculty members are all, except of one assistant professor, employed on a full-time basis. Five department members have submitted their files for promotion (two for the position of a full professor and three for the position of associate professors).

In the academic year 2020/2022, there were 57 students in the Physiotherapy Bachelor program. Considering the number of the teaching staff, the faculty-to-student ratio is 1:32.

In the Master study program, there are currently 9 (female) students enrolled. Considering the two associate professors, four assistant professors on a full-time basis and one part-time teaching staff includes one assistant professor, the student-to-faculty ratio is 1:8.

The full teaching load hours of all regular academic staff members per week is 10 hours for professors, 12 hours for associate professors and for assistant professors, 15 hours for lecturers and 15 hours for instructors.

The recruitment procedures and regulations are stated in the faculty handbook. To be appointed a professor, a person must:

- have spent at least ten years (or 15 years from someone outside the university) teaching in a recognized university since obtaining his or her PhD or an equivalent qualification,
- have occupied the rank of associate professor for at least five years in a recognized university insider or outside the country,
- have conducted and published as an associate professor research in his field of specialization in refereed journals.

To be appointed as an associate professor, a person must:

- hold a PhD or an equivalent qualification from a recognized university and must have held the position of an assistant professor for at least five years (or eight years from someone outside the university),
- have conducted research in his or her specialization

Assistant professors must at least hold a PhD. Lecturers must at least hold a Master's degree.

The University supports the teaching staff and encourages them to continue seeking development through arranging different activities. The strategic planning office is applying key performance indicators for each faculty requiring each faculty to at least 15 activities until the middle of the year. These activities are considered part of the faculty evaluation during contract renewal. Examples of services and activities organized by the University are:

- workshops in e-teaching through the center for educational leadership,
- IT workshops on how to use blackboard, zoom, and MS teams,
- students' advising workshops for the new faculty,
- encouraging faculty participation in different self-development activities abroad,
- workshops and training sessions in areas of specialization,
- allocating a budget for attending workshops, conferences and training programs.

The central laboratories have been established in 1997 to be the core location for practical experiments, training and research related to applied medical sciences. The central labs directorate which belongs to the deanship of academic support services is the administrative unit responsible for operating and managing the central labs. The central labs directorate duties include space management, purchasing new lab equipment, chemicals, tools and consumables, centralized lab



utilities, equipment maintenance and asset management, sharing lab equipment between different programs, store services and lab safety management (SER 2.3.1).

The following laboratories are implemented for the “Physiotherapy” programs:

Building #	Lab Name	Type (Teaching/Research)	Lab Description
W12			
204	Physical Agents Lab	Teaching	Therapeutic Modalities Orthotics and Prosthetics Cardiopulmonary Conditions Exercise Physiology
203	Physiotherapy Supplementary Lab	Teaching	Physiotherapy for Musculoskeletal Conditions Therapeutic Modalities Cardiopulmonary Conditions Exercise Physiology
209	Physical Examination and Simulation Lab	Teaching	Physiotherapy for Obstetrics & Gynecology Physiotherapy for Geriatrics Selected Topics in Physiotherapy Physiotherapy for Musculoskeletal Conditions
M23			
039	Isokinetic Analysis Lab	Teaching and Research	Physiotherapy for Pediatrics Assessment in physiotherapy Therapeutic Exercise
040	Isokinetic Analysis Lab	Teaching and Research	Physiotherapy for Pediatrics Assessment in physiotherapy Therapeutic Exercise

Building #	Lab Name	Type (Teaching/Research)	Lab Description
034	Posture and Balance Assessment Lab	Teaching and Research	Physiotherapy for Medical & Surgical Conditions Physiotherapy for Neurological Conditions Research
035	Posture and Balance Assessment Lab	Teaching and Research	Physiotherapy for Medical & Surgical Conditions Physiotherapy for Neurological Conditions Research

The library homepage acts as a portal to all library resources and research tools. The UOS libraries has access to 136 online databases in various disciplines. The library has developed a dedicated program to keep faculty and students aware of the latest information resources acquired by the library and to enable students to search, find, retrieve, evaluate and make efficient use of resource.

