

# Accreditation Report

Institutional Accreditation at Université La Sagesse, Beirut

Reference Number II-1216-1



## 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ZEvA Commission for International Affairs on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2026

### Item 4.04

Accreditation contract signed on: 22.01.2025

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- Prof. Dr. Sélim Mekdessi (HDR), Lebanese University, Beirut, Dean Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
- Prof. Dr. Susanne Schmidt, Otto von Guericke University, Magdeburg, Faculty of Economics and Management
- Stefan Mosandl, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Head of Quality Management in Studies and Teaching (representative of the profession)
- Haroon Metro, Leibniz University, Hanover (student representative)

Hanover, 13.04.2026

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## 1 Final Vote of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission

### 1.1 Decision of the ZEvA Commission

*The ZEvA Commission follows the experts' report and recommendations and acknowledges the university's response to the accreditation report of 7 February 2026. The Commission concludes that Université La Sagesse (Beirut) has established solid standards in teaching and learning which are continuously monitored by means of efficient quality assurance procedures. The ZEvA Commission therefore decides to award institutional accreditation to Université La Sagesse (Beirut) without conditions for a period of six years.*

*This decision is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide as referred to in the ZEvA Manual for Institutional Accreditation.*

## 1.2 Final Vote of the Expert Panel

### 1.2.1 Recommendations:

- The experts recommend reviewing the rules of student representation and how they are implemented. Especially the minimum grade for eligibility for Master's students, should be revised to give more students the opportunity to participate.
- The experts suggest that involving more academics from outside ULS in quality assurance committees could be beneficial.
- The experts recommend that the QA policy is published on the website.
- The experts suggested publishing more detailed information about the study programmes on the website.
- The experts recommend reviewing the study plans to indicate when the courses should be taken and to differentiate consistently between compulsory and elective courses.
- The experts recommend evaluating the situation and taking steps to accommodate the growing number of students.

### 1.2.2 Recommendation to the ZEVA Commission for International Affairs:

The expert group recommends the institutional accreditation for the duration of six years without conditions.

## 2 Evaluation Report of the Expert Panel

### 2.1 Introduction: Purpose, Design and Context of the Accreditation Procedure

The purpose of the institutional accreditation procedure is to assess the quality of the internal quality management system offered by Université La Sagesse (ULS) against international standards. The assessment is based on ZEvA's Assessment Framework as laid out in the "Institutional Accreditation Manual for Auditors and Higher Education Institutions". This assessment framework is in part based on the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)" (ENQA 2015), the "Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area" (2005) and the "ECTS Users' Guide" (European Communities, 2015).

This report is based on the experts' assessment of the self-report submitted by the university and on their findings during the site-visit. It will serve as a basis for ZEvA's Commission to decide on the accreditation of the university. In the case of a positive decision by the Commission, ZEvA will award its quality seal for a limited time period, after which the university can reapply for accreditation. The report will be published on the ZEvA website upon finalization.

The experts would like to thank all faculty, staff, students and graduates of Université La Sagesse for the open and constructive atmosphere during the digital talks.

## **2.2 Governance, Management and Profile of the University**

### Brief History

In 1874 Monsignor Joseph Debs, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, founded the Secondary School of La Sagesse. According to the self-report the institution was founded with the vision of fostering an inclusive and diverse educational environment that welcomed students from various religious and confessional backgrounds. In the following year, Archbishop Debs expanded the institution by founding the Higher Institute of Law, which gained prominence during the Ottoman Empire for its pioneering efforts in teaching Ottoman Law, Islamic jurisprudence, and Comparative Law in Arabic. Despite its temporary closure during World War I, the institute was re-established in 1961, following a Lebanese government decree that allowed it to resume its law programme due to its historical significance.

In 1999, Université La Sagesse (ULS) achieved three major milestones: the laying of the cornerstone for its new university buildings, the approval of new faculties by the Council of Ministers, and its recognition as a pontifical university by the Pontifical Council for Education in Rome.

Today, ULS is one of six Catholic universities in Lebanon, comprising eight faculties that offer 27 programmes in English, French, and Arabic, with a focus on professional and humanistic education.

Listed in order of seniority, the eight faculties are as follows:

- Faculty of Law (FOL)
- Faculty of Canon Law (FCL)
- Faculty of Religious and Theological Sciences (FRTS)
- Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEBA)
- Faculty of Political Science and International Relations (FPSIR)
- Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management (FTHM)
- Faculty of Public Health (FPH)
- Faculty of Engineering (FOE).

All ULS programmes are offered in English and French. In addition, several foreign languages are offered as elective courses (Spanish, for instance, helps students to gain an added value for their international career at FTHM) or as core courses (Latin and Italian for students of Canon Law and FRTS). In compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education (MEHE) and the Bar Association, a number of courses within the Bachelor of Laws and Canon Law programmes are delivered exclusively in Arabic.

