

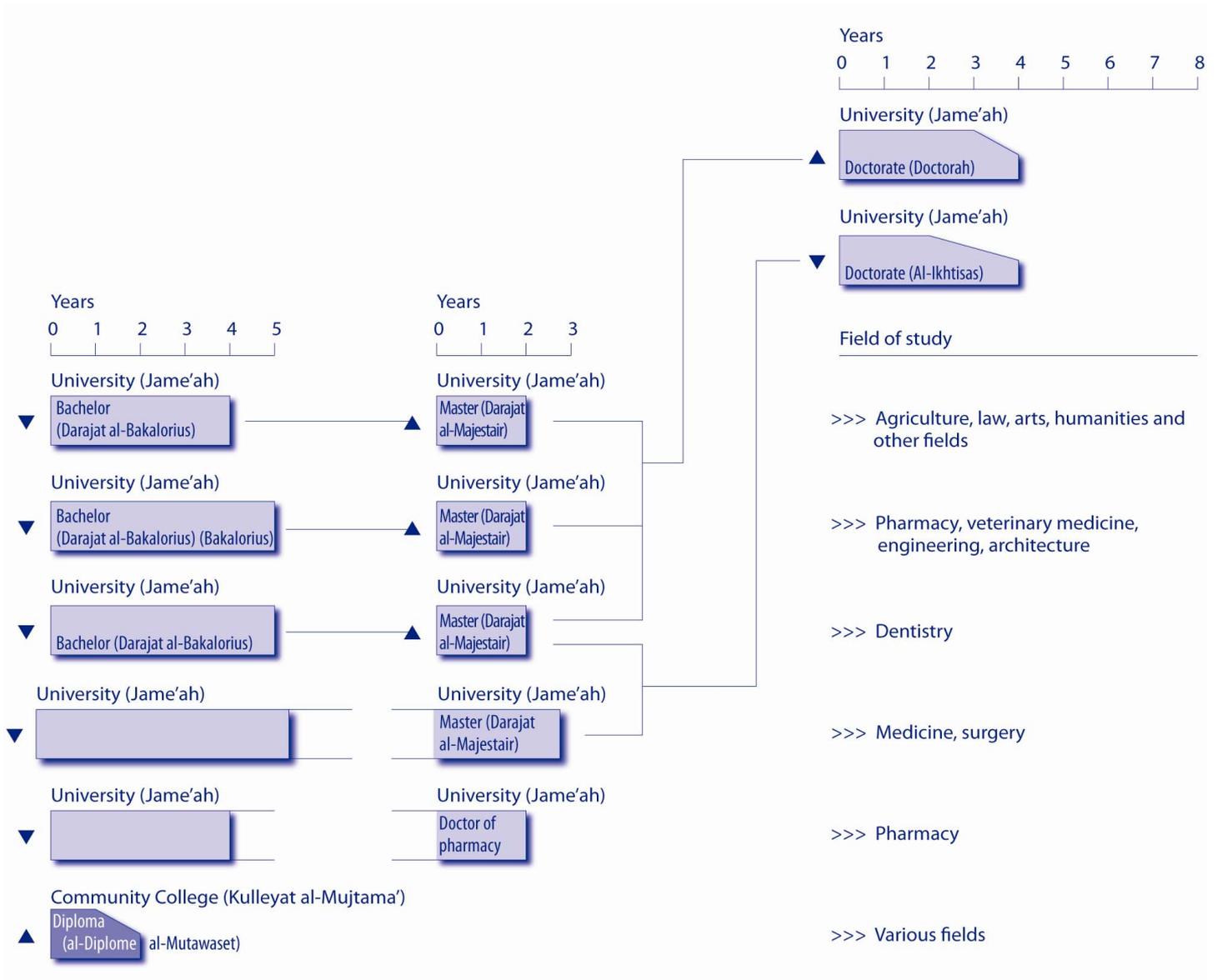


HIGHER EDUCATION IN JORDAN



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The higher education system in Jordan



- Most common length of a Bologna cycle
- Other length of a Bologna cycle
- Programme outside the typical Bologna model
- Professional programme

ECTS
Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

		regulated at national level	decided at institutional level
ALL	programmes have admission requirements	▼	▲
SOME		▽	△

