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QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

CAIRO UNIVERSITY

MASS COMMUNICATION

JOURNALISM (BACHELOR)

RADIO AND TELEVISION (BACHELOR)

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING (BACHELOR)

MASS COMMUNICATION (BACHELOR) (ENGLISH)

June 2023



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DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME MASS COMMUNICATION

with the specializations

- **JOURNALISM (BACHELOR)**
- **RADIO AND TELEVISION (BACHELOR)**
- **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING (BACHELOR)**
- **MASS COMMUNICATION (BACHELOR) (ENGLISH)**

OFFERED BY CAIRO UNIVERSITY, CAIRO, EGYPT

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments by the university and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 17th meeting on 22 May 2023, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Mass Communication**” (**Bachelor**) with the specializations “**Journalism**”, “**Radio and Television**”, “**Public Relations and Advertising**”, and “**Mass Communication (English)**” offered by **Cairo University, Egypt** is accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

The accreditation is conditional.

The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 June 2024**.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 June 2029**.

Conditions:

1. It must be demonstrated how existing quality assurance activities work together in a coherent system assuring the closure of the PDCA cycle. Required adjustments to close the loop must be implemented.
2. The availability of objective and up to date programme-related information – such as curricula, module and course-descriptions, entry requirements, intended learning outcomes, and teaching, learning & assessment methodologies, etc. – must be improved, in particular on the website, so that it is accessible to relevant stakeholders beyond the internal ones.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. For all three specializations and the English track, more exposure to real world field experience should be enabled for a larger number of students by supporting internships, practical work in companies, agencies, and media-outlets.

2. More international staff should be integrated in the teaching process, or the international exposure of existing staff should be increased.
3. The Faculty should assure a continuous update of learning resources to enable addressing the quantity of students but also respecting student diversity.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

EXPERTS' REPORT –**ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME “MASS COMMUNICATION” (BACHELOR)**

with the specializations

- **JOURNALISM**
- **RADIO AND TELEVISION**
- **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING**
- **MASS COMMUNICATION (ENGLISH)**

OFFERED BY CAIRO UNIVERSITY, CAIRO, EGYPT

Visit to the university: 6-8 March 2023

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr. Nanette Besson

University of Applied Sciences for Media, Communication and Management, Faculty of Journalism and Corporate Communications, Chair of PR and Communication (Germany)

Prof. Dr. Hosam Salama

Ajman University, Dean of the College of Mass Communication, Chair of Radio and Television (United Arab Emirates)

Eric Karstens

Media Consultant, Krefeld (Germany)
(representative of the labour market)

Julien Seid

Student of Communication Sciences,
University Hohenheim, (Germany)
(student expert)

Coordinator:

Ronny Heintze

AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor in Mass Communication programme offered by Cairo University in Egypt with the three specializations in Journalism, Radio and Television, Public Relations and Advertising, and an English track of the programme.

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against a set of criteria for accreditation developed by AQAS: the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master). The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015. To facilitate the review each criterion features a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria. However, if single indicators are not fulfilled this does not automatically mean that a criterion is not met. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of each programme since not all indicators necessarily can be applied to every programme.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in January 2022. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In March 2023, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programmes and an appendix as well as statistical data on the programmes. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g., number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,
- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,

- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission in July 2022. The final version of the SER was handed in October 2022.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in January 2023. AQAS informed the university about the members of the expert panel and the university did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place from 8-10 March 2023. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g., the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS Criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the university for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 22. May 2023. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In July 2023, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

III. General information on the university

As the SER describes, Cairo University, the first civil university in Egypt, after Al Azhar University, was founded in 1908 as a community university funded by the donations of Egyptian people. Learning began at Cairo University through studying geography, history, and Arabic and English literature. Afterwards, the topics expanded to include natural sciences and math. Later, in 1923, the schools of law and medicine were included. A Royal Decree was issued before the 1952 revolution, transforming Egypt into a republic to establish the Egyptian university in 1925. This university is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and has become a governmental university. Cairo University today includes 25 faculties and institutes in relevant specializations of major, natural, social, and humanities, in addition to computer science. Lately, a Nanotechnology faculty was established.

The university has branches in Al Khartoum in Sudan and in El Sheikh Zayed in Giza, in addition to the international brand. Cairo University has a central library, which hosts around 300,000 books and manuscripts, beside a digital library. The University also has a Grand Celebrations Hall that was established in 1935. This is in addition to the hostels that accommodate students. As of 2022, the number of students at Cairo University is 270.000.

The University funds the salaries of the academic staff, their assistants, and administrators through the financial resources as part of its annual budget provided by the government. This is in addition to the faculty's own funds, part of which is spent to fund the educational process, scientific research, conferences, student and community activities, and the provision of student welfare.

The faculty Mass Communication was established in 1970 as an institute and in 1971 it started accepting students to enrol in its BA programme. As of today, fifty batches graduated from the faculty of Mass Communication and the faculty witnessed the graduation of hundreds of masters and PhDs. The faculty is among the smaller faculties at Cairo University. The number of students in its four years does not exceed 4500 students, in addition to hundreds of students in higher education and professional programmes. There are 276 professors and assistants in the faculty. Some of them, nevertheless, are on missions in other places inside and outside Egypt and on special vacations. The number of the administrative system of the faculty is 150 administrators and technicians. The faculty includes three departments: Journalism, Radio and Television, and Public Relations and Advertising with an addition of two divisions. The faculty directly manages the Mass Communication English division. The Journalism department manages the other division that is Digital Media. The faculty is managed through the Faculty Council and the Council of each department and headed by the Dean. Three assistants support the dean in managing the faculty's affairs.

IV. Assessment of the study programme

1. Quality of the curriculum

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.

The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.

[ESG 1.2]

Description

According to SER and the regulation of the faculty, a student must complete 132 credit hours to graduate in four years. This is equivalent to ECTS 220.44 credit. The curricula at the Faculty of Mass Communication are designed for full-time studies and part-time studies are not permitted. Programmes presented for accreditation use the credit hour system, in which one credit hour is equivalent to one theoretical hour and two practical hours. The minimum number of hours for registration in each term is (9) credit hours and the maximum of (18) hours. The faculty council might approve students to exceed the maximum of hours to enable them to graduate. The programmes' levels are represented according to the credit hours system in four years, and eight terms. In the first year, the student must pass 36 credit hours (24 core hours) and (12 elective hours). In the second year, the student must pass 36 credit hours (30 core hours) and (6 elective hours). In the third year, the student must pass 33 credit hours (21 core hours) and (12 elective hours). In the fourth year, the student must pass 27 credit hours (24 core hours) and (3 elective hours). The study lasts for four years while the specialization in various programmes begins in the third year.