As a private institution ULS currently relies primarily on student tuition fees as its main source of financial revenue, but is seeking to diversify its financial resources. Approximately 1% of its total income is gained through contributions from various public and private entities, including Aid from the Church in Need (ACN), the Alaywan Family Foundation, L'OEuvre d'Orient, Arabia Insurance and Online Money Transfer (OMT).

As of 2025, the total number of enrolled students was 4,366, with 86 members of full-time academic

staff and 113 members of administrative staff.

### Values and Mission

In the self-report and the submitted Bylaws (self-report, appendix 2) ULS describes their values and mission as follows:

#### *“Core Values*

*Rooted in Greater Lebanon, witnessing its founding and subsequent development, ULS promotes, in its mission of education, research, and community involvement, the Christian and universal values of freedom, justice, social responsibility, and respect for human dignity.*

#### *Mission*

*Founded in 1875 by the Maronite Archdiocese of Beirut, ULS is a private, non-profit Lebanese Catholic institution. Open to the international community, ULS prepares generations of Lebanese men and women for the evolving job market and supports active members of society in their pursuit of knowledge. Sagessians are called upon to be vectors of progress and innovation. Free, open, and committed, they work for a spirit of solidarity in citizenship and a society founded on justice, transparency, and ethics.*

#### *Vision*

*ULS intends to become a centre for fundamental and applied research that meets the evolving needs of the market. Being an environment conducive to pluralism and cultural diversity, ULS aims to be a privileged space for intercultural dialogue. It aims to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit of young people, thus facilitating their professional integration. Rooted in the City, ULS strives to promote the culture of life and family. Aware of the university's role in shaping the public sphere, it will promote a culture of institutionalization, transparency, fighting corruption, and human well-being.”*

According to the self-report ULS adopts a holistic educational model that integrates professional readiness with humanistic development. Its teaching philosophy emphasizes bridging academic specialization with real-world practice, guiding students from foundational knowledge to applied learning, and mentoring them for career readiness. Faculty members act as mentors, facilitating the transition from theoretical understanding to practical application through hands-on exercises, simulation labs, and case studies. This approach aims to ensure that students acquire both technical expertise and essential soft skills, preparing them for professional success.

ULS also prioritizes the integral development of students as individuals, fostering values such as intellectual growth, ethical leadership, and social responsibility. Certain faculties, such as the Faculty of Religious and Theological Sciences (FRTS) and the Faculty of Canon Law (FCL), focus on personal formation, spiritual growth, and service to the community. This dual commitment to professional and humanistic education reflects ULS’s mission to nurture well-rounded graduates who are equipped to contribute meaningfully to society.

### Internal Organizational Structure and Governance

As stated in the self-report, the governance structure of Université La Sagesse (ULS) is designed to ensure effective decision-making, transparency and active participation from academic staff, administrative personnel and students. At the highest level, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut serves as Chancellor, holding both ecclesiastical and institutional authority. The President, who is appointed by the Chancellor, is responsible for overseeing the University's strategic development and management. The President is supported by a team of Vice-Presidents with portfolios covering academic affairs, research, quality assurance, development, strategic planning, internationalisation, institutional relations, and administrative affairs. Each faculty is led by a dean who manages academic programmes, faculty development and budgetary matters with the support of faculty councils comprising department chairs, academic staff and student representatives. Financial oversight is managed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who ensures fiscal stability through budget planning, risk management, and compliance. Student affairs are coordinated by the Dean of Students, who supervises key offices such as Admissions, Alumni Relations, and Career Development. The Office of the Registrar oversees student records, enrolment, and graduation audits. Institutional decision-making is guided by the Board of Trustees and the University Council, which includes representatives from academic and administrative entities, as well as elected student and faculty representatives. (Bylaws and Rules and Regulations, self-report, appendices 2 and 3)

The number of student council members is determined annually in proportion to the number of students enrolled in the semester during which the elections are held in faculties. There is one student representative per 100 students. To vote, students need to be registered for a minimum of credits. For a candidacy a minimum grade is required as stipulated in the Student Council Election Regulations.

### Student Mobility and Internalisation

According to the self-report, ULS has established a network of partnerships with global institutions as part of its strategic planning and commitment to international collaboration. The focus of these partnerships is on academic and administrative cooperation, faculty mobility, student exchange, research initiatives, and professional training programmes.

With institutions in Europe (e.g. Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP), Université de Lille, Bordeaux Institute of Technology, Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), Università Della Calabria – UNICAL) ULS has established partnerships to develop academic collaboration as well as to establish joint research projects, entrepreneurial support and double degree programmes.

Recognition of prior learning and transfer credits is facilitated through a structured process, ensuring compliance with MEHE regulations. ULS also supports international student mobility and exchange programmes, aligning its credit system with ECTS for compatibility with global standards.

