



Assessment Report

**for the Application of
Jouf University, Saudi Arabia
College of Education
for the Accreditation of the Master Study Program
“Psychological Counseling”,
Master of Psychological Counseling**

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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 medicine or psychology. 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.

The AHPGS is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) since 2009. Since 2004, the AHPGS has been a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). In 2006, the AHPGS joined the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). In 2009, the AHPGS also became a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and since 2012 a member of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). In 2023, the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) recognized the AHPGS as an agency with recognition status for 10 years.

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:

1. Program aims and their implementation
2. Structure of the study program
3. Admission and Feasibility
4. Examination System and Transparency
5. Teaching Staff and Material Equipment
6. Quality Assurance
7. Gender equality and equal opportunities

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 this information, the AHPGS produces a summary, which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

II. Written review

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

III. On-site visit (peer-review)

The experts carry out a 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 site visit is to verify and evaluate the objectives of the program and its projected study results, its structure, staff, material resources, course of studies, 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 site visit, the expert group evaluates the fulfilment of the criteria based on the results of the visit and the documents submitted by the HEI. This Assessment 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 Assessment Report is made available to the University for the opportunity to issue a response opinion.

The Assessment 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 Assessment Report, as well as the University's response opinion. These documents lay basis for the decision of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS regarding the accreditation of the study program.

2 Overview

2.1 Procedure-related documents

The University delegated the task of accrediting the following Bachelor study programs to AHPGS: "Medicine and Surgery", "Oral and Dental Surgery", as well as the following Master study programs: "Psychological Counseling", "Public Health", "Infection Prevention and Control", "Clinical Laboratory Sciences", "Nursing" and "Prosthetic Dental Sciences".

The Self-Evaluation Report for accreditation of the above-mentioned study programs (hereinafter the SER) of the Jouf University (hereinafter the University) was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS) in electronic format on March 24, 2025. The decision regarding the accreditation of a study program is carried out by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS. The contract between the Jouf University and the AHPGS was signed on the March 20, 2025.

On July 15, 2025 the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) pertaining to the application for accreditation for the study programs to the University. On August 28, 2025 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 Jouf University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the application request towards accreditation of the Master study program "Psychological Counseling", 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 study program "Psychological Counseling"

Annex	Description
1	01-Module Description
2	02-Teachers' CV
3	03-Teaching Matrix
4	04-Program Specifications
5	06-Admission Requirements
6	07-List of Exemplary Research Topics

7	08-Gender Equality Concept
8	09-Examination Manual
9	10-Student Handbook
10	11-Quality Assurance Manual

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

Annex	Description
A	A-Policy of Encouraging Faculty Participation in Research and Scientific Activities
B	B-Intellectual Property Rights Protection Policy
C	C-Academic Quality Assurance Policy
D	D-Policy of Communication with Graduates
E	E-Council Self-Evaluation Policy
F	F-Outstanding Performance Award Policy
G	G-Monitoring the Quality of Teaching and Learning
H	H-National Qualifications Framework
I	I-Policy for Developing and Creating Academic Programs and RASCI
J	J-Examinations and Student Evaluation Policy
K	K-Policy of Verifying the Standards of Achievement for Students
L	L-Stimulation and Support of Employees' Participation in Community Activities
M	M-Professional and Personal Development Policy
N	N-Student Retention Policy and Increased Completion Rates
O	O-Policy of Attracting External Beneficiaries
P	P-Rights and Benefits in Providing Advice and Services to Outside Sectors
Q	Q-Support Mechanism for Faculty Conducting Joint Research with External Bodies
R	R-Policies for Marketing and Commercial Investment of Innovations and Productions
S	S-University Risk Management Policy
T	T-Workload Policy

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

2.2 Information about the University

Jouf University was established in 2005 and is located in Sakaka, in the Al-Jouf region of Saudi Arabia. The University currently enrolls approximately 17,000 students across 14 colleges and offers 46 academic programs at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels. The University is accredited by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA). All programs are either fully accredited or in the process of accreditation. The University reports that its colleges cover a broad range of disciplines, including humanities, sciences, engineering, medicine, and business administration. Health-related programs are among its most developed areas. According to the University, the Clinical and Health Sciences are ranked 401–500 in the Times Higher Education Subject Rankings, Pharmacy and Pharmacology are placed 251–300 in the QS World University Rankings by Subject, and the Medicine program ranks 601–650 in the same QS subject ranking.

According to the University, the Department of Psychology, established within the College of Education in 2008, launched the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" following the University's approval on 9 April 2019. As the University explains, the program is one of three Master's programs offered by the College; its first cohort graduated in 2021 (4 male and 9 female graduates).

Currently the program enrolls 10 students (5 male, 5 female). The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" aims to prepare qualified psychologists for the labor market and to contribute to community service in line with Saudi Vision 2030.

2.3 Structural data of the study program

University	Jouf University
Faculty/Department	College of Education / Department of Educational Psychology
Cooperation partner	/.
Title of the study program	"Psychological Counseling"
Degree awarded	Master of Psychological Counseling
Form of studies	Full-time, on-campus.
Organisational structure	Classes are scheduled Sunday to Thursday, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Language of Studies	Arabic

Period of education	Four semesters
Credit Hours (CH) according to the internal credit hour system	54 credit hours
Hours/CH	15
Workload	<p>Total: 1,275 hours</p> <p>Contact hours: 675 hours</p> <p>Individual work: 300 hours</p> <p>Practice: 300 hours</p>
CP for the final paper	6 credit hours
Launch date of the study program	April 2019
Time of admission	Fall semester
Number of available places on the program	10 per year (5 male students and 5 female students)
Number of enrolled students by now	10
Particular enrollment conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saudi nationality or official scholarship for graduate studies, - Bachelor's degree from a recognized Saudi university or another accredited university with a minimum grade of "very good", - Accredited qualification if obtained from outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, - Score of the General Aptitude Test of no less than 85 and not older than 5 years, - Meeting of specific requirements, - Admission interview.
Tuition fees	The program is offered free of tuition, in accordance with the university's commitment to accessible mental health education since it is the only counseling program in Al-Jouf region.