There are different categories of courses required to be studied in the programmes in Arabic language (Journalism, Radio and TV, PR and advertising): 8 General courses and the university's requirements with 24 credit hours, 14 Faculty requirements with 42 credit hours, 15 Core requirements for the programme with 45 credit hours, 5 Elective requirements for each programme with 15 credit hours, 2 Free courses with 6 credit hours with a total of 44 courses and 132 credit hours. The standard study plan of the programme studied in English according to courses categories and levels: 4 Core Courses with 12 credit hours, 10 Mass Communication courses with 30 credit hours, 8 Professional Courses with 24 credit hours, 2 Elective courses with 6 credit hours, 11 Humanitarian and Social Sciences Courses with 33 credit hours, 2 Computing and Statistical courses with 6 credit hours, 5 Field Training with 15 credit hours, and 2 courses for the Graduation Project with 6 credit hours; a total of 44 courses with 132 credit hours for graduation in 4 years.

In the first year of study, students can choose from general education courses, followed during the academic years by two electives available in each academic year. The student may choose within their specialization or explore an approach from another programme. The electives consider any admission requirements, such as an introductory course, a specific language level, or technical knowledge. It is a specialization which is to be based on the merging, overlapping and interdependence of multiple disciplines.

General and basic knowledge-building courses are concentrated in the first year of study. Skills acquisition, academic research, and targeted character-building courses are spread over the four academic years. There are specific courses taught within the programme, not at the university or faculty level, identified in the SER as courses targeting the programme specific learning outputs. These courses are mainly distributed in the third and fourth year. Training is carried out in the second and third year, at the beginning of the first week of studying, and students in the fourth year prepare their graduation projects. The number of theoretical hours in

the structure of each programme is 81.1% (108 credit hours), compared to the percentage of laboratory and training, which is 18.9% (48 practical hours). Each credit hour is calculated as two practice hours, equating to 24 credit hours.

According to the SER, the journalism programme aims to enable students to master various communication skills, and to understand freedom of expression, freedom of the press and their components. The students shall acquire comprehensive knowledge of ethics and the code of ethics of journalistic work. They also shall excel in ICT skills, interpersonal skills, group work and decision making. In addition, they shall gain competences in journalistic writing, including printed newspapers and news websites, Arabic language rules, the basics of good writing, and English language rules. Students also shall learn to think critically and innovatively and shall be enabled to conduct scientific research and compete in the job market. These aims are further categorized into three specific intended learning outcomes (ILOs) with 14 ILOs on knowledge and understanding, 12 ILOs on intellectual skills and 14 ILOs on professional and practical skills.

The radio and television programme aims to prepare outstanding cadres and researchers who want to work in radio and television and related fields using the latest technologies and approaches. According to the SER, it is carried out under the supervision of media professionals with extensive experience and through courses that shall keep up with the evolution of the media industry and meet the needs of radio and television institutions in terms of innovative human resources. These aims are further specified by 12 ILOs on knowledge and understanding, 5 ILOs on intellectual skills and 8 ILOs on professional and practical skills.

The public relation and advertising programme aims to prepare an elite group of qualified students and researchers in the fields of public relations, collaborative communications, crisis management, image and identity management, marketing, advertising, marketing communications, and public opinion. These goals are explained to be achieved through an efficient educational process, described in the course descriptions, and using e-learning approaches. These aims are further specified by 14 ILOs on knowledge and understanding, 9 ILOs on intellectual skills and 11 ILOs on professional and practical skills.

The intended learning outcomes mass communication programme in English are specified by 12 ILOs on knowledge and understanding, 8 ILOs on intellectual skills and 8 ILOs on professional and practical skills. Curricula and courses are described as being subject to constant further development with discussion rounds and workshops. These events shall witness the participation of academic staff in dialogue, discussion and brainstorming about courses and means for their development. The faculty carries out all these activities so that the curricula can keep up with the continuous developments in ICT and the labour market demands. The faculty explains that it ensures the achievement of course learning outcomes through a matrix of knowledge and intended skills that was available for expert's review.

Experts' evaluation

All four specializations

As the interview during the site visit confirmed, the study programme of mass communication has the full support of the university president. The global challenges in the field are reflected in the goals of the programme. Critical thinking is supported. International research and benchmarking are principles of the Cairo University. So, the panel concludes that the general working environment seems to be given and supporting the professional development of the programme on an adequate level.

The four specializations offer a broad education in all mass communication aspects. They are up to date and very open to new aspects and innovations. Future challenges like AI, digitalization and internationalization are to a limited extent already integrated and the programme is constantly updated which is reflected by development-plans for the future.

As the panel learned during interviews with stakeholders, the mass communication programme of Cairo University is seen to set a nationwide benchmark for the profession. Inside of Cairo University there is even potential to work integratively, e. g., content from all aspects of scientific research could be communicated in mass comm channels. The specializations in PR & advertising, radio & TV and journalism follow a similar study structure. The English programme has a different approach, focussing on the general study of mass communication and the integration of non-Arabic-speaking students.

The documentation of the study programme with its four specializations is generally transparent, but in some parts there is quite a difference in the level of detail and completeness which impacts comparability and offers room for improvement. Overall, the ECTS-calculation is done transparently, particularly for the English programme.

The academic degree of the programme with its four specializations reflects a fundamental knowledge of practice and theory of the specialization. The educational concept includes a strong focus on application while academic writing is not part of the final exam as this is more focussed from Master's programmes onward. The panel learned that there is a relatively high proportion of students that continue their whole academic cycle from Bachelor's through Master's to finally a PhD programme at the institution.

Literature is available in English and Arabic. English resources are translated into Arabian language from Master's and PhD students and teaching staff.

Across the board, critical thinking is integrated in most courses and is applied in the general skills teaching. While the focus in all four pillars is strongly laid on practical qualifications the experts found a high awareness of the necessity to develop critical thinking skills in students. The graduates thus have a broad knowledge of useful and necessary tools to start into the labour market.