In addition to these academic partnerships, ULS has established a range of strategic collaborations with international and national organisations (e.g. Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

([www.auf.org](http://www.auf.org)), CNRS (Lebanese National Research Council) ([www.cnrs.edu.lb](http://www.cnrs.edu.lb)), Digital Marketing Institute International (DMI)([www.digitalmarketinginstitute.com](http://www.digitalmarketinginstitute.com)), • HR Certification Institute (HRCI) ([www.hrci.org](http://www.hrci.org)), International Foundation for Women's Empowerment ([www.foundationforwomen.net](http://www.foundationforwomen.net)) and with foreign embassies. Furthermore ULS is an active member of several academic networks (e.g. Association of Arab Universities (AarU) ([aaru.edu.jo](http://aaru.edu.jo)), Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) member, Conférence des Recteurs de la Région du Moyen-Orient (C2R), Education Development Center (EDC-HECD), Fédération des Universités Catholiques Européennes (FUCE) ([www.fuce.eu](http://www.fuce.eu)), Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques (FIUC) ([www.fiuc-ifcu.org](http://www.fiuc-ifcu.org)), Universities Association of Lebanon (UAOLB) ([www.uaolb.org](http://www.uaolb.org))).

### Equal Opportunities

According to the self-report ULS promotes inclusion by supporting the participation of students from diverse backgrounds through scholarships, mentoring, and accessible admissions. Support services ensure accessibility for students with disabilities. Interdisciplinary projects, cultural events, and student clubs promote intercultural understanding and an equitable academic environment. (Self-report 3.2.3.)

The university actively promotes the inclusion of students with special needs. The Office for the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs coordinates with the relevant departments to ensure that teaching materials, classrooms, and assessment methods meet the needs of students. This includes extended exam times, assistive technologies, and adapted course materials (Self-report 3.4.2.). ULS is committed to ensuring the accessibility of its premises for students with special needs. All campuses are equipped with accessible restrooms, ramps, designated parking spaces, elevators, and classrooms that accommodate people with disabilities. The Office for the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs plays an essential role in ensuring that affected students are supported through individual accommodations and assistance. (Self-report 2.3.2)

Transparent hiring practices and equal opportunity support the recruitment of administrative staff. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) defines job profiles, performance evaluations, and training programs. (Self-report 3.1.1.)

Between 2019 and 2025, the number of enrolled students grew from 3,457 to 4,366. The gender distribution remained consistently balanced (Female: 2,293, Male: 2,073). Academic staff 86 (Male: 50, Female: 36), Administrative staff (Female: 58, Male: 55) (Self-report, 2.1.4)

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts commend Université La Sagesse on its commitment to developing the institution as evidenced by its formulated strategic goals. The university's mission focuses on education, ethics, and social responsibility. It appears to be taken seriously and was well known and referred to by all participants of the online-talks. The strategic plan is aligned with the mission, identifying development

priorities such as quality assurance, research and international cooperation.

The leadership board and academic staff are highly engaged and supportive of the current strategy. A quality culture supported and embraced by stakeholders (including students), has clearly been established. The governance structure is formally established and documented. Responsibilities are defined in the bylaws and the organisational charts. Financial resources seem to be very closely controlled and systematically monitored.

The institution's internal organisation, study programmes and research endeavours appear to be well aligned with the strategic goals. Research principles and ethics are defined in institutional regulations. Some faculties are developing research activities, and cooperation with AUF provides initial external engagement.

Internationalisation is included as a strategic goal, and the internalisation efforts of ULS are appreciated by the experts. The university maintains and fosters a network of international organisations. The goal is to promote academic and administrative cooperation. It is also to promote the mobility of staff and students. However, achieving mobility can be difficult in the current economic and security situation as has been pointed out in the online-talks.

Social and community engagement is evident through outreach activities and inclusion policies. Ethical principles are embedded in institutional documents. ULS clearly values equality and inclusion, both in terms of gender distribution (including leadership positions like deans and vice president) and support for students with special needs.

With respect to student participation, the experts recommend reviewing the rules and how they are implemented, as the minutes of the University Council meetings show that student representatives participated in some <sup>1</sup>but not all of these meetings. During the talks, it was not always clear whether the same rules applied to all faculties<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the minimum eligibility grade, especially for Master's students, should be revised to give more students the opportunity to participate.

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<sup>1</sup> “The statement indicating that “the minutes of meetings show that student representatives participated in some but not all these meetings” is factually correct. However, ULS wishes to clarify that this situation was not due to institutional intent but rather to contextual constraints. Student elections are held at the end of November, and the new regulations on student representation took effect starting in November 2023. Due to the war situation in the following academic year, elections could not be organized, and several elected student representatives had already graduated. Since the most recent elections in November 2025, student representatives now sit in all relevant meetings, fully in line with both the regulations and the experts’ recommendations.” (Statement ULS, Factual Corrections and Clarification, 07.02.2026)

<sup>2</sup> „All institutional rules apply equally to all faculties. In some cases, faculty-specific considerations may require adaptations; however, ULS consistently ensures fairness and equal treatment for students, regardless of faculty affiliation.” (Statement ULS, Factual Corrections and Clarification, 07.02.2026)

## **2.3 System of Internal Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning**

### **2.3.1 Internal Quality Assurance**

According to the self-report Université La Sagesse (ULS) has established a comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) framework. The QA system is embedded institutionally through the Office of Quality Assurance and coordinated by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee (QASC), which includes representatives from faculties, administrative staff, and students. The QA framework is guided by ULS's Quality Assurance Policy, which outlines priorities for governance, teaching, research, student services, staff development, and community engagement.