3 Expert Report

The site visit was carried out on October 13-14, 2025 according to the previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the head office of AHPGS accompanied the expert group.

The expert group met on October 12, 2025 for preliminary talks prior to the 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 site visit at the University.

During the site visit, experts conducted discussions with the University management, representatives of the College of Education, the chair, vice chair and the teaching staff of the program "Psychological Counseling" as well as with students currently studying in the program and alumni. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar classrooms, library, and computer classes. Moreover, experts had the opportunity to examine the equipment and the capacity of the laboratories.

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

- Exemplary research projects

The Assessment 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 to the documents, the observations made during the site visit, the results of discussions with the representatives of the University, College of Education and the department of Educational Psychology serve as the foundation for the statements made in the Assessment Report.

3.1 Program aims and their implementation

In accordance with ESG 1.2 Design and Approval of Programs

The study program focuses on specific qualification objectives. These objectives cover professional and interdisciplinary aspects and particularly refer to the domain of academic or artistic competences, competences necessary for a qualified employment, skills of social commitment and personal development.

Summary

According to the University, the mission of the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is to qualify psychologists locally by providing the knowledge, professional skills and research values needed for the labor market and to contribute to community service. As the University explains, the program objectives are to prepare psychologists who can work effectively within multidisciplinary teams in both the public and private sectors while adhering to ethical and professional standards; develop students' scientific research skills to improve counselling practice and generate innovative solutions to psychological problems; and equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional values necessary to form a professional identity that serves labor market needs.

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is aligned with Level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework of Saudi Arabia (NQF-KSA), reflecting advanced specialist competence. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are organized across three domains:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Graduates are expected to acquire in-depth knowledge of core theories, principles and concepts in psychological counselling. As the University explains, they should understand advanced counselling processes and procedures — including diagnostic and therapeutic methods — be familiar with modern trends and advanced therapeutic approaches, and possess advanced knowledge of scientific research methods applicable to psychological counselling.
- **Skills:** The program develops graduates' ability to apply specialized counselling theories to develop creative, evidence-based solutions to psychological problems. As the University explains, graduates should be able to use multidisciplinary approaches to evaluate and solve psychological issues, design and conduct advanced research using specialized methods, perform a range of practical counselling tasks (individual and group), communicate effectively with patients and interdisciplinary teams, utilize modern technologies and electronic health records to enhance care, and design and implement tailored treatment plans.
- **Values, Autonomy, and Responsibility:** The program emphasizes professional and ethical values such as integrity, confidentiality and respect for patients' rights. Graduates are expected to exercise professional autonomy in academic and therapeutic decision-making, contribute to strategic planning in psychological services, work collaboratively in interdisciplinary

teams and assume leadership responsibilities in addressing community psychological needs, and apply ethical, patient-centered practices that support quality improvement and community mental-health development.

By the end of the study program, students are expected to reach an advanced level of proficiency in both individual and group counseling. As the University explains, graduates should be able to apply core psychological theories, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and person-centered therapy, to diverse client cases, conduct and interpret psychological assessments, and design and administer standardized tests and clinical interviews. They are expected to master counseling techniques including active listening, empathy and a range of intervention strategies, and to formulate, implement and adjust treatment plans based on assessment results and ongoing progress evaluation. According to the University, students must also employ research-based methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling interventions, enabling independent and effective clinical practice (SER 3.1.3).

Graduates of the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" may pursue a range of career paths depending on their specialization and qualifications, including clinical counselling in hospitals, private clinics or community health centers; educational counselling in schools and universities; organizational/industrial counselling addressing employee well-being and workplace issues; and rehabilitation counselling supporting people with disabilities or recovery from trauma. As the University explains, graduates find employment in both the public and private sectors, such as schools, health organizations, NGOs and corporate firms and demand for psychological counsellors is increasing as awareness of mental health grows (SER 3.2.1).

The graduates of the program enter a labor market that is projected to expand. Saudi Arabia's mental health sector is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 6.12% from 2024 to 2032, with market size estimates rising from \$210.4 million in 2023 to about \$365.7 million by 2032. This growth is linked to broader investments in comprehensive healthcare solutions. As the University explains, employment information is documented by the kingdom's general authority for statistics, whose labor market publications report on employees and job seekers across variables such as nationality, gender, age group, and educational level. for psychologists in particular, current trends point to increasing demand driven by greater awareness of mental health needs, expanding roles within multidisciplinary

care teams, and additional opportunities in the private sector, including hospitals, clinics, and counseling centers (SER 3.2.2).

Judgement

From the experts' point of view, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" pursues clear and well-defined qualification objectives that are consistent with the strategic mission of Jouf University. The experts recognize that the University follows a coherent educational strategy that connects undergraduate and postgraduate education. While most Bachelor programs are accredited nationally, the University aims to obtain international accreditation for its postgraduate programs, thereby enhancing its global visibility and competitiveness. This approach underlines the University's commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance at all academic levels.

From a regional perspective, the experts emphasize that the program addresses the growing demand for qualified mental-health professionals in the Al-Jouf region. The University maintains strategic and institutional partnerships with local health institutions and hospitals, which not only facilitate practical training opportunities but also contribute to high employability among graduates. As the University reports, there is currently a shortage of qualified counseling staff, which underscores the program's relevance and social importance.