The opening hours are as follows:

Library	Monday - Thursday	Friday	Saturday - Sunday
Men M16	8:00 AM - 12:00 AM	Closed	9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Medical M26	8:00 AM - 12:00 AM	Closed	9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Women W16	8:00 AM - 8:00 PM	Closed	9:00 AM - 8:00 PM
Fine Arts M22	7:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Closed	Closed

The information technology center offers two types of support for faculty and students (SER 2.3.3). The department of academic computing services provides support for faculty members on how to effectively use technology in the teaching and learning process. This includes instructional support using the blackboard system as well as support for using classroom technologies.

The research funding department (RFD) is responsible for pre-awards and post awards administration of research projects' funds. The department provides support to faculty, students' research projects and research group as it facilitates the procurement of research funding and publication of research works. The department processes internal and external research funding to ensure compliance with the University bylaws and regulations and manages the processing of approved research projects including purchasing and the reallocation of funds (SER 2.3.4).

### **Judgement**

New teaching staff is thoroughly briefed about the programs and their teaching responsibilities before they start teaching. The institute of leadership in higher education (ILHE) has delivered a series of interactive training and workshops to keep the faculty of University of Sharjah up to date with current pedagogical and educational teaching methodologies and technology that can help them to enhance the learning experience of students in face-to-face as well as hybrid/hyflex sessions. Students evaluate the performance of all teaching and staff periodically.

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of the College of Health Sciences at University of Sharjah shows a very high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as further development of the study programs they are responsible for. The expert group concludes that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the University and the faculty administration. As motivations to teach at the University of Sharjah, the faculty cites the university's good reputation, good working atmosphere, safe working

environment, and support mechanisms related to research and academic development.

The experts find the amount of human resources allocated to the program to be sufficient to carry out its functions. The teaching staff is highly qualified. The teaching staff within the Bachelor as well as the Master study program "Physiotherapy" is in possession of academic and technical credentials and experience adequate to their tasks. The University informs its employees about opportunities for personal and professional development transparently, and actively encourages their participation in workshops, training courses and conferences intended to further their abilities, which is confirmed during the talks with the staff on site.

The experts visited the premises of the College of Health Sciences as well as the central laboratory building, where the skills labs of the Bachelor and Master study program "Physiotherapy" are located. The skills labs are equipped with all relevant technology devices. From the experts' point of view, the quality of the laboratories and clinical areas used to train students in the programs are sufficient. Additionally, the experts were shown around the Research Institute of Medical & Health Sciences at the University of Sharjah, which was established in 2015. This institute supports more than 170 faculties and young researchers. According to the experts, the institute incorporates state of the art lab facilities with very good research equipment. The research groups focus on transnational biomedical research on areas including cancer, chronic inflammatory diseases, immunological disorders, genetic disorders, diabetes, drug discovery, neuro-pharmacology, and toxicology; in addition to public health and other research areas of local and regional interest.

Furthermore, some of the experts were able to visit the university hospital of Sharjah, which is located on the campus. The experts are convinced that the hospital is well equipped in terms of personnel and especially, equipment. The hospital operates independently, the students only practice here via internships, just like with other cooperating hospitals. Both the teachers and the students would like to have their "own" teaching hospital. The evaluators also see this as a great opportunity to promote the practical skills and abilities of the students outside of the skills labs and even before the internship. Therefore, they recommend that the University reviews the extent to which cooperation with the hospital on campus can be intensified.

As a whole, it was ascertained by the experts that the Bachelor as well as the Master study program “Physiotherapy” has ample teaching facilities at its disposals. During the round of talks, the experts learned that the financial support for open-access publications could be strengthened, as the fees sometimes have to be privately financed. The experts recommend that these costs be paid by the University.