ULS's systematic approach to QA incorporates nine institutional quality standards. These standards encompass governance, teaching, research, student services, staff development, and community engagement. Key strategies include annual self-evaluation mechanisms, comparative evaluation models, and feedback loops from internal and external stakeholders. The QA framework is integrated into recruitment, academic review, curriculum reform, and research evaluation processes. The institution prioritizes faculty and programme-level accreditations to align with its strategic development plan (2021–2026).

The nine quality standards include:

- **Good Governance:** ULS adheres to its Bylaws, ensuring participatory governance with representation from elected academic staff and students in decision-making processes.
- **Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives:** Institutional and faculty-level visions and missions are periodically reviewed to ensure alignment with strategic goals.
- **General Resources:** Adequate infrastructure, including laboratories, digital platforms, and administrative systems, supports academic and operational functions.
- **Career Development for Academic Staff:** Clear policies on recruitment, promotion, and professional development ensure the growth and retention of qualified faculty.
- **Career Development for Administrative Staff:** Transparent recruitment practices, performance assessments, and training programmes support the professional growth of administrative personnel.
- **Teaching and Learning:** Programmes are designed to meet local, regional, and international employment demands, with structured processes for programme design and review.
- **Scientific Research:** ULS prioritizes impactful research, offering internal funding, sabbaticals, and access to research resources to support faculty research activities.
- **Student Support Services:** Comprehensive academic, administrative, and personal support services are provided, including financial aid, career counselling, and access to advanced learning resources.
- **Community Services:** ULS actively engages with municipalities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote social responsibility and community-oriented projects. (Quality Assurance Policy, self-report, appendix 11)

According to the submitted documentation, ULS's regulatory framework includes bylaws and rules and regulations for academic and scientific research activities. These documents were developed to provide guidelines for academic and administrative activities, ensuring consistency, accountability, and alignment with institutional goals. A range of policies governs key aspects of operations, such as recruitment, performance reviews, data security, inclusion, course evaluation, and student professional integration. These policies are designed to uphold academic integrity, promote equity, and support continuous improvement.

At ULS, QA is supported by a collaborative approach, with the governing bodies, key support services and academic and administrative staff working together. ULS fosters a culture of shared responsibility in QA by actively engaging students, faculty, alumni, employers, and advisory boards. Students provide feedback through course evaluations, academic advising, and petitions, while faculty members contribute through self-evaluations, curriculum reviews, and departmental meetings. External stakeholders, including advisory boards and employers, provide insights into programme alignment with industry needs and global standards. Alumni feedback is collected through surveys to assess programme effectiveness and career readiness.

Technical resources such as IT systems and tools supporting data collection, learning assessment and feedback, as well as QA-supporting systems and tools such as LMS (Moodle), SIS (PowerCampus), Laserfiche, Koha, assessment tools, course evaluation tools, curriculum mapping, Turnitin and Compilatio, support the QA process.

Approved preliminary budgets enable targeted investments by academic and administrative units, supporting stability and improvement.

ULS conducts regular self-evaluations and submits comprehensive quality reports to external accreditation bodies. Several faculties have achieved programme-level accreditations, affirming their compliance with international standards. The university also conducts external audits of its financial operations and academic credentials to ensure transparency and accountability. These evaluations contribute to the continuous improvement of ULS's academic offerings and institutional practices.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts appreciate the differentiated and transparent system of internal quality management at ULS. The documentation shows that key policies and frameworks are in place. Many new structures have recently been developed. The online-talks and additional documentation provided on the experts' request demonstrated that the QA system has been implemented, how data are used in management and how continuous improvement is embedded in practice across faculties.

Teaching evaluations and feedback mechanisms have been implemented, and awareness of quality processes is evident throughout the academic departments. Courses and curricula are evaluated regularly and any necessary action is taken. Students are kept informed. Quality loops are being closed.

While the university already engages with external stakeholders in quality management, experts suggest that involving more academics from outside the university in quality assurance committees

could be beneficial.

The student life cycle is well-managed throughout. Admission, orientation and student support procedures are also described. The Career Development Centre and Alumni Office contribute to graduate employability and relations. It is very obvious that the students' well-being is at the heart of ULS's academic mission.

The allocation of human and financial resources appears adequate. Stakeholder involvement and external assessment (e.g. accreditation of study programmes) is part of the quality assurance concept.

Although the QA policy has been implemented, it does not appear to have been published yet. The experts recommend that the policy is published on the website.

### 2.3.2 Institutional Objectives in Student Learning

ULS defines quality as *“the consistent delivery of education, research, and services that align with its mission and meet national and international standards”* (self-report p. 41). The institution's strategic objectives for 2021–2026 include strengthening academic programmes, launching continuing education initiatives, enhancing student services, embedding a culture of quality, expanding international partnerships, improving communication strategies, supporting staff career development, advancing research, and ensuring sound governance. These objectives are periodically reviewed by the QASC and the University Council to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and stakeholder needs.