With regard to curriculum design, the experts note that all academic programs are aligned with the strategic plan of the University and that curriculum development also considers national initiatives launched by the Ministry of Education or other relevant authorities. The University council retains the authority to review and approve program structures, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to labor-market needs. Programs are evaluated every two years after the graduation of each cohort. The University also applies a sustainability policy to smaller master's programs: continuation or discontinuation is decided based on market demand, student interest, and overall relevance to regional needs.

Internationalization represents an element of the University's strategic development. Although enrollment in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is currently limited to Saudi nationals due to governmental regulations in the health sector, the University plans to open the program to international students in the near future. The experts welcome these ambitions and encourage the University to attract international students, and foster more active participation in international research collaborations. To further establish internationalization at

Jouf University, the experts recommend to implement cooperation agreements with international universities to foster student and staff mobility. Given cultural and structural constraints, the experts suggest inviting international scholars for guest lectures or short visits to increase academic exchange and global visibility.

The experts inquire about the distinct professional orientation of the program compared to clinical psychology. The University explains that while clinical psychology focuses on severe mental disorders, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" concentrates on counseling, prevention, and moderate mental-health challenges. Graduates are prepared to work in hospitals, schools, and community institutions, filling a crucial gap in regional psychological services. Upon graduation, they become eligible for professional licensure, which enables them to practice in healthcare and educational settings.

Overall, from the experts' point of view the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" focuses 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. The objectives are clearly defined, aligned with the University's mission and the national framework, and supported by adequate institutional strategies for research, quality assurance, and future development.

Decision

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

3.2 Structure of the study program

In accordance with ESG 1.3 Student-centered Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The study program aims to provide students with specialized and interdisciplinary knowledge as well as professional, methodological and general competences. The study program has a modular structure that is closely linked to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)¹ and a course-related examination system. Descriptions of the modules contain all necessary information, as required in the ECTS User's

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/ects-guide_en.pdf

Guide (particularly with regard to the details about learning content and outcomes, methods of learning, prerequisites for the allocation of ECTS credits, workload).

The combination and succession of the modules 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.

The arrangement of internships in the study program allows acquisition of ECTS credits. Provided that the program offers exchange mobility gaps, they will be integrated into students' curriculum.

Study programs with special profile requirements (e.g. dual, part-time, occupational or distance learning study programs) comply with particular aspects that are considered as appropriate and proportionate. These particular aspects are continuously observed in the study program.

Summary

The program comprises 17 modules, out of which 13 are obligatory and 4 are elective modules. There are between 3-5 modules in total provided for each semester. All modules have to be completed within one semester. There are no semesters offered as a period for exchange programs.

All modules in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" are program-specific. The program currently has no shared modules with other study programs at the University and no cooperative arrangements with external institutions for joint coursework. Elective modules provide structured flexibility, allowing students to tailor study paths to their professional goals and interests. As the University explains, the learning objectives of these program-specific modules are aligned with core competencies in the field, ensuring depth and a clear focus on psychological counseling (SER 4.1.2).

The list of modules offered:

Nr.	Title	Sem.	CH
PSY60 1	Theories of Psychological Counselling	1	3
PSY60 2	Educational Research Methods	1	3

PSY60 4	Fields of Psychological Counselling	1	3
PSY60 5	Psychological Disorders	1	3
			12
PSY60 3	Educational Statistics	2	3
PSY60 6	Counselling Techniques	2	3
PSY60 7	Cognitive Behavioral Counselling	2	3
PSY60 8	Behavior Modification	2	3
PSY60 6	Counselling Individuals with Disabilities	2	3
ED	Training and Professional Development	2	3
			18
PSY60 9	Psychological Therapy	3	3
PSY61 0	Counselling Interview Skills	3	3
PSY61 1	Addiction Psychology	3	3
PSY61 2	Career Counselling	3	3
			12
PSY69 5	Seminar in Psychological Counselling	4	3
PSY69 6	Field Training in Counselling	4	3
PSY69 8	Research Project	4	6
			12
	Total:		54

The module description/catalogue covers the following aspects: number, title, semester, credit hours, lecture hours, practical hours, self-study hours, language, learning outcomes, content examination (Annex 01).

According to the University, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" follows a structured four-level sequence that builds competencies progressively and integrates theory with practice, with explicit learning outcomes for each module. In semester 1, students develop foundational knowledge in counseling theories, research methods, service fields, and psychological disorders; core modules include: theories of psychological counselling, educational research methods, fields of psychological counselling, and psychological disorders. In semester 2, the focus shifts to practical skills and specialized techniques; core modules include: educational statistics, methods of psychological counseling, cognitive behavioral counseling, and behavior modification. Electives such as training and professional development and counseling individuals with special needs allow targeted exploration. Semester 3 advances competency through psychotherapy, interviewing skills in psychological counseling, and a research seminar in psychological counseling. Semester 4 combines field practice and research via field training in psychological counseling and a research project. As the University explains, this progression supports a coherent pathway from foundational learning to applied practice and independent research (SER 4.1.3).

The study program includes a field training in psychological counseling (3 CH) in the final semester. The internship is jointly supervised by university instructors and practical instructors at affiliated sites, and its objectives align with the program's overall goals to ensure hands-on experience in real-world counseling settings. As the University explains, quality assurance is maintained through regular meetings with practical instructors, structured evaluation of student performance via reports and feedback, and confirmation that practical instructors hold relevant qualifications and expertise. Additionally, the program encourages students to collaborate with external organizations and institutions to gain exposure to diverse counseling environments, which broadens practical knowledge and strengthens professional networks in preparation for workplace demands (SER 4.1.4). Supervisors in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" must hold at least a master's degree in counseling, psychology, or a related field, in addition to having both clinical or counseling experience and prior supervisory experience. As the University explains, students are required to attend weekly supervision sessions with their faculty supervisor. These meetings provide ongoing feedback and emphasize ethical practice, case formulation, intervention planning, and the application of evidence-based training models.