### **Decision**

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

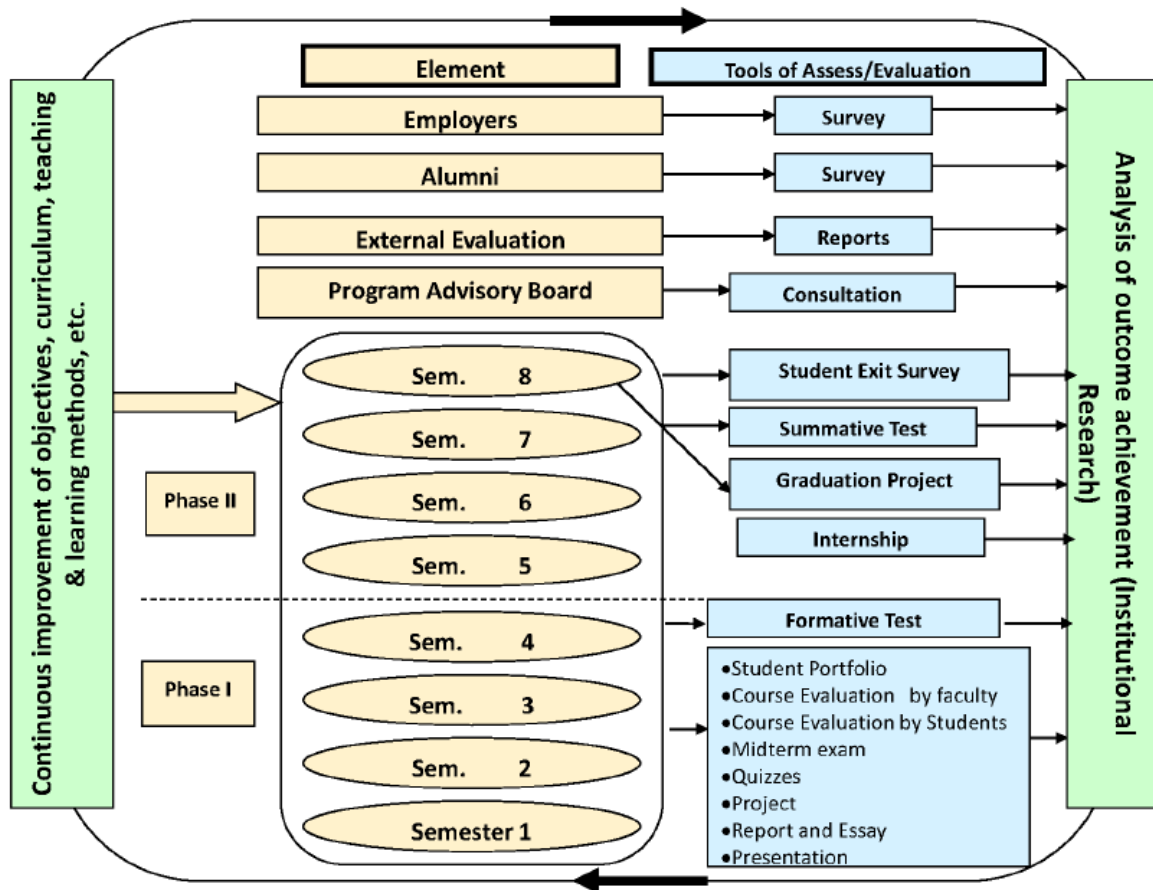
## **4.6 Quality assurance**

### **Summary**

The deanship of quality assurance, institutional effectiveness and accreditation is the central body to coordinate and control all related activities throughout the university. The deanship supervises, assesses and plan issued related to institutional research, institutional effectiveness, accreditation and professional development by dealing, amongst others, with the following responsibilities (SER 1.6.1):

- Coordination and preparation for national and international accreditation,
- design and update evaluation and assessment methods appropriate for each category of programs and verify all development plans,
- ensure that all existing and planned curricula meet the required standards and have well defined outcomes,
- prepare progress reports at all levels and periodically review and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and directions.