To ensure QA across all academic and administrative activities ULS employs structured processes. Student feedback is collected through mandatory course evaluations, which assess teaching effectiveness, course content, and overall satisfaction. Results are shared with instructors, department Chairs, and Deans to inform improvements. Classroom observations by chairs of departments or peers may be conducted to observe teaching practices and faculty members are encouraged to complete self-evaluation forms to reflect on their performance. Curriculum and syllabus evaluations are regularly conducted by Faculty Curriculum Committees, with proposed amendments reviewed and approved through a multi-step process involving the University Council.

Students participate in Faculty Councils and the University Council, providing feedback on academic and administrative matters. External stakeholders, including advisory boards, employers, and alumni, contribute insights to ensure programme relevance and alignment with industry needs. Faculty members are encouraged to engage in research, professional development, and community service, with their contributions evaluated through a structured performance review system.

The institution encourages students to share feedback with their academic advisors, coordinators, or department heads. They may also formally express concerns or requests by submitting a petition to the Office of the Registrar (OR) or referring to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). These petitions are reviewed by faculties, ensuring transparent, multi-level evaluation of student input and concerns. All feedback collected through these channels is documented and used to monitor and implement enhancements.

### Experts' Appraisal

The expert panel has gained a positive impression of the institutional objectives in student learning at ULS. The university has a clear definition of quality in teaching and learning that is aligned with its vision and mission. The teaching and learning objectives are regularly revised using stakeholder feedback, with a particular focus on encouraging student contributions.

### **2.3.3 Study Programmes**

#### External Framework for the Design and Content of Study Programmes

The design and content of academic programmes at Université La Sagesse (ULS) need to adhere to national regulations and international standards, ensuring compliance with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGHE). While private higher education institutions in Lebanon have autonomy in programme design, they must align with guidelines established by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and Technical Committees. These bodies review applications for programme authorization, recognition, and renewal. ULS follows a structured internal process for programme development and revision, involving Faculty Curriculum Committees, Faculty Councils, the University Curriculum Committee, and the University Council.

Despite the fact that the development of a comprehensive national qualifications framework (NQF) for higher education is still in its initial stages in Lebanon, ULS adheres to ministerial decisions, such as MEHE Decision 488, which governs teaching and learning in Master's programmes. Additionally, ULS incorporates international standards, including the American credit system, with equivalence to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This alignment is meant to facilitate student mobility and to ensure global recognition of academic qualifications.

According to the self-report stakeholder engagement is integral to programme design, with input from faculty, alumni, industry professionals, and students

ULS employs an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach, emphasizing constructive alignment between learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment methods. Learning outcomes are defined at three levels: Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). ILOs reflect the broader attributes ULS aims to instil in students, such as professional excellence, critical thinking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ethical leadership. PLOs are specific to each academic programme and align with the institution's mission and vision, while CLOs detail the expected achievements for individual courses.

Outcomes are designed to be clear, measurable, and aligned with international standards. Regular reviews aim to ensure their relevance and coherence with evolving educational and professional demands. The Assessment of Learning (AOL) process, recently piloted, evaluates the effectiveness of learning outcomes and provides feedback for continuous improvement.

Study programmes are designed with a focus on learning outcomes. Curricula are meant to be flexible

and adaptable and are updated regularly to reflect industry trends and market needs. Assessment strategies, including formative and summative evaluations, are employed to monitor student progress and ensure academic integrity. Practical learning experiences, such as internships, capstone projects, and case studies, are integrated to enhance skill development and application.

The approval of new programmes follows a structured, multi-step process. Proposals are submitted by department Chairs to Faculty Curriculum Committees, reviewed by Faculty Councils, and forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee via the Vice-Presidency for Academic Affairs. Final approval is granted by the University Council. New programmes require formal authorization from MEHE before they can be launched.

For all stages of a student's academic journey ULS has established comprehensive rules and regulations, as outlined in the Rules and Regulations for Academic Affairs (RRAA). Admission processes are managed by the Office of Admissions and Orientation (OAO). Students are guided through course selection and registration, with audits conducted by the Office of the Registrar (OR) to ensure compliance with admission requirements.

Assessment methods at ULS are designed to align with learning outcomes and monitor student progress. Continuous assessments, final examinations, and other evaluation methods are implemented to ensure academic rigor and fairness. The university employs plagiarism and AI detection tools such as Compilatio and Turnitin to uphold academic integrity. Grades are reviewed and approved by faculty before being finalized.

Graduation requirements are clearly defined, with academic eligibility verified by faculties and the OR. Students must meet specific credit and GPA requirements. Diplomas are issued upon successful completion of degree requirements, accompanied by certified copies, official transcripts, and diploma supplements.