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" employs a range of teaching methods tailored to each module to support comprehensive learning outcomes. Instruction combines lectures with interactive formats such as small-group discussions, case-based learning, and seminars or workshops, and it includes field training to connect theory with practice in professional counseling settings. These approaches are intended to foster critical thinking, applied problem-solving, and professional development while allowing instructors to select methods aligned with each module's aims. The blended use of modalities encourages peer interaction, guided practice, and reflective learning (SER 4.1.5).

Digital tools are integrated to support flexible, student-centered learning. The learning management system Blackboard is the central hub for course materials, announcements, quizzes and assignment submission; its discussion forums enable structured peer interaction. Virtual classroom sessions are used for focused revision or additional support when needed, and a variety of online assessment formats (quizzes, assignments, formative tests) complement in-person instruction. This blended approach ensures taught concepts are practiced in real settings and assessed through both direct (exams, projects, presentations) and indirect (course evaluations, supervisor feedback) methods (SER 4.1.6).

According to the University, research is a central priority reflected in the college's executive and strategic plan and embedded within the Master study program "Psychological Counseling". The program offers an academically stimulating environment, support for innovative projects, and dedicated resources for students and faculty to advance research. Students build research competencies through sequenced modules, including educational research methods (semester 1), research seminar in psychological counseling (semester 3), and a capstone research project (semester 4). As the University explains, these components align with the department's research priorities and encourage collaborative projects as well as dissemination through recognized journals and academic conferences (SER 4.1.7). The final research project in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is designed to reflect the scientist-practitioner model in counseling. In PSY696 (seminar in Psychological Counseling (level three)), students identify a relevant issue in the counseling field and critically analyze it from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This stage helps them develop research questions, review existing literature, and design appropriate methodologies. Students then proceed to PSY698, Research Project, where they conduct independent research under

faculty supervision. This component integrates scientific inquiry with applied counseling practice, ensuring that graduates can connect research with professional application.

The "Psychological Counseling" program currently does not offer formal international mobility options such as study-abroad semesters. However, as the University explains, plans are in place to integrate mobility into the program in the near future by establishing partnerships with regional and international universities to provide exchange opportunities. International perspectives are integrated through curriculum content that incorporates international best practices in psychological counseling, elective modules that address specialized topics across diverse cultural contexts, and research opportunities that encourage participation in international conferences and publications (SER 4.1.8).

Judgement

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" has a course-based structure and a course-related examination system. Descriptions of the courses are embedded within the course specifications. The course specification for each course contains information on the course name, course code, study load, semester, prerequisite, learning outcomes, description/syllabus, soft skills, forms of learning, learning methods, assessment of learning outcomes. 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.

With regard to interdisciplinarity, the experts observe that Jouf University provides a suitable institutional framework and possesses considerable potential for interdisciplinary cooperation. Several programs, such as "Health Administration," are implemented jointly between the College of Medicine and the College of Administration, while others like "Public Health" and "Infection Prevention and Control" are coordinated between the College of Applied Medical Sciences and the College of Medicine. These structures create favorable conditions for interdisciplinary teaching and research. However, in the view of the experts, the University has so far made only limited use of these opportunities. Interdisciplinary exchange currently takes place primarily at the faculty level through research cooperations or through the admission of students from different disciplinary backgrounds. There is no systematic integration of interdisciplinary courses or joint research activities

with other colleges on a student level at this stage. The experts encourage the University to strengthen these connections, in order to enhance the programs' practical and clinical orientation and to broaden students' perspectives. The planned establishment of the new University Hospital within the next 15 months is expected to further enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and provide additional practical learning opportunities. In this context, the clinical aspects of the study program could also be increased.

The experts also appreciate the University's efforts to integrate digitalization and artificial-intelligence tools into teaching and learning. A core course introduces students to the ethical and practical use of AI technologies and the University has implemented mechanisms to ensure responsible application. Students are trained in how to acknowledge AI assistance in academic work, and specific software tools are used to verify AI-generated content, particularly in research projects and theses.

The experts acknowledge the very detailed course files with their 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.

Research plays an important role in the structure of the Master study program "Psychological Counseling". The program combines academic research with professional training in counseling practice. The experts acknowledge that the curriculum provides students with the necessary methodological and analytical competencies to design and conduct research projects independently. Students may choose their supervisor and research topic according to their professional interests, with each topic reviewed and approved by the departmental council to ensure academic relevance and ethical compliance. Every research project must obtain approval from the ethics committee before implementation. Weekly meetings between students and supervisors are mandatory, providing ongoing academic guidance and progress monitoring. The research process follows a structured sequence and students begin developing their research proposal early, typically in the first or second semester, and continue working on it throughout the program.

The research strategy of Jouf University is designed to align research priorities with national development goals, particularly in the fields of social well-being, sustainability, and public health. The experts appreciate that students are introduced early to scientific research and encourage the University to further include students to participate in applied projects that address local community needs and national

priorities. In the long term, the University plans to expand its academic and research profile by introducing PhD programs, increasing collaboration with national and international partners, and encouraging faculty–student research teams. These plans are considered by the experts as valuable steps toward strengthening the University's research culture and international visibility.

The experts recommend to expand close cooperation with the regional psychiatric hospitals, where students complete parts of their field training. They also recommend expanding simulation-based teaching methods, as simulated client interactions with actors instead of students. Such training effectively bridges theory and practice and supports the professional identity of future counselors.

Decision

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

3.3 Admission and Feasibility

In accordance with ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

The admission requirements and, if applied, student selection procedures are specified. They correspond to the standards of the study program.

Feasibility of the study program is guaranteed. The amount of student workload is appropriate.

Student support services, as well as specialized and general consultations, are provided by the University in a sufficient and appropriate manner.

As a whole, the organization of the education process ensures the successful implementation of the study program.