The following processes are implemented:



The course instructors/coordinator reflect on the course level data, such as grade distribution, student feedback, faculty feedback as well as performance of teaching and learning to make improvement recommendations for the course. The chairperson/program coordinator revises the course e-files, uses the recommendations status report and reflects on the program level data such as cohort analyses, grade distribution, student feedback, faculty feedback, advisory board and external evaluator feedback.

The department of Physiotherapy implements routine evaluation of the Bachelor study program and its constituent courses. Therefore, the following surveys are used (SER 1.6.2):

- course experience survey,
- senior exit survey,
- alumni survey,
- student satisfaction survey,
- fresh student's survey,
- faculty satisfaction survey.

For the evaluation of the practical relevance of the study program, the alumni survey and senior exit survey are used.

At University of Sharjah, different support mechanisms are implemented. The colleges and departments have mechanisms in place to deal with students who are academically at risk. New students are provided with an orientation program, where every student is assigned to an academic advisor. The academic advisor helps with the course selection, academic planning and orientation. The advisors also assist students in making changes to their courses during add/drop periods and may recommend dropping, adding, changing and/or repeating courses. Advisors may discuss special circumstances and personal issues affecting their students and offer guidance. The Department Council also discusses special students' progress issues. Special requests received from students (regarding registration, progress, and special circumstances) are evaluated by the advisor and an appropriate suggestion is made, the requests are then sent through the College to the University's Students Affairs Committee for further evaluation.

In addition, students under probation are assigned academic advisors to follow-up on students' progress during their study in the program, identify problems they could be facing and advise them of ways to rectify such problems. Besides this, the department assigned one senior faculty member over the last four years to serve as an advisor/mentor for students under academic probation. Furthermore, the deanship of student affairs has the students counseling department with the mission of developing the student's balanced personality at the psychological, social, emotional and mental or skills level (SER 1.6.8).

The enrollment statistics can be seen in SER 1.6.6.

### **Judgement**

From the experts' point of view, the University has a well-structured system of quality assurance spread across all of its units. The University has developed and documented a concept of quality assurance in education process, teaching and research, which serves as the basis for the quality-oriented development and implementation of the study programs "Physiotherapy".

The experts were granted access to the electronic administration system of the study programs. Here the feedback loops are closed by presenting evaluation results and action plans. The whole system is designed centrally, but all faculties have access and are obligated to update their own material. The experts are

impressed by the wealth and detail of information and reports available there. Nevertheless, the experts recommend checking again where process flows can be streamlined. The staff report that sometimes the same information has to be made available in different formats for different responsibilities, which costs a lot of time. It might also be helpful to have one administrative employee per department who is responsible for keeping the system up to date.

The results of the internal quality assurance management are applied for the continuous development of the study program. In doing so, the University takes into close consideration the quality evaluation results as well as the analyses of students' workload, their academic accomplishments and feedback from graduates. The experts appreciate that regularly meetings on different levels are held to improve the study programs.

### **Decision**

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

## **4.7 Gender equality and equal opportunities**

### **Summary**

The University of Sharjah admits academically qualified and morally sound students irrespectively of their national origin, color, gender, religion or disability.

At University of Sharjah, a Disability Resource Center was established as an independent center concerned with people with disabilities' affairs. The Center is intended to be a source of support for people with disabilities, which assumes the responsibility of inclusion, integration and empowerment. To achieve this goal, the Center employs a comprehensive and integrated work system that takes care of people with disabilities from the time of their environment in the University and continues well beyond their graduation. To create an attractive, inclusive, sustainable and accessible environment that provides full outreach to people with disabilities at the University.

The "Physiotherapy" department is inclusive and accepts as well as accommodates all students, unless the disability or chronic illness jeopardizes the clinical practice safety and affects the ability of the student to complete the program requirements.

### **Judgement**

The University demonstrates its commitment to the provision of equal opportunities for all students and shows openness for diversity and social developments.