Regulatory texts, policies, and programme documentation are accessible through the university's website and internal platforms. Students can access detailed information about their academic plans, course offerings, syllabi, and grades through the Student Information System (SIS), Moodle, and Teams platforms. Effective communication channels, including email, social media, and face-to-face meetings, ensure that students receive timely updates and can voice their concerns.

Faculty annual reports and systematic documentation of processes and decisions further support transparency and continuous improvement.

### Experts' Appraisal

The expert panel concludes that the formulated intended learning outcomes are coherent and in line with the intended qualification level. Especially the alignment of course learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes is deemed impressive.

The course content, teaching methods and student assessment are all coherently aligned. Learning outcomes have been defined at institutional, programme and course levels, and training on outcome-based education has been provided. Curricula are designed so that the Intended Learning Outcomes

can be achieved.

Overall, the submitted study plans appear sufficient to show students which courses they need to complete in order to graduate. However, some of the information is inconsistent, and the study plans generally do not indicate which semester each course should be completed in<sup>3</sup>. The experts recommend reviewing the study plans to indicate when the courses should be taken.

The experts confirm that the course descriptions provide sufficient information for organising learning agreements and student exchanges.

The submitted syllabi/course descriptions show that all the expected requirements for course descriptions are fulfilled (course learning outcomes, course type, learning methods, number of credits, instructor, course material and suggested readings, testing system and grading criteria).

The panel appreciates the detailed organization of the student-life cycle throughout and addresses all relevant stakeholders equally. The various applied assessment methods are competency-oriented, and a student-centred approach is taken when designing the study programmes.

Teaching policies and assessment procedures are well documented. However, the experts suggested publishing more detailed information about the study programmes on the website. This would make it publicly available.

All programmes are continuously monitored through a variety of evaluation methods (course evaluation, monitoring of students' workload, progression and overall satisfaction, graduate surveys).

#### **2.3.4 Resources and Learning Environment**

According to the self-report, a list of premises and physical resources and a video provided by the university, ULS offers diverse teaching and learning spaces, including lecture halls, amphitheatres, seminar rooms, and nearly 100 classrooms equipped with modern technology such as projectors, whiteboards, high-speed Wi-Fi, and interactive screens. Specialized laboratories, such as for example the Nursing Simulation Lab, Culinary Lab, Smart Center, Petroleum Lab, Optical Lab, provide students with hands-on learning opportunities using industry-standard tools. Additionally, the university maintains dedicated offices for academic staff, including instructors, Chairs, and Deans, to facilitate efficient communication and advising.

The main campus features a variety of administrative offices and student support services, including meeting rooms, cafeterias, computer labs, and recreational areas. The Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management (FTHM) offers specialized facilities such as industrial kitchens, restaurants, a wine lab, and student housing, enhancing practical learning and campus life.

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<sup>3</sup> „While it is correct that study plans do not systematically indicate the semester in which each course must be completed, students are guided by a detailed **Progress of Study (POS)** provided for each programme, which supports academic planning and progression.” (Statement ULS, Factual Corrections and Clarification, 07.02.2026)

ULS prioritizes accessibility for students with disabilities by providing ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and designated parking spaces. The university also demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through initiatives such as solar panel installations, recycling programs, and electric vehicle charging stations. The newly established Office for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is developing a comprehensive carbon assessment and action plan to reduce the university's environmental footprint.

The ULS Library spans 1,000 square meters and houses approximately 70,000 physical books alongside extensive digital resources, including access to databases like EBSCO and JSTOR. The library is equipped with modern facilities, such as internet-enabled computers and quiet study rooms, and is managed through Koha, an open-source Integrated Library Management System (ILMS). The ULS Publishing House, established in 2018, supports research dissemination by overseeing the publication of scholarly and general-interest manuscripts.

ULS maintains a secure and modern IT infrastructure to support academic and administrative functions. Integrated systems such as PowerCampus (SIS), Moodle (LMS), Laserfiche (digital archiving), and Koha (library management) ensure efficient data management and seamless interaction between faculty, students, and administrative staff. Office 365 and MS Teams further enhance communication and virtual learning.

According to the self-report a structured and systematic approach involving regular evaluations, feedback collection, and collaborative efforts across academic and administrative entities. ensures the monitoring of learning resources and student support services.

Key mechanisms include student feedback and staff input. Student feedback through course evaluations, satisfaction surveys, and direct communication with academic advisors is systematically analysed to identify gaps in learning resources and support services. Academic and administrative staff provide insights into the effectiveness of learning resources and student support services during regular meetings and through structured reporting mechanisms.

**Student Support Services:** The university evaluates its support services, such as academic advising, career development, and extracurricular activities, through surveys and feedback mechanisms. These evaluations help identify areas for improvement and ensure that services align with student needs.

ULS monitors specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as student retention rates, graduation rates, academic performance, and satisfaction scores, to evaluate the effectiveness of learning resources and support services. These metrics provide data-driven insights for decision-making and continuous improvement.