Summary

According to the University, admission to the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" follows centrally managed policies overseen by the deanship of admission and registration. The University provides an online platform (e-gate) for applicants and students to register and monitor academic progress. Applicants must be Saudi nationals, have a Saudi mother, or—if non-Saudi—hold an official scholarship for graduate study. Applicants must hold a Bachelor's degree from a recognized Saudi or other accredited university with a minimum overall rating of "very good," and qualifications earned outside the kingdom must be formally

accredited. The University may cancel admission if minimum program requirements are not met. Where applicable, the general aptitude test for university graduates must be at least 85 and no older than five years, and any program-specific requirements also apply. The permanent committee for postgraduate studies may grant exceptions upon recommendation of the college and department councils.

Student selection is based on weighted criteria: cumulative grade point average (cGPA) 50%, general aptitude test 30%, and an admission interview 20%. As the University indicates, applicants with disabilities follow the standard admission process, with academic suitability assessed during the interview. Early disclosure of disabilities or medical conditions is requested so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged, and accepted students meet with advisors to implement the required support measures (SER 5.1.1).

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" promotes inclusive education. While there are currently no students diagnosed with disabilities or chronic illnesses enrolled, the University explains that students with such conditions are supported through academic accommodations and psychosocial assistance to ensure equitable access to learning and participation.

The University has defined policies for the recognition and transfer of academic credits from other accredited national or international institutions. These require equivalency in course content, a minimum grade, and timely completion. A maximum of 40% of the total credit hours can be transferred. The process is overseen by academic departments and finalized by the College Council, with exceptions reviewed by the University's Permanent Committee for Academic Affairs (SER 5.1.3).

According to the University, academic counselling is provided through faculty advisors and the University's Center for Academic Advising. Students receive support with academic planning, personal and social challenges, and career orientation. Structured tools and templates guide regular advisor-student interactions. Faculty staff maintain office hours for individual support, and communication is facilitated via email, Blackboard announcements, and feedback channels. Targeted assistance is available for specific student groups: creative students receive mentorship, high-achieving students gain access to additional resources, and underperforming students are supported through tutoring and progress monitoring. Research mentoring is offered for student projects and conference preparation. Clinical and laboratory supervision is ensured through assigned faculty members.

Additional support includes orientation sessions, skill development workshops, and access to campus-wide services such as libraries, sports facilities, and wellness resources, promoting a well-rounded student experience (SER 5.2.1)

Judgement

The admission policies and procedures along with the requirements are properly documented and made publicly available. The experts determine the admission procedures and requirements to be appropriate, as they correspond to the standards of the study program.

The experts draw attention to the relatively high number of exams to be passed during the study program. 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 specification 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. The experts appreciate the fact that students with disabilities or chronic illness 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. Students with illnesses or special circumstances are granted flexible arrangements such as online sessions, sick or maternity leave, and adjusted examination schedules. These measures ensure academic continuity and

inclusivity. The experts also note that students who work alongside their studies are adequately supported through personal supervision and flexible scheduling.

Regarding psychological support, the University provides comprehensive services to safeguard student wellbeing. All students undergo a pre-screening to identify health concerns, and those in need receive ongoing follow-up, counselling, and psychological consultation. The program trains peer mentors in stress-management techniques, fostering a supportive community. Financial assistance is available through an agreement with the Saudi Developmental Bank for students unable to cover tuition fees, and faculty members benefit from institutional health-care support.

Through these measures the University demonstrates its commitment to maintaining a healthy, resilient student body.

Decision

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

3.4 Examination system and transparency

In accordance with ESG 1.8 Public Information

Examinations serve to determine whether the envisaged qualification objectives have been achieved. These examinations are focused on students' knowledge and competences. The requirements to students' performance in examinations are regulated and published. The frequency of examinations, as well as their organization, is appropriate.

The University guarantees that students with disabilities or chronic illnesses receive compensation with regard to 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.

Summary

According to the University, assessment in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" combines module-level midterm and final written exams with continuous evaluation through assignments, in-class quizzes, and presentations, all scored against established checklists. The final project is presented to an

examination committee of three academics, who assess it for approval. Make-up exams are available when students provide a valid reason accepted by the examination committee e.g. illness, and the overall examination policy follows the University's bylaws for post-graduate studies, as outlined in the examination manual.

As the University explains, the assessment policy is communicated at the start of the program and posted on the University's website. Students with disabilities may receive accommodations such as large-font exam papers or, where necessary, physical assistance. Students with chronic illnesses can be granted arrangements including monitoring or medical treatment during exams (e.g., diabetes).

Each course has a defined assessment plan detailing methods and timelines, which is shared with students at the beginning of the course via the learning management system (Blackboard). Feedback regarding the assessment activities is collected from students, faculty members, and the quality unit during the program, by the end of each semester as well as by the end of the program through surveys and reports.

The minimum passing grade is 60%, and the University applies a 5-point GPA system:

Percentage	Grade	Symbol	Weight (out of 5)	Weight (out of 4)
95-100	Exceptional	A+	5.0	4.0
90-less than 95	Excellent	A	4.75	3.75
85-less than 90	Superior	B+	4.5	3.5
80-less than 85	Very Good	B	4.0	3.00
75-less than 80	Above Average	C+	3.5	2.5
70-less than 75	Good	C	3.0	2.0
65-less than 70	High Pass	D+	2.5	1.5
60-less than 65	Pass	D	2.0	1.0
Less than 60	Fail	F	1.0	0

The College of Education ensures that all key information regarding the study program is publicly accessible through the official college website. This includes a detailed study plan outlining course sequencing, credit hour distribution, and the integration of theory and practice. The educational process is described with reference to teaching methods, learning resources, clinical training, and assessment strategies. Admission requirements, including eligibility criteria and selection procedures, are clearly presented. Examination regulations are also available, covering assessment types, grading policies, academic integrity, and procedures for appeals and re-examinations. In addition, the website highlights extracurricular activities, community engagement, and research opportunities that complement the

academic curriculum. The College also communicates with stakeholders through newsletters, social media, and public events to maintain transparency (SER 6.2.2).