Having clearly formulated expectations and achieving the defined outcomes also the workload does not seem to be a problem, neither for the teaching staff nor for the students. Students are highly motivated, and a very positive spirit could be attested during the interviews. The motivation and team spirit among the teaching staff is very eminent. The energy and engagement with the programme are palpable.

Overall, it can be confirmed that the learning outcomes of the programmes are carefully designed to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to succeed in mass communication. There is an emphasis on integrating interdisciplinary elements into learning outcomes to prepare learners for the complex challenges the industry faces today. Intended learning outcomes are designed to reflect both academic and labour market demands, with input from stakeholders to ensure learners are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in the dynamic and ever-changing field of mass communication.

The experts also learned during the interviews that efforts are made to continuously improve the intended learning outcomes by engaging with industry representatives, academic experts, and alumni through surveys. Feedback is carefully considered and used to enhance and improve learning outcomes, making them more relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of learners and the job market. This was reflected in the number of graduates of these programmes working in important media fields and the significant use of practitioners in the practical classes.

For all four specializations, all elements of the curriculum, including the courses offered, their functions and their compulsory or elective nature, are documented adequately. A course plan sample is also available which outlines the sequence and timing of required courses for each of the programme's specializations, as well as any compulsory or elective courses that students may choose to take. This allows students to plan their academic progress and helps ensure that they are on track to meet graduation requirements. In addition, the

college provides students with academic mentors by assigning several students to each mentor who can help them navigate the curriculum and make informed decisions about their course choices.

In all four tracks of the programme, there are many methods used to motivate and engage students in the learning process and assessment regulations and procedures are outlined and made readily available in the form of a publication for students.

Generally, it can be observed that there is a high number of course learning outcomes for most of the courses (see below). This can be a challenge to achieve each year through direct assessment tools such as tests, presentations, and projects, or indirectly.

Journalism

The journalism specialization within the programme at the Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University is a vital and valuable part of the academic programmes offered. Although challenges have been encountered, such as low demand for the programme at other media colleges leading to their discontinuation, the importance of journalism as a major field is still evident and this was confirmed by the commitment of the faculty. The programme provides students with a comprehensive education in journalism that includes the subject-specific knowledge, methodological skills, and general skills needed to succeed in the dynamic and ever-evolving field of journalism. The incorporation of interdisciplinary elements into the specializations learning outcomes ensures that graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to meet the complex challenges facing the discipline. The specialization managed to demonstrate the achievement of the Bachelor's Level of the European Qualifications Framework.

The Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University has a long and distinguished history in journalism education and has produced many notable journalists, including those who hold senior positions as editor-in-chiefs of influential newspapers and websites.

In addition to the above, the journalism programme at the Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, has several unique features that make it an important and valuable programme to continue. One of these features is the manageable academic load of faculty members, which allows for more direct and engaging communication with students, providing them with individualized attention and support. Furthermore, the establishment of a printing press within the faculty has created an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in journalism by producing multiple publications, including the University Voice newspaper. This non-periodical student newspaper provides an excellent platform for training students to meet high standards of journalism. Employers have expressed their appreciation for graduates from this programme, citing their superior skills and readiness to adapt to new technologies and developments in the field.

Considering the very satisfactory performance of the programme and the high level of education provided by the faculty an area of improvement which should be addressed is the relative lack of external training opportunities for students in press and media institutions. The programme should focus more on organizing visits to media institutions for students to observe and learn about the latest practices in professional journalism. However, the programme attempts to address this issue by inviting practitioners to train students and provide them with insights into the practical aspects of the profession. Nonetheless, more efforts are recommended to ensure that students are exposed to real-world experiences and are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the field (**Finding 1**).

Moreover, the current technical equipment and computer software, as well as the number and availability of spaces, are areas that offer room for improvement. The college needs to increase investment in updating its technical infrastructure and equipment to keep pace with the rapid changes and developments in technology

in the field of mass communication. So far, the available spaces, compared to the number of students, are quite a challenge, especially during practical classes and group projects (see below).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

Radio and Television

The Radio and Television specialization offered at the faculty is a comprehensive programme that takes into account new forms of production and writing, both for traditional media and for new social platforms.

The specialization within the “Mass communication” programme aligns with the Bachelor’s level requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as its learning outcomes are designed to meet academic and labour market requirements, and the curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of learners and the industry.

Upon completion of the programme, students are required to complete a final project, which is evaluated by faculty members and experts in the field. The panel of experts confirms that the level of these final projects demonstrated the achievement of the learning outcomes at Bachelor’s level well. The programme also employs various assessment methods such as tests, research projects, and presentations to measure students’ knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired during the programme.

It is worth noting that the majority of members teaching practical classes are practitioners in professional television stations. This collaboration with media institutions has allowed students to gain hands-on experience and led to the recognition of some student projects at the regional level. However, the programme would benefit from additional improvements to equipment and facilities to better support student learning in light of student numbers (see below).

While the programme emphasizes practical experience, it would benefit from more external training opportunities to provide students with exposure to the latest industry practices and developments (**see Finding 1**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

Public Relations and Advertising

The specialization in PR and Advertising teaches both aspects of communication. From the expert’s point of view there is a tendency to focus on advertising. Still, the difference between both fields of communication of this specialization is clear. The production of media for any channel is relevant for both areas which is represented well in the curriculum. The programme aligns with the Bachelor’s level requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as its learning outcomes are designed to meet academic and labour market requirements. Public Relations is taught in different special areas, which opens room for further development of the specialization. Focusing on special stakeholder groups like employees or financial shareholders is not yet part of the curriculum but clearly could be an interesting area to include in the future. Also, innovative aspects like employer branding, corporate social responsibility could be integrated, too.

Within a well-designed curriculum strategic working is part of the programme and is applied also in the Bachelor project. The grade for the Bachelor project consists of individual tasks and exams and a combined grade for the group work on the Bachelor project. Based on the reviewed documents and the interviews with students and graduates, it occurs to the panel of experts that these groups are sometimes rather big with up to ten and

more students. The discussions helped to understand how this is still managed and a result of sometimes larger cohorts, while most obviously the panel would encourage the faculty to assure that team sizes should be subject to monitoring and potentially reduction to assure and maintain high quality of individual achievement by students.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

English track of the Mass Communication Programme

Based on the presented documents and very much also thanks to the constructive discussions on site, the expert panel clearly understood that the English track follows a different lead than the other three specializations. This is part of a strategic plan to offer all study programmes in English in the next years. The English track combines all three academic areas covered by the other specializations into one. The curriculum then also adds Arabic language courses for expats. While initially this was an area that required clarification as to comparability between the four specializations with the addition of the future dimension to the explanation, the English track is well rounded besides the obvious fact of the qualification meeting the requirements of a Bachelor's according to the EQF.