I. Overall description

1. Major characteristics of tertiary education in the country

Legislation covering the field of tertiary education

There are two types of higher education institutions in Jordan: public and private. For the first time ever, one law was issued in September 2009 that addresses both types of institutions. The law, entitled the "Higher Education and Scientific Research Law of 2009," was approved by the Cabinet, endorsed by a Royal Decree and published in the *Official Gazette* on 28 September 2009. The Law was amended in May and endorsed by a Royal Decree and became effective in June 2010. According to the Law and its amendment, the Board of Higher Education is chaired by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and comprises of:

- Secretary General of the Ministry,
- President of the Higher Education Institutions Accreditation Commission,
- Seven persons who have expertise in academia and higher education and hold the rank of Full Professor,
- Director of Education at the Jordanian Armed Forces.

Members of the Board are appointed by a decision of the Cabinet, which is endorsed by a Royal Decree. The Board of Higher Education has a number of responsibilities, including:

- Drafting the policy of higher education and submitting it to the Cabinet for approval,
- Approving the establishment of higher education institutions in Jordan and approving the fields of studies and programmes at all levels,
- Supervising universities to ensure the fulfilment of their objectives and duties and issuing the necessary bylaws required by the law,
- Allocation (distribution) of government funding to public universities,
- Approving admission criteria and the number of students to be admitted each year,
- Appointing the Boards of Trustees of private universities and approving the

appointment of Presidents of private universities.

- Recommending the appointments of Presidents of public universities.

The Board of Higher Education has units responsible for policy and strategic planning and coordination of admission at public universities. The Law also establishes the *Scientific Research Support Fund*, which is an independent unit from a financial and administrative point of view that aims to promote and support research in Jordan.

Types of tertiary education programmes and qualifications

The structure of higher education in Jordan follows the three-cycle system. The Bachelor degree (*Darajat al-Bakalorius*) requires anything from four to six years of study, depending upon the study programme. Students enrol in tertiary education after successful completion of secondary education and obtaining a secondary school certificate at the age of 18.

Bachelor degrees (*Darajat al-Bakalorius*) in medicine and surgery require six years of full time study. Students may also enrol after high school in a programme called "Doctor of pharmacy" and obtain a degree after six years. Bachelor degrees (*Darajat al-Bakalorius*) in dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, engineering and architecture and town planning all require five years of full-time study. Other undergraduate programmes (such as: nursing, para-medical sciences, agriculture, natural, social and behavioural sciences, commerce and business administration, law, arts and humanities etc.) all require four years after high school to enable a student to obtain a B.Sc. or B.A. (*al-Bakalorius* or *al-License*) in the relevant field of study.

The Master degree (*Darajat al-Majestair*) requires on average one and a half to two years of study. Students have an option in a number of universities to obtain a Master degree with a thesis or with a comprehensive exam.

In medicine and dentistry, universities offer the opportunity to enable students to conduct residency programmes that make them Board eligible in large numbers of specialties. Examples of such programmes in medicine include paediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, orthopaedics, radiology, obstetrics and gynaecology and others. In such cases, the time needed is determined by the programme

and ranges from approximately three to four years, depending upon the specialty. After completing the residency requirements, students are allowed to sit for the Jordanian or Arab Board in the specific specialty.

Doctorate degrees are offered in a selected number of specialisations, in some universities and the numbers of students is still limited. Fields of study mainly include education, natural sciences (chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics etc.), social and behavioural sciences, commerce and business administration, arts, humanities and law. Specialties like engineering, architecture and nursing are quite limited in terms of the programmes offered and the number of students enrolled.

Apart from the three main cycles described above, students may enrol in one- or two-year programmes at community colleges (*Kulleyat al-Mujtama'*). Students receive a diploma (*al-Diplome al-Mutawaset*) after successfully completing the programme requirements and in the case of two-year programmes, students have to pass a national exam, in order to receive a Diploma (*al-Diplome al-Mutawaset*) certified by the Ministry of Higher Education. A small percentage of students who successfully complete the national comprehensive exam may be admitted to regular programmes at a university to study for a Bachelor degree. The Ministry of Higher Education issues the "bridging" regulations that govern recognition of the hours studied in Community Colleges to be counted towards the new degree.

Some universities offer postgraduate diplomas (*al-Diplome A'lee*) that require approximately one year of study for students who possess a B.Sc. or B.A. degree. Such diplomas are not very popular in Jordan, as far as the