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. 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. However, 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 to students' performance in examinations are regulated and published in the course specifications. The frequency of examinations, as well as their organizations, are 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.

The University ensures that information about its activities, particularly the programs it offers, is easily accessible to prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. The published information includes detailed insights into the selection criteria for programs, intended learning outcomes, qualifications awarded, and the procedures employed for teaching, learning, and assessment.

From the experts' point of view, the relevant information concerning the study program, the process of education, the admission requirements and compensation

regulations are documented and published. The experts also recommend providing additional information with the graduation certificate: To increase international comparability, the University could use the template for Diploma Supplements developed by the Council of Europe, European Commission and UNESCO.

Decision

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

3.5 Teaching staff and material equipment

In accordance with ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff and in line with ESG 1.6 Learning Resources and student support

Professionalism and a sufficient number of human resources assure the successful implementation of the study program. Qualifications of the teaching personnel correspond to the requirements of the study program. Recruitment and appointment of teaching positions are appropriate. Interdisciplinary links to other study programs are taken into consideration.

Measures for the professional and personal development of the teaching personnel are provided.

Qualitative and quantitative sufficiency of the equipment and space resources assures the successful implementation of the study program.

Summary

According to the University, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is taught by full-time faculty staff composed of highly qualified professionals from diverse national and international backgrounds. The staff includes 3 professors, 2 associate professors and 6 assistant professors.

The student-to-faculty ratio is 1:1 at full enrollment capacity.

According to the University, the recruitment of faculty members for the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is conducted through a structured, multi-stage process aligned with strategic priorities and international academic standards. Departments assess their staffing needs and submit requests specifying academic rank, specialization, and qualifications. These requests are consolidated by the College Recruitment Committee and approved by the College Council before

being announced through official recruitment channels, including the Saudi Arabian Cultural Missions and academic networks. Applicants are required to hold a PhD or equivalent degree from internationally ranked institutions, maintain academic continuity, demonstrate relevant experience, and possess peer-reviewed publications in recognized journals. Shortlisted candidates are evaluated via online interviews, and final selections are approved by the College Council and endorsed by the Vice Rectorate for Academic Affairs (SER 7.1.2).

Faculty development is overseen by the Skill Development Committee, which organizes targeted workshops and seminars in areas such as teaching strategies, student engagement, leadership, and academic writing. Activities are based on annual needs assessments and are documented through feedback and evaluation reports. Research is supported by the Deanship of Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research, which provides funding for projects, publications, and conference participation. The University also offers incentives such as publication fee reimbursements, performance awards, and recognition prizes to promote a research-oriented academic culture.

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is supported by additional human resources that include the dean of the College of Education, the department chair, the head of quality assurance, and the head of the postgraduate unit. These roles contribute to study program coordination and work placement oversight, helping ensure consistent administration and supervision across academic and practical components (SER 7.2.1).

According to the University, the study program is supported by on-campus facilities and structured partnerships. The program is delivered on campus in classrooms equipped with display systems, smart boards, educational electronic tools, and appropriate seating. As the University explains, practical training is provided through a partnership with Al-Irada Mental Health hospital, where students complete internships. The following rooms are offered at the main campus (SER 7.3.1):

No.	Facility	Quantity
1	Classrooms	22 (equipped with data projectors)
2	Laboratories	2
3	Offices, Computers, and Printers	50
4	Video Conference Rooms	2
5	Activity Rooms	1
6	Meeting Rooms	3
7	Prayer Room	1
8	Cafeteria	2

The central library at Jouf University provides essential academic resources to support the Master study program "Psychological Counseling". The collection includes 30 books, with materials available in English and some in Arabic. Students also can access a wide range of reference materials, including journals, reports, and professional publications such as: Journal of the Saudi Society for Educational and Psychological Sciences (Justin), Journal of Mental Health Counseling, Journal of Counseling & Development, Journal of Counseling Psychology. The library also subscribes to various periodicals, both in print and digital formats, covering key topics in medicine and related fields. Digital access is offered through platforms such as the Saudi Digital Library, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Elsevier, and Wiley. These resources are accessible on- and off-campus via university credentials and Blackboard. The library is open from Sunday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., while digital resources remain accessible at all times. The inventory is regularly updated to ensure relevance and accuracy, with outdated materials replaced by current editions. A centralized library system manages lending and access (SER 7.3.2).

The University provides computer labs and high-speed internet to support digital learning and research. PCs are available for students and faculty in both male and female sections (SER 7.3.3).

Judgement

New teaching staff is thoroughly briefed about the programs and their teaching responsibilities before they start teaching. Overall, the teaching and academic staff at the Jouf University shows a very high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as further development of the study program they are responsible for. The experts conclude that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the University and the faculty administration. As

motivations to teach at the Jouf University, the faculty staff cite good working conditions, the good reputation and the family-like feeling between the staff.

The experts find the number of human resources allocated to the program to be sufficient to carry out its functions. The teaching staff is well qualified and in possession of academic and technical credentials and experience adequate to their tasks. The experts positively acknowledge the very good student-to-faculty ratio.

The University informs its employees about opportunities for personal and professional development transparently, and encourages their participation in workshops, training courses and conferences intended to improve their abilities, which is confirmed during the talks with the staff on site. Each faculty member receives an individual development plan. General training courses cover teaching methodology, quality assurance, and academic leadership, while specialized workshops are offered at the program level. The professional development of faculty members is monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined in the University's strategic plan.