The teaching staff is open to international contacts and exchange and the English track clearly facilitates the practical implementation. The offer actively supports programmes like Erasmus, and staff as well as students are interested in international study and teaching programmes. Most of the teaching staff comes from Cairo University's mass communication programme. They are aware of the continuous challenge to keep up to date with the changing mass communication technics and cultures around the world.

The English track also features a different student profile of also international students, mostly coming from African countries, very few also from Europe or America. The teaching staff is motivated and eager to intensify the internationality of the programme which is facilitated by the teaching language. Consequently, the panel of experts is also very supportive of the plans of the faculty to further intensify its internationalization by extending the curricular offer taught in English language.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Procedures for quality assurance

The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.

A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.

The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.

Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.

[ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]

Description

According to the SER, the Quality Assurance Unit was established by a decision of the Faculty Board in 2006. As explained by the university, an internal system for quality assurance was established and an internal regulation for the unit was developed which is to be in line with the faculty's mission and strategic objectives in order to ensure quality and continuous development. The main objective was to obtain institutional and programmatic accreditation for the Faculty from the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education which accredited the faculty's programmes in 2017. An application for renewal of this accreditation was applied for in May 2022.

The Unit's Academic Manager is chosen from the academic staff. The unit's board of directors consists of the faculty's dean as chairman of the board of directors, two students and two media industry representatives. The unit's work team was formed from academic staff, the assistant body, and administrators, and the work was divided into sub-teams, each responsible for a specific standard (leadership, governance, organizational structure and ethics, academic staff, academic programmes, administrative body, teaching, learning and assessment of students, students and graduates, scientific research, postgraduate studies, environmental service and community participation, strategic planning, financial resources, and quality system management).

The university has presented data on the past three years concerning students' profiles regarding the distribution of the percentage of faculty students by gender, successful students in the four faculty programmes, a comparison of the percentage of students who have failed in various study programmes, and students' grades upon graduation. In addition, it shows the development in the numbers of both academic staff and the assistant body (lecturers, assistant teachers), including the ratio to students' numbers in the last three years. The ratio developed during the academic year 2020-2021 reaching approximately 21:1 (that is, one academic staff for every 21 students). The SER also shows the percentage of students who completed their Bachelor's degree in a period of four years over the past three years.

The faculty's quality unit has designed an electronic questionnaire which is supposed to obtain feedback from all parties including alumni in the educational process in a way that helps increase its effectiveness. Results on the career progression of graduates varied between 64% working in the media field, 25.6% working in another field, and 10.3% not working at all. Data was collected on the faculty's interest in the skills of graduates and labour market opinion regarding the faculty graduates, as well as degrees. Students' satisfaction degree includes notes on some aspects related to course planning and implementation, educational materials and resources, assignments, and assessments.

Experts' evaluation

From the experts' point of view, the faculty has been maintaining a 360-degree multi-dimensional approach to quality assurance for many years. Based on the documents and triangulated in different interview sessions, this approach includes in particular:

- Student feedback on course as well as programme level, including student assessment of teaching staff;
- appeals lodged by students against grades, or any other complaints;
- completion rates and grade averages achieved by students;
- feedback from graduates/alumni, including keeping tabs on their career trajectories;
- suggestions by teaching staff based on their own observation of both the media sector at large and their respective own courses and student interactions;
- suggestions by faculty members based on their monitoring of current scientific research;
- external assessment of students through internships and work placements, respectively presentation and review of graduation projects by industry practitioners;

- external input from the media industry on emerging demands in the sector, but also based on their experience as employers of CU alumni;
- external input from accreditation processes with the Egyptian authority as well as the one on hand.

During the discussion on site and in minutes of meetings the experts' panel found clear evidence that this process does, in fact, work. The courses are generally very much up to date in terms of topics as well as teaching methods. For instance, due to its good relations with the industry, the faculty found a sponsor that provided a new state-of-the-art television studio (on top of existing, yet older professional equipment), complete with control rooms, editing facilities, lighting, as well as staff technicians for operation and maintenance. This allows CU to train students in-house under fully realistic conditions. In another example, so-called "artificial intelligence" (applications developed on the basis of machine learning models) was already integrated into several courses.

There also is a formal process in place for the approval of any changes to individual courses or to the curricula of the study programmes as a whole. Depending on how substantial the amendments are, they are approved (or rejected, as the case may be) by the department, then the faculty, and eventually the university's management, as well as ultimately by the accreditation authority and/or the relevant bodies of the education ministry. Smaller and meso-level changes obviously do not have to go through all those steps but only to the appropriate stage. Several of the committees involved in this process include student and labour market representatives, and their sessions are logged. Staff participation in quality management is high, and students as well as labour market representatives confirmed they were involved on a regular basis, and their concerns and suggestions heard.

The expert panel took away the impression that the faculty's approach to quality management has developed over many years and is indeed "lived" – i.e., implemented in practice – by all involved. If anything has not yet fully caught up with the actual practice, it is conceptual formalisation and documentation. Quality assurance should be based on a dedicated, target-oriented strategy that covers and records the full feedback loop:

1. Definition of the objectives of the quality assurance policy in general;
2. definition of the objective of any given quality management action, including specific targets or KPIs where appropriate;
3. description of the planned amendment: How it will be implemented, to what specifications, and who will own the process;
4. documentation of the deliberations in, and conclusions by, the relevant committees to authorise the change (see above), in full transparency for all stakeholders;
5. documentation and public announcement of implementation, such as in the affected syllabi, specializations, or programmes, respectively in the affected administrative or academic departments;
6. monitoring of the success (or not) of the amendment, and its assessment in the light of the originally defined objectives and targets;
7. affirmation of the change, or initiation of further amendments if deemed necessary.

If the process is implemented in an efficient and streamlined fashion, it will increase the transparency and accountability of quality management without increasing the workload for the involved staff members. At this point, clearly the panel of experts identified room for improvement as many things happen that lead to continuous improvement, their conceptual formalization is yet lacking behind. Only by conceptual clarification and formalisation, the faculty will be able to assure that the loop is closed (**Finding 2**).