The experts take positive note of the fact that actual cases of dealing with students with disabilities or chronic illnesses could be named in the discussions. Overall, the experts conclude that the University's actions on the provision of gender equality and promotion of equal opportunities for students with particular living circumstances are implemented in a transparent manner.

### **Decision**

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

## **5 Conclusion**

Overall, the experts were impressed and highlight the strong commitment and engagement demonstrated by all levels of the University of Sharjah. The student-centered philosophy of the University is highly appreciated, as students are treated with care and respect. The structure of the Bachelor and Master program "Physiotherapy" are clear, with a good balance between theoretical, practical, and clinical work. The programs follow both national and international requirements and use modern learning techniques to create a well-rounded curriculum. Although mobility opportunities are available, they are not very frequent at this time. The University should continue to focus on internationalization and mobility for students and staff. The examination system is well-regulated and fair, with a variety of tools available to assess student progress. The staff is highly qualified and there is a good balance between research and teaching. The quality assurance system in place is robust. Evaluation results are used to make changes, and the monitoring system on the program level is a useful tool. The University should periodically reevaluate the QA system to make it as lean as possible and retain only essential processes. The institution has non-discriminatory practices in place for admission and promotes gender equality.

Based on the information from written documents and the results of the on-site visit, the experts concluded that the Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" as well as the Master study program "Physiotherapy" offered at the University of



Sharjah fulfil the above-described criteria. Hence, the Experts recommended that the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS make a positive decision regarding the accreditation of the study program.

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

- The University should continue to focus on internationalization and mobility for student and staff.
- The University should review the curricula of the various study programs at the College of Health Sciences in regard to possibilities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
- According to the experts, it would also be helpful to focus on international recommendations like the CANMEDS model, which also emphasizes the importance of interprofessional competences. Furthermore, the experts recommend to focus more on current and future issues as well as direct access, digitalization, (digital) health literacy and prevention regarding common disease of burden.
- The University should consider examining the students individually in the form of a thesis in order to make it more internationally comparable.
- The University should translate its internal credit hour system into the European Credit Transfer System and attach it as an appendix to the diploma to ensure international compatibility.
- The University should revise the module manual and combine some modules to reduce the number of examinations.
- The University should check again the electronical quality assurance system regarding to where process flows can be streamlined. It might also be helpful to have one administrative employee per department who is responsible for keeping the system up to date.
- The University should pay for the Open Access publication fees.

## **6 Decision of the accreditation commission**

### **Decision of the accreditation commission of May 4th, 2023**

#### ***Bachelor Study Program Physiotherapy***

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

The on-site visit of University of Sharjah took place on January 23 and 24, 2023 according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the "Accreditation Criteria for International Program Accreditation" which have been developed in close accordance with 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 as well as the response opinion of the University of Sharjah.

The regulated study period in the Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" is four years / eight semesters. The study program requires the obtainment of 138 credit hours (CH) according to the internal credit hour system. The study program consists of 44 courses out of which six are university requirements, seven are college requirements and 31 are program requirements. The language of instruction is English. The Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" is completed with awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Science". Admissions take place every fall semester. The first batch of students was admitted to the study program in the academic year 1999/2000.

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

The Bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" is accredited for the duration of five years, until September 30, 2028.

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

### ***Master Study Program Physiotherapy***

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

The on-site visit of University of Sharjah took place on January 23 and 24, 2023 according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the “Accreditation Criteria for International Program Accreditation” which have been developed in close accordance with 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 as well as the response opinion of the University of Sharjah.

The regulated study period in the Master study program “Physiotherapy” is three semesters in full-time and six semesters in part-time. The study program requires the obtainment of 42 credit hours (CH) according to the internal credit hour system. The study program consists of 12 courses out of which two out of five are elective ones. The language of instruction is English. The Master study program “Physiotherapy” is completed with awarding of the academic degree “Master of Science”. Admissions take place every fall semester. The first batch of students was admitted to the study program in the academic year 2018/2019.

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

The Master study program “Physiotherapy” is accredited for the duration of five years, until September 30, 2028.

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