The Quality Assurance Steering Committee (QASC) and other advisory boards play a central role in monitoring learning resources and student support services. These committees review feedback, audit results, and performance data to ensure alignment with institutional goals and international standards.

ULS collaborates with external experts and international organizations, such as AUF and USAID, to assess and enhance its auxiliary units, including the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), Center for Languages, and Center for Career Development (CCD). These evaluations provide recommendations

for improving the quality and accessibility of learning resources and student support services.

The Offices of Campus Management and Procurement conduct periodic audits to assess the adequacy, accessibility, and safety of classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other learning spaces. These audits ensure that facilities meet academic and technological standards and are optimized for effective learning.

Findings from audits, surveys, and evaluations are integrated into strategic planning and decision-making processes. ULS uses these insights to implement targeted improvements, such as upgrading facilities, enhancing IT systems, and expanding support services. For example, the university has introduced new entities like the Office for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Office for the Inclusion of Students with Specific Needs to address identified gaps.

#### Experts' Appraisal

The experts commend the university on their infrastructure and learning environment which appears to be well suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The financial resources seem to be adequate, as indicated by a very well-established and well-maintained infrastructure (as displayed digitally) and the level of satisfaction of staff and students.

However, it was indicated during the talks that the increase in student numbers over the last few years has resulted in overcrowded premises. Experts recommend evaluating the situation and taking steps to accommodate the growing number of students.

ULS offers a variety of student support in academic and non-academic matters and students confirmed during the talks that both teachers and non-academic staff were responsive to questions and that their requests were met with openness and flexibility. The students displayed a high level of identification and satisfaction with the teaching and supportive services both in formal evaluation and during the online talks with the experts.

The university applies a variety of methods to evaluate, monitor and improve learning resources and student support services.

#### **2.3.5 Teaching Staff**

According to the self-report and the Academic staff Manual (Self-report, appendix 5) Université La Sagesse (ULS) employs 86 full-time academic staff members, categorized into three contract types: Category A (exclusive full-time, 47 staff), Category B (non-exclusive full-time, 30 staff), and Category C (non-exclusive full-time with no administrative load, 9 staff). Additionally, ULS employs 276 part-time instructors. Among these, 138 hold a PhD, and 138 possess a Master's degree or lower. Gender representation is relatively balanced, with 50 male and 36 female full-time faculty members, while part-time staff includes 110 women and 166 men.

Université La Sagesse (ULS) ensures that all faculties have sufficient teaching staff through a structured and strategic approach to staffing and resource allocation. The following measures are implemented:

- The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and academic entities, conducts a thorough needs assessment to verify staffing requirements. Semester course offerings are planned in advance to ensure that the teaching load of each full-time academic staff member is met. Full-time instructors are prioritized in course assignments, and their teaching load is carefully managed to ensure that no instructor exceeds four sections per semester, as outlined in the Academic Staff Manual. To optimize human resources, full-time academic staff members are allowed to teach courses across different programmes, provided their expertise aligns with the course requirements. This flexibility ensures that teaching needs are met without overburdening individual instructors.
- If a need for additional teaching staff arises, ULS conducts recruitment on an annual basis for full-time positions and on a semester basis for part-time positions. Recruitment is aligned with projections of future course offerings and student enrolment.
- The VPAA conducts an annual review to confirm that faculty teaching loads have been effectively fulfilled and that staffing needs are adequately addressed. This review also ensures compliance with ministerial regulations and identifies areas requiring additional resources.
- When launching new programmes or renewing recognition at MEHE, ULS conducts a comprehensive assessment to verify that the required academic expertise is available to deliver courses. This ensures that new programmes are adequately staffed from the outset. For example, MEHE Decision No. 488 mandates that at least 70% of courses in Master's programmes must be taught by full-time or PhD-holding faculty.

ULS follows a merit-based recruitment policy, prioritizing candidates with advanced degrees, relevant certifications, and substantial academic or professional experience. The recruitment process begins with a public call for applications, followed by a rigorous selection procedure. Applications are reviewed by a recruitment committee at the faculty level, which evaluates candidates based on their qualifications, teaching ability, and research experience. Shortlisted candidates may be required to deliver a teaching audition to assess their pedagogical skills and subject knowledge. The committee completes evaluation forms to inform the final hiring decision. ULS also prioritizes diversity in its recruitment efforts, seeking candidates with international academic backgrounds and practical expertise to enrich the learning environment. (Staff Recruitment Policy)

ULS employs a structured system to monitor teaching staff performance, incorporating student evaluations, classroom observations, and self-assessments. Students complete mandatory course evaluations at the end of each semester, providing feedback on teaching effectiveness, course content, and assessment methods. Chairs of departments and Deans review these evaluations, along with teaching portfolios, research output, and community service contributions, to assess faculty performance. Classroom observations are conducted when necessary, particularly in response to student petitions or concerns. Additionally, the Assessment of Learning (AOL) process evaluates student performance and learning outcomes, providing insights into teaching effectiveness.