Standard procedures to prevent plagiarism and fraud in examinations are in place; in addition, the relations between teaching staff and students are such that it appears unlikely that students can deceive their teachers and mentors in the long run.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.

Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.

Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

[ESG 1.3]

Description

In general, the report highlights the focus on the teaching and learning strategies and methods. The SER describes that these are based on a set of “modern strategies that are integrated, effective and flexible”; such as the interactive education (cooperative learning-work teams, problem-based learning, e-learning, and brainstorming-discussions), indirect education, self-education, and experiential learning (organizing visits to news agencies, advertising agencies, press institutions and Media Production City). These modern approaches are aligned with more traditional strategies based on direct education, through the use of brainstorming, discussions, and reliance on a strategic solution to problems.

The teaching and learning methods used in the faculty appear through the following: (i) Cooperative learning (theoretical lectures - teaching aids - work teams). (ii) Indirect learning (homework). (iii) Self-learning (research). (iv) Experiential learning (field training, research projects).

The SER explains that the faculty has set the regulations for the Bachelor's courses in the different programmes in a way that shall achieve coordination and harmony between the different disciplines in the vertical direction (at the level of one programme) and horizontal (across the different programmes). Additionally, there are supporting courses for all disciplines such as Arabic, English, politics, computers, and others, in addition to foundational entries for radio and television programmes, journalism, public relations and advertising. The academic staff are also said to be distributed among the courses in the first stage within the same department and then in a higher coordination stage at the faculty council level so that a balance is supposed to be achieved in the teaching of courses between the main programmes. Coordination is also done at the level of courses so that the full benefit is supposed to be achieved for the student by teaching professors from different specializations for courses such as Media ethics and legislation, public opinion, and advertising.

Since the beginning of the academic year 2021, the faculty uses the Gourmet assessment system which was adopted by Cairo University within its e-learning system. The Gourmet system is described as allowing academic staff to create different types of exams, whether electronic or paper-based in more than one language and to create and correct all kinds of questions. The faculty explains that it has adopted a pattern of achievement and attitude tests (Rubrics) which is prevalent in its use in the summative or final assessment of the student, especially when graduating. As stated in the SER, it can also be used in a preliminary or diagnostic assessment for students, as well as in the formative assessment of their knowledge, emotional status and skills responses during the different academic years.

The faculty explain that it is committed to announcing the exam schedules well in advance (three weeks). Also, the faculty describes that it takes into account the needs and desires of students when setting the schedules. The faculty receives students' complaints (if any) about exam schedules and works to meet them within the limits of the available possibilities (exams period - halls - other subjects for the rest of the students and others).

The faculty also aims to announce the results of the exams within an appropriate period not exceeding two weeks. The Examiners Committee is responsible for reviewing the results of the exams and approves them after making sure that they match the acceptable success and failure rates. Students' complaints and petitions about exam results can be handed in within two weeks after the results' announcement. In some cases, the Committee of Examiners may take specific decisions to raise the outcome of a subject if it is found to have a high failure rate after such decisions have been adopted by the Board of the faculty. The faculty, through the Quality Assurance Unit, concludes the assessment of students at the level of courses and programmes. The grade point average scale is calculated on the four-point scale: 3.5 and above is excellent, 3 and less than 3.5 is very good, 2.5 and less than 3 is good, 2 and less than 2.5 is pass, while less than 2 is fail. If the student obtains a cumulative average of less than two (2), he or she will be sent an academic warning and the study load is reduced to 12 credit hours (four courses at most). A second warning can be given with a reduction of the study load to 9 credit hours (three courses) until the cumulative average rises to at least two (2). The student is obligated to attend theoretical lectures and practical applications of the courses they are enrolled in, with a minimum of 75% of the lectures. If the student's absence rate exceeds 10% of the theoretical and practical hours, with also having a warning and fail system installed if absence exceeds. Students' grades of courses are calculated and documented in SER. Studying at the Faculty of Mass Communication is only possible in full-time.

Experts' evaluation

The expert panel witnessed that teaching and learning methods applied by the faculty are varied and focus very strongly on interactive, hands-on, and self-learning experiences. The university offers a range of learning opportunities in the field, i.e., with media companies and state media authorities. These are considered very useful by students, although they desire perhaps even more such opportunities – primarily with a view to underpinning their job search after graduation.

The student body generally gave the impression that they were strongly intrinsically motivated to engage with their courses and assignments, in particular wherever practical tasks and challenges are concerned. Indeed, students appear to consider it a privilege to be part of Cairo University's student body and proactively strive to make the most of it. It is therefore not in doubt that the university takes a student-centred approach to teaching and learning.

Course exam assessments are transparent; expectations and thresholds are discussed in the first session of every course. Grades are reviewed according to a four-eyes principle, with sample solutions available as a point of reference for all involved. Examples reviewed by the expert panel matched the relevant CLOs. Students may lodge an appeal, which is reviewed and decided by a board of faculty members. The students interviewed by the expert panel did give no indication that they were doubting the fairness of assessments in any way or harboured any grievances against teaching staff or the university.

Graduation projects usually take place in groups, where students apply the division of labour that is typical for many media sector professions. When groups are getting too large, students are empowered to propose that two or more end products be created, so that every participant can actually leave their mark on it. The projects are typically media 'products' such as brochures, videos, fully-elaborated thematic communication campaigns, print magazines, newspapers, broadcasts, etc., and accompanied by a theoretical part, such as target group analyses, reviews of scientific literature and sectoral best practices. Graduation projects are assessed by the relevant academic supervisor (60%) in cooperation with a committee (40%) that consists of academic staff as well as media practitioners. In such a way, the faculty ensures that students actually deliver to the standards and demands of the labour market and remain up-to-date with the latest methods and techniques. The committee also takes on a steering/mentoring role in graduation projects by providing interim guidance.

Under-performing or otherwise challenged students (e.g., because they struggle with the Arabic language or come from foreign countries with diverging educational systems and qualifications) receive individualised support from faculty staff almost to the extent that they are 'adopted' by academic supervisors. Accordingly, the available academic warning and expulsion procedures need to be invoked only by exception.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

[ESG 1.4]

Description

a. Admission

Regarding the admission to the faculty in general, the faculty explains that it does not impose certain conditions for students' admission, as the students shall be admitted according to the numbers, which the higher board of universities determine to accept, and based on the following listed in the SER (i) the student must be a high school graduate and wants to join the faculty, and that the student should fulfil the minimum admission requirements as determined by the Coordination Office each year; the admission of students is determined in light of the educational changes and developments of the state, the policy of higher education in particular, and the number of students admitted to faculty each year; (ii) students pass a written ability test, and the student is not admitted until after passing such tests. The test is related to general information (general information in the specialization + general cultural information + Arabic and English) in addition to a psychological and social test. The test includes 55 multiple-choice questions + 45 true and false questions for each question of one degree, which make the total number of questions 100 questions.

According to the new regulation applied since 2023, the student of the first academic year must study general courses that include: Arabic, English, history, political geography, principles of political science, personal communication skills, psychological approach to media, critical thinking and entrepreneurship, in addition to new subjects such as human rights, anti-corruption, and specifics of culture and personality in Egypt. In the second year of study, the student is supposed to take basic introductions to the three sections. The student can then choose the area of study that suits their inclinations and abilities, and the specialization begins in the third year. Before the start of the third year, students receive a form to write their desired specialization programme. The assigned degree programme will be announced on the faculty's website, considering the respective study regulations. In cases where the first choice of the student does not correspond to the faculty regulations or the academic achievements, the second choice will be assigned as a specialization for continuing the study if it fits into the intended faculty regulations. Faculty regulations for specialization in one of the four programmes are listed as follows:

For the Journalism specialization, the department conducts interviews for acceptance with students who choose this programme as a first choice. For the Radio and Television specialization, the faculty explains that it has developed a template for student evaluations in oral examinations which shall ensure transparency and objectivity in the assessment. The students have to take an oral exam which is conducted by a commission of professors and media experts. The students who choose this specialization as a first choice must also have good grades in the following courses: Arabic Language, English Language and Introduction to Radio and TV.

For the Public Relations and Advertising specialization, the students must pass an oral examination by a commission of professors and media experts of the department. They must also have a flexible, open mind that can absorb diverse knowledge, learn various communication skills, work with initiative, and present creative ideas. For the specialization in Mass Communication in English, students must pass a 50-score written English language test at Cairo University's Language and Translation Center and they have to have a score of 46 in the English language test from general secondary school. The highest scores are then determined among the applicants.

The total number of first-year students in the Arabic Division was (896) in 2020/2021 and became (812) students in the academic year 2021/2022. The English Language Division had (256) students in 2020/2021 and is (266) students in the academic year 2021/2022.

b. Progression

The faculty assigns an academic advisor from the academic staff, assistant teachers or lecturers to each group of students (25 male and female students), The academic advisor is supposed to perform the tasks of guiding and directing the students to choose the courses that suit their abilities and willingness.

The minimum number of credit hours for registration in each semester is (9) credit hours with three courses, and the maximum is (18) credit hours with six courses. Registration is made on the course registration website at the times determined by the Guidance and Registration Department for each academic level.

c. Recognition

Since the faculty's bylaw is described as being approved by the Supreme Council of Universities headed by the Minister of Higher Education and its media studies sector committees, the certificates granted by the faculty are recognized in Egypt and do not legally required to undergo another accreditation. International students are accepted into the Faculty of Mass Communication by applying on the "Study in Egypt" platform. Students are initially admitted centrally by the Ministry of Higher Education and Academic Research and distributed to different faculties. Once accepted, their documents are delivered to the faculty for enrolment in various degree programmes.

d. Certification

Following the information given in the SER and the annexes, after completing the examination and monitoring the results electronically, the result is announced to the students on the faculty website. The result must be approved by the faculty board and the university president, and it is reviewed by the general administration of student affairs at the university, and the student can then extract a provisional graduation certificate signed by each of the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice Dean for Education and Student Affairs. After that, a Bachelor's degree registered and signed by the president of the university is obtained. The faculty began designing a new certificate for graduates as a diploma supplement that includes more information.

Experts' evaluation

As already described above and also following a transparent description in the SER, the formal admission requirements and the specific requirements for the individual study programmes are clearly defined and are accessible to the prospective students. They are communicated and published in time and students explained that they were well aware of them.

Since students interested in all Bachelor's degree programmes of the faculty must take an aptitude test in order to be admitted, this test contributes significantly to the successful completion of the study programme. Especially for the Bachelor track taught in English language, it is necessary for students to pass a corresponding proof of language proficiency. The faculty's selection mechanisms for the individual specializations are transparent and expedient. Changes to the requirements are published in time.

The university collects data on the admission procedures of the previous years and evaluates them. The panel discussed trends and needs and found that the data is also used to consider new ideas and reflect on adjustments. The panel confirms that regulations for the recognition of competences and the crediting of study achievements from other universities are available, documented and accessible. It earns special positive recognition that also the use of learning agreements was confirmed by triangulating different interview sessions.

Progression monitoring is also enabled by a high level of personal support. Mobility projects are coordinated with the students individually and are adapted to international principles. Students receive their Bachelor's certificate in Arabic and English on request. Students receive a document with transparent information about the acquired qualification and the results. Clearly it should be considered to add the English version of the certificate automatically to enable graduates to act flexibly even at a later point in time.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Teaching staff

The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.

Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.

[ESG 1.5]

Description

According to the SER, the process of appointing academic staff to the faculty is subject to the Universities Organization Law, which stipulates that the President of the University appoints academic staff at the request of the University Council after consulting the faculty board and the concerned department council. The appointment is from the date of approval of the University Council, where vacancies are possible to be announced twice a year under appointed criteria. For example, who is appointed to the professorship must have been working as an assistant professor at a university for at least five years and at least ten years since the doctorate and at least eighteen years since the Bachelor's degree. The applicant must have conducted innovative research and published it since the appointment as an assistant professor and must be committed to the duties of the academic staff in their work, considering supervision of Master's and doctoral theses and a remarkable scientific and social activity in the faculty. Those appointed as assistant professors must hold the position of teacher for at least five years at a university or receive a doctorate for at least five years, with was obtained at least thirteen years after obtaining the Bachelor's degree or its equivalent. The applicant must, as a teacher, have conducted and published innovative research and have been committed to the duties of the academic staff in their work since the appointment.