The experts note that academic career progression at the University follows a clear, government-regulated pathway: faculty advance through the ranks of assistant, lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and finally full professor, with each promotion contingent on demonstrated excellence in community engagement, research, and teaching. The University encourages participation in national and international conferences, provides full PhD scholarships for academic advancement, and covers publication fees to promote research output. Newly recruited faculty members participate in an induction program designed to support their integration into teaching and research activities. Research activities within the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" are supported through both internally and externally funded projects conducted in cooperation with local and regional institutions.

The experts visited the premises of the College of Education, where the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is located. As a whole, it was ascertained by the experts that the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" has ample teaching facilities at its disposals. Students and staff have full access to the University's digital library and electronic databases, ensuring the availability of up-to-date academic literature.

Decision

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

3.6 Quality assurance

In accordance with ESG 1.1. Policy for Quality Assurance and ESG 1.10 Cyclical External Quality Assurance.

In line with ESG 1.7 Information Management and taking into consideration ESG 1.9 On-going Monitoring and periodic review of programs

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 program.

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

Summary

According to the University, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" ensures quality in teaching, learning, and research through the Quality and Academic Accreditation Unit (QAAU), under the supervision of the Deanship of Development and Quality (DDQ). The program applies the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) model as a framework for continuous monitoring and improvement of educational standards. The QAAU operates in accordance with the University's Quality Manual and is responsible for conducting internal audits, facilitating program reviews, organizing faculty training, and monitoring key performance indicators. These efforts are supported by several specialized committees and department-level quality coordinators. An advisory council, comprising internal and external experts, provides strategic input on academic quality and accreditation (SER 8.1.1).

Program and course quality is evaluated through structured mechanisms involving direct and indirect assessments. Course reports, submitted each semester using the up-to-date NCAAA template, include assessment results and proposed improvements. These reports are reviewed by the QAAU and relevant committees before final approval by the College Council. At the program level, the Annual Program Report (APR) is prepared by the Program Coordinator, guiding development plans and actions for improvement. The QAAU compiles a summary of all

action plans and oversees their implementation and follow-up to ensure closure of the quality loop (SER 8.1.2).

Stakeholder involvement is a central component of the quality system. The program conducts regular surveys, including Course Evaluation Surveys, Program Evaluation Surveys, Student Experience Surveys, and Stakeholder Surveys (e.g., alumni and employer feedback). These surveys assess course delivery, program relevance, academic advising, and graduate readiness. The QAAU analyzes the data, which is then discussed in institutional meetings and used to develop targeted action plans for continuous enhancement (SER 8.1.4). Student participation is further ensured through representation in departmental meetings, reinforcing their role in the decision-making process.

The practical relevance of the study program is systematically evaluated through employer and alumni surveys, patient feedback, clinical case assessments, and alignment of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with professional standards. External reviewers and accreditation bodies, including SCFHS, assess whether the curriculum meets national and international expectations. Input from the advisory council, benchmarking against peer institutions, and tracking of key performance indicators such as graduate employability and clinical examination results all contribute to the ongoing adaptation and improvement of the curriculum (SER 8.1.5).

According to the University, workload in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is primarily monitored through direct student feedback. A dedicated item in the course evaluation survey (question 16) asks whether the amount of work was reasonable for the credit hours allocated, and responses are analyzed to confirm balance, achievability, and consistency with credit-hour expectations. Results inform targeted adjustments to modules to maintain alignment with educational objectives and to support students' academic success (SER 8.1.5).

Regarding student statistics, the University provides the following tables (SER 8.1.7):

Female						Male					
Year of Enrollment	Completion rate	Number of those who completed the program	Graduation Year	Number of Enrolments	Year of Enrollment	Leakage rate	Completion rate	Number of those who completed the program	Graduation Year	Number of Enrolments	Year of Enrollment
0	100%	9	2020	9	2018	33.3 %	66.7%	4	2020	6	1441
9%	91%	10	2021	11	2019	0	100%	9	2021	9	1442
0	100%	12	2022	12	2020	0	100%	5	2022	5	1443
3.1%	96.9%	31	total	32	total	5.27 %	94.73%	18	total	20	total
Program completion rate as a whole = 96.1% Leakage rate for the program as a whole = 3.90%											

Female					Male				
Average duration of graduation in classes	Number of graduates	Graduation Year	Number of Enrolments	Year of Enrollment	Average duration of graduation in classes	Number of graduates	Graduation Year	Number of Enrolments	Year of Enrollment
4	9	2021	9	2020	4.7	4	2021	6	2020
4.1	9	2022	11	2021	4	9	2022	9	2021
4	13	2023	12	2022	4	5	2024	5	2022
female average = 4.03					male average = 4.23				
Average duration of graduation for the program as a whole = 4.13									

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 the education process, teaching and research, which serves as the basis for the quality-oriented development and implementation of the study program "Psychological Counseling".

The University consistently monitors and periodically reviews its programs to ensure alignment with established objectives, responsiveness to the evolving needs of students and society, and the facilitation of continuous program improvement.

These systematic reviews are integral to the University's commitment to maintaining the relevance of study programs and fostering a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The evaluation process encompasses various aspects, including the regular examination of program content in light of the latest research in the discipline, consideration of changing societal needs, assessment of student workload, progression, and completion rates, evaluation of the effectiveness of procedures for student assessment, collection of feedback on student expectations, needs, and satisfaction regarding the program, and examination of the suitability of the learning environment and support services for the program's objectives.