*“The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) [is] dedicated to supporting instructors by offering targeted training courses that address didactic, pedagogical, and disciplinary aspects to enhance their*

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*teaching practices. The CTL organizes its activities in cooperation with international organizations including the AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie), USAID (US Agency for International Development), HEC (Higher Education Agency for Capacity Development). The CTL also offers a support and feedback service for instructors, informed by the Students' Evaluation half-yearly results. Similarly, through its international cooperation agreements, ULS provides its academic staff opportunities for international mobility." (Quality Assurance Policy, self-report, Appendix 11).*

Instructors are encouraged to participate in workshops, international training programmes, and academic mobility initiatives. ULS also supports research activities by providing access to databases, funding for conferences, sabbatical leaves, and reduced teaching loads. Faculty members are encouraged to publish in peer-reviewed journals and integrate their research findings into their teaching practices.

To attract and retain highly qualified teaching staff, ULS offers competitive salaries, healthcare coverage, seniority-based benefits, and provides transportation and accommodation allowances for professional mobility.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts congratulate ULS on the establishment of a variety of study programmes which appear well-equipped with experienced and motivated staff members. The identification with ULS and the commitment of the teaching staff was obvious.

The elaborate quality assurance system acts in support of favourable working conditions and staff support. Recruitment and promotion policies are documented, and staff manuals clarify responsibilities. Employment procedures are transparent. The processes are communicated (e.g. <https://www.uls.edu.lb/regulatory-texts/>)

The university offers a variety of valuable training courses for lecturers.

## 3 Appendix

### 3.1 Statement of the University in Response to the Expert Report

#### Statement of Université La Sagesse in Response to the Experts' Report

Université La Sagesse (ULS) would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Expert Panel and to the ZEvA Commission for International Affairs for the exceptionally thorough, constructive, and positive evaluation report. The University is particularly grateful for the experts' recognition of the strong quality culture established and implemented at ULS, the coherence between its mission, strategy, and governance, and the high level of identification, sense of belonging, and motivation of students and Academic and Administrative Staff at ULS. The report constitutes a valuable external validation of ULS's continuous improvement efforts and provides meaningful guidance for further institutional development.

#### Response to the Recommendations

ULS gratefully accepts all recommendations formulated by the Expert Panel and views them as constructive guidance for further strengthening its institutional practices.

**Experts' Recommendation 1:** The experts recommend reviewing the rules of student representation and how they are implemented. Especially, the minimum grade for eligibility for Master's students should be revised to give more students the opportunity to participate.

**ULS Response:** We appreciate this constructive recommendation and fully acknowledge the importance of supporting broad and meaningful student participation in institutional governance. The current regulations stipulate that each student may submit an individual candidacy provided that their cumulative GPA is at least 2.0 in bachelor's programmes or 3.0 in master's programmes, with specific exceptions for newly admitted bachelor's students and students beginning their first semester in master's programmes or in the Graduate Diploma in Law. These minimum thresholds correspond to academic success requirements and are intended to ensure that elected representatives are both responsible and sufficiently engaged in their studies. Nevertheless, ULS will review the implementation of these rules, particularly at the master's level, in light of the experts' recommendations and to encourage wider student involvement while maintaining effective representation.

**Experts' Recommendation 2:** The experts suggest that involving more academics from outside ULS in quality assurance committees could be beneficial.

**ULS Response:** ULS welcomes the recommendation to involve more external academics in quality assurance committees and will progressively expand such participation to further enrich external perspectives.

**Experts' Recommendation 3:** The experts recommend that the QA policy is published on the website.

**ULS Response:** The University confirms that its Quality Assurance Policy is published on the official website, in accordance with the experts' recommendation:

<https://www.uls.edu.lb/regulatory-texts/>

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3.1 Statement of the University in Response to the Expert Report

**Experts' Recommendation 4:** The experts suggested publishing more detailed information about the study programmes on the website.

**ULS Response:** More detailed information on all study programmes is now published on the University's website, enhancing accessibility for students, stakeholders, and the public.

**Experts' Recommendation 5:** The experts recommend reviewing the study plans to indicate when the courses should be taken and to differentiate consistently between compulsory and elective courses.

**ULS Response:** While it is correct that study plans do not systematically indicate the semester in which each course must be completed, students are guided by a detailed Progress of Study (POS) provided for each programme, which supports academic planning and progression. Furthermore, the study plans accessible on the Student Information System (SIS) clearly specify compulsory and elective courses.

**Experts' Recommendation 6:** The experts recommend evaluating the situation and taking steps to accommodate the growing number of students.

**ULS Response:** Concerning the recommendation related to the **growing number of students**, ULS confirms that a project to build new premises to accommodate the growing number of students is currently in progress. Careful budgeting, phased implementation, and close monitoring of human and material resources are in place and ensure that growth remains sustainable and aligned with quality standards.

ULS once again thanks the Expert Panel and ZEvA for their professionalism, rigor, and supportive approach. The University fully endorses the developmental spirit of the evaluation and remains firmly committed to implementing the recommendations in line with its mission, strategic objectives, and continuous quality enhancement.