The total number of permanent faculty and assistant staff members at the Faculty of Mass Communication is (276), of whom (234) are currently in the workforce at a rate of (84.8%), and the percentage of female members is 76.4%. The number of academic staff is (130) who hold a doctorate degree at a rate of (55.5%). The academic staff are distributed to 234 (academic staff - assistant staff members) on the four specializations as follows: 84 Journalism (49 academic staff -17 assistant teachers - 18 lecturers), 67 Radio and Television (41 academic staff - 11 assistant teachers - 15 lecturers), 64 Public Relations and Advertising (34 academic staff

- 14 teachers assistants - 16 lecturers), 19 English track in Mass Communication (6 academic staff - 7 assistant teachers - 6 lecturers). The number of administrators and technicians in the faculty is 157 distributed according to the educational levels.

The number of hours that the academic staff teach in the Journalism specialization is between (8 hours - 15.7 hours) for each person. The legal hours according to the Universities Law are 12 teaching hours per academic term for teachers, 10 hours for assistant professors, and 8 hours for professors. In addition, they are said to perform some tasks related to supervising Master's and doctoral theses, academic advising, leadership and quality, and some members teaching hours exceed 12 hours during the academic term because they teach in more than one academic programme. The SER states that the academic and teaching work of the academic staff of the four specializations is sufficient and related to its field of specialization.

In the implementation of what was stipulated in Universities Regulation Law No. 49 of 1972 and in compliance with what was determined by the National Authority for Quality Assurance of Education and Accreditation in Egypt, the Faculty of Mass Communication explains in the SER that it has developed a set of criteria based on which the performance of each of the academic staff and the assistant body is evaluated concerning the performance of their duties and various tasks. They shall also determine policies and programmes for the development of the capabilities and skills of the faculty/assisting staff members by developing a mechanism to identify the training needs of academic staff based on the results of student surveys and by the faculty/assistant staff through questionnaires.

Experts' evaluation

Based on a careful study of the academic CVs of the staff involved in teaching the programmes, the expert panel concludes that the Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University has a distinguished faculty of highly qualified and experienced professors, who are experts in their respective fields. The faculty members have diverse academic and professional backgrounds, including extensive experience in various media disciplines, providing students with a high-quality educational experience. Moreover, faculty members are actively involved in academic research and publish articles in official daily newspapers and scientific books. Each programme publishes a scientific journal in addition to a public opinion journal and a communication journal. The college holds an annual scientific conference that enhances the quality of education provided to students. Many faculty members obtained doctoral degrees from international universities.

Based on the provided documents and confirmed during interviews, the appointment of faculty members follows clear procedures and criteria set by the university in accordance with the Ministry's laws as a public university. Recruitment procedures include regulations against gender discrimination. These procedures aim to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates.

Quantitatively, the experts found that faculty members are available to students to provide academic advice and guidance, creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

A relevant observation to be shared is the fact that to a remarkable extent staff is recruited from the university's own academic uprising. This brings a high concentration of "inner circularity" which underlines the need for a more structured and intense international exchange among the team and with external visiting professors. While the faculty takes a lead on a national and regional level, a well embedded and steered integration of international scholars as well as sending staff as guest professors will even increase the international competitiveness and lead to increased academic exchange that also inspires teaching **(Finding 3)**.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Learning resources and student support

Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.

Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.

[ESG 1.6]

Description

a. Learning Resources

Following the SER, the Faculty of Mass Communication depends on funding academic programmes and thus the specializations in the Arabic language within the Mass Communication programme without tuition fees on what is allocated to it from the budget of the Ministry of Higher Education within the framework of the state's general budget. Additionally, the faculty explains that it generate income in the Unified Educational Services Fund account, which includes sub-accounts: income from the Department of English Mass Communication (as a fee-based programme), as well as faculty income from unique units such as; the Center for Training, Documentation and Media Production, the Center for Public Opinion Research, the Center for Women and Media Studies and Research, the Center for Journalistic Heritage (currently frozen), and the Agency for Media and Marketing Campaigns.

The Faculty of Mass Communication explains in the SER that it has 4 halls of 400 seats each, 8 halls of 200 seats each, 2 halls of 100 seats each, and 3 classrooms of 30-44 seats; it is given in the SER that all of them have technical equipment such as computers, boards, and microphones. It also includes five different labs. Each lab contains computers (between 11 and 38); in addition, there are two radio studios and one television studio.

The faculty has a library divided into Arabic books and (4,327) scientific theses in addition to books in English and French and foreign periodicals. The library acquired 30 computers and provides an external borrowing service for books.

Student registration relies on the electronic registration system through the faculty's website. Academic results are also announced through the website for all academic levels. With the transformation of (also) teaching online the faculty, in cooperation with the university, created an account on the Blackboard platform for each academic staff and each student in the faculty. Lectures by the professors were also recorded in the faculty studios and then uploaded to the faculty's YouTube channel.

b. Student Support Services

The faculty aims to support new students through the Department of Youth Welfare and the Academic Guidance Department. The student's guide contains the faculty's vision, values, mission, and strategic objectives. It contains a definition of the faculty's departments, the academic degrees granted by the faculty, the faculty's study system, as well as disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed on students, and course programmes to choose from. According to the SER, the faculty assigns an academic advisor to each group of students from a member of the faculty or the assistant body, who performs the tasks of guiding the student and directing them to choose the courses that suit their abilities and aptitude, and also to consider their psychological and social situation, and to monitor the student's course of study and academic achievement.

The Faculty of Mass Communication explains that it engages graduate students in scientific research through funded research projects that are conducted in cooperation with Cairo University or other scientific research bodies in Egypt. It also wants to provide training on the use of scientific research tools through conducting

research seminars organised by the faculty Vice Deanship for Graduate Studies and Research (for example, a qualitative research webinar). It explains in the SER that it encourages researchers to participate in the research activities carried out by the faculty as well as by holding training workshops on modern trends in the study of social sciences. Through the Education and Students Committee of the faculty Agency for Education and Student Affairs, the faculty wants to support outstanding students, defaulting students, foreign students, and students with disabilities, e. g., by allocating one of the faculty professors as coordinator for students' affairs. For students with special needs the scientific content of various subjects is also provided on CDs in addition to the electronic content available on the Blackboard platform. Also, tablets shall be distributed to students with visual impairments.

Foreign students can be accepted into the faculty of Mass Communication by applying on the "Study in Egypt" platform, to which students are initially accepted by the Ministry of Higher Education and academic research centrally when meeting the general criteria. It is the faculty's aim to motivate and sponsor these students, e. g., by supporting them to travel outside Egypt to participate in media forums. In addition, The Radio and Television Department explains that it engages in supporting third-year students to find internships at TV channels, governmental or private radio stations for summer vacation.

The policy for students' financial support is to be announced at the beginning of each academic year. The social services can provide different support measures, e. g., by paying university residence/tuition fees, distributing some prescribed books to students for free, disbursing an amount of money to a student in need from the budget of the Social Solidarity Fund. The faculty also explains that it provides health care for students inside the faculty buildings.

Experts' evaluation

It could be confirmed during interviews and also by consulting the respective material that students receive information on course/module descriptions including information on the intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching methods, forms of assessment and the expected workload in sufficient form via the information resources provided by the university.

In order to coordinate the courses offered in terms of content and organization in such a way that overlaps are avoided, and the students are able to complete their studies in the foreseen time, the persons responsible regularly consult with each other. The courses offered are coordinated and the coordination is oriented towards the student's needs. The experts found a very active culture of communication that enables quick solutions before issues arise.

Counselling services are available to students in various forms. For example, advising sessions are offered regularly by the faculty and the university administration. Furthermore, introductory sessions are offered for new students. For those interested, there is a wide range of information available on the Internet as well while the expert panel found that probably this is easier to navigate for students than for the external audience.

The experts also found that exchange students are adequately supported by the university. It should be mentioned that almost all of the incoming students come from Africa. The university is trying to become attractive for incomings from other countries. In line with this observation the experts believe that the availability of clearly structured and matter of fact information openly available for the interested public is of high relevance (see below).

Altogether it should be noted that students also undermined the impression of being highly motivated and authentically convinced of the quality of the study programme and the support they receive. The teachers and students seem to have a very good relationship, with open channels of communication and support mechanisms centred around the student.

When considering the learning resources, particularly rooms and technical equipment, the panel found those to be acceptable, but in relation to the high number of students there is room for improvement. The college includes two studios for radio and television, one of which was established by a well-known media outlet as a gift to the university and includes modern equipment. There is also more than one computer lab, whether for multimedia or Mac, in addition to different classrooms. Appropriate capabilities and equipment are available. The college also has a well-stocked library containing a wide range of printed and electronic books and academic journals, and a comprehensive database provided by the Ministry of Higher Education that students and faculty members can make use of inside and outside the university. These resources are also available for individual research and study purposes of students. In addition to computer labs, there are editing and directing rooms equipped with the necessary software for media production and editing. The college also includes a well-equipped printing press that publishes the Sawt al-Jamaa newspaper periodically, and it is edited by students under the supervision of faculty members in the journalism major. However, due to the average student population of 4,700 students, these facilities might need more support, as during the examination of some of the practical classes it was found that they were quite well booked, thus potentially impacting the student learning experience. There is also a clear encouragement to periodically renew the laboratory programmes and include this in a continuous process, as it was noted during the site visit that the chairs in the classrooms are not appropriately equipped for left-handed students. Hence, with regard to respecting student diversity, there is some room for improvement (**Finding 4**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Information

Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders.
[ESG 1.8]

Description

As stated in the SER, the faculty website of mass communication includes information on departments, student and faculty satisfaction, information about the library and learning resources, and programmes and course descriptions. The primary language used on the website is Arabic, which has a translation feature for other languages, and there is another website in English. Student's guides and brochures to the programmes are available through the faculty homepage. It is explained in the SER that information on admission, registration, organization of lectures and the faculty's agenda, testimonies regarding some important organizational matters for students, and information on decisions issued by councils such as the Supreme Council of Universities, University Council, Faculty Council, and reports on scientific events and activities organized by the faculty such as scientific conferences, symposiums, research seminars, workshops, youth media forums, and activities related to graduation projects for students, are published on the website.

Experts' evaluation

Availability of information is of key relevance and for a faculty focussing on mass communication, and the experts found the use of various channels promoting the manyfold activities of the faculty, including but not limited to social media. Also, student guides, courses handbooks, as well as information materials on various internal regulations exist, are published and generally comprehensive. However, the versions provided

together with the SER dated from the academic year 2020-21, though updated printed versions for the current academic year 2022-23 exist and were reviewed by the expert panel on location to their satisfaction.

Much, yet not all of the information appears to be readily available on the faculty's website; e.g., there are course plans, yet no syllabi for the individual courses. The student guide download is hard to find and the document also dates back to the 2020-21 academic year, even as the file name indicates the year 2022. This suggests that no updates were made to the programmes or to the documentation, which seems unlikely. Even if the comprehensive syllabi might not need to be available on the website, a clearly structured and accessible approach on providing matter of fact information on learning outcomes of courses and the programmes is not yet visible. The very active information on activities and achievements of the faculty is impressive and deserves praise, at the same time key information on the programme and teaching should not be pushed aside.

Potentially, some material is only available for users with a university login or requires proficiency in Arabic in order to navigate to the appropriate page. If so, that would still be problematic, as potential future students, notably including foreign ones, as well as external stakeholders could not easily get an impression about the faculty's offer, and inquiries would need to be handled manually. Particularly in light of the large potential of what the faculty provides, this lack of objective and up to date information reduces the opportunities for the faculty itself. Generally, the faculty's website is somewhat outdated in terms of information architecture, design, and technology, and would greatly benefit from a substantial facelift and upgrade (**Finding 5**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the Mass Communication study programme with all four specializations offered by Cairo University with conditions.

Commendation:

The expert panel highly appreciates that the Faculty of Mass Communication of Cairo University maintains an energetic journalism programme at a time when many other higher education institutions in Egypt and the MENA region withdraw from journalism as a self-sufficient subject – either out of a lack of student demand, or because they do not recognise its importance. The experts believe that properly understanding journalism not only has a societal impact, but also serves to improve the quality of the faculty's other programmes in line with CU's laudable cross-sectional emphasis on critical thinking. The expert panel further applauds the systematic use of English-language textbooks and their adaptation to local needs and circumstances by academic staff of the faculty.

Findings:

1. For all three specializations and the English track, more exposure to real world field experience should be enabled for a larger number of students by supporting internships, practical work in companies, agencies and media-outlets.
2. It has to be demonstrated how existing quality assurance activities work together in a coherent system assuring the closure of the PDCA cycle. Required adjustments to close the loop have to be implemented.
3. More international staff should be integrated in the teaching process, or the international exposure of existing staff should be increased.
4. The faculty should assure the continuous update of learning resources to enable addressing the quantity of students but also respecting student diversity.
5. The availability of objective and up to date information – particularly on the website – must be improved, so it is accessible to relevant stakeholders, beyond the internal ones.