The University possesses a robust data collection system and gathers comprehensive data on its study programs and other activities. The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the University. Various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are captured. A range of information regarding study programs and activities is consistently captured by the University. Student progression, success rates, and dropout rates are inherent considerations in the University's analytical processes. With an established feedback mechanism, the University regularly measures student satisfaction with their programs, the learning resources and the available student support. The University also actively tracks and analyzes the career paths of its graduates. It seamlessly integrates the collected information into its existing internal quality assurance system. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that the perspectives of students and staff are considered in decision-making processes. The experts observe that the University takes evaluation feedback seriously. For instance, changes to course timing, additional exam opportunities, and the introduction of practical assessments. All evaluation results are systematically reviewed and discussed by academic committees, ensuring that constructive feedback leads to tangible enhancements in teaching and program delivery.

Regular program reviews and revisions are conducted, actively involving students and other stakeholders in the process. The information collected from these reviews undergoes analysis, and program adaptations are made to ensure the program is up-to-date. Curriculum review follows a structured schedule: minor changes are made annually, while major revisions take place every five years with input from external stakeholders, including employers and hospital representatives. Clinical placements are also evaluated through student and supervisor feedback. Any actions planned or taken as a result of these reviews are communicated to all

relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the University ensures the publication of revised program specifications, fostering transparency and keeping stakeholders informed of changes resulting from the systematic review process. To ensure accountability, the University maintains a formal complaints mechanism that allows students and staff to raise concerns about instructional quality or professional conduct.

From the experts' point of view, the University should consider structured alumni activities or alumni programs to strengthen graduates' ties to the institution and to provide current students with access to and exchange with alumni in professional practice (e.g. mentoring, career talks and networking).

Decision

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

3.7 Gender equality and equal opportunities

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.

Summary

According to the University, the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment. The program ensures that all students, regardless of gender, personal, or social background, receive equal access to high-quality education. Both male and female students are taught in equally equipped, modern facilities and receive instruction from the same qualified faculty. Equal opportunities are provided in all academic and extracurricular areas, including research activities and leadership roles. Male and female students in the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" are enrolled in integrated classes rather than being separated. This approach is intended to enrich students' experiences and skills within a diverse and supportive academic environment.

The University also provides structured support for students who develop disabilities or chronic illnesses after admission. Measures are in place to ensure that affected students can continue their studies without compromising patient safety

or academic standards. The campus is equipped with ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, assistive technologies, and on-site medical and psychological services. Faculty and staff are trained to accommodate individual needs and to maintain a supportive learning environment. Compensatory measures include individualized assessments, adapted examination formats, provision of makeup exams, targeted support services, and the reassignment of clinical duties when necessary.

Judgement

The University demonstrates its commitment to the provision of equal opportunities for all students within the cultural conditions and shows openness for diversity and social development. 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. The experts also acknowledge the University's progress in promoting gender equity and encourage further advancement of women in academic and leadership positions.

Decision

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

4 Conclusion

From the experts' point of view, all eight evaluated programs demonstrate clear and well-defined aims that are aligned with labor-market demands and community needs, with a strong emphasis on regional healthcare delivery. Throughout the meetings, the expert group observed high levels of motivation and commitment among students and staff. Students expressed overall satisfaction with the quality of teaching, academic guidance, and support services. Admission procedures and examination regulations are transparent, and the advisory and complaint systems function effectively and are well known to students.

Considering the University's large number of health-related programs, the experts suggest further strengthening interprofessional learning to better reflect the realities of modern healthcare delivery. Particularly with the establishment of the new University Hospital, they encourage the University to continue this development.

Based on the information from written documents and the results of the site visit, the experts came to the conclusion that the Master study program "Psychological Counseling" offered at the Jouf University fulfills 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 further strengthen its international profile by concluding cooperation agreements with foreign higher education institutions to promote student and staff mobility.
- The University should invite international scholars for guest lectures or short-term academic visits, including virtual/online contributions to enhance academic exchange and global visibility.
- The University should establish a systematic integration of interdisciplinary courses and joint research activities, both across colleges and within the same college at the student level to enhance the program's practical and clinical orientation and to broaden students' perspectives. The University

should utilize the planned establishment of the new University Hospital to further promote interdisciplinary collaboration and provide additional practical learning opportunities.

- The University should increase the clinical components of the study program.
- The University should continue to introduce students early to scientific research and further involve them in applied projects that address local community needs and national priorities.
- The University should expand its academic and research profile in the long term by establishing PhD programs and increasing collaboration with national and international partners.
- The University should encourage the formation of faculty–student research teams to strengthen the institutional research culture and enhance international visibility.
- The University should expand its cooperation with regional psychiatric hospitals where students complete parts of their field training.
- The University should further strengthen simulation-based teaching methods with simulated client interactions from actors.
- The University should provide additional information with the graduation certificate to increase international comparability by using the Diploma Supplement template developed by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UNESCO.
- The University should consider structured alumni activities or alumni programs to strengthen graduates' ties to the institution and to provide current students with access to and exchange with alumni in professional practice (e.g. mentoring, career talks and networking).
- The University should continue its efforts to promote gender equity and further advance women in academic and leadership positions.

5 Decision of the Accreditation Commission

Decision of the Accreditation Commission December 11, 2025

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

The site visit of the University took place on October 13-14, 2025, according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

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

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group regarding the Assessment Report. The Master study program requires the obtainment of 54 credit hours according to the internal credit hour system. The regulated study period in the program "Psychological Counseling" is two years. The program comprises 17 modules, out of which 13 are obligatory and 4 are elective modules. The language of instruction is Arabic. The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is completed with awarding of the academic degree "Master of Psychological Counseling". Admission takes place every fall semester. The first cohort of students was admitted to the study program in the academic year 2019/2020.

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

The Master study program "Psychological Counseling" is accredited for the duration of five years until September 30, 2031. The accreditation is based on the circumstances described in the Assessment Report.

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 Assessment Report.

An appeal against this decision may be filed within two weeks of its notification. The appeal must be submitted in writing or recorded at the office of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH, Sedanstraße 22, 79098 Freiburg, and must include a statement of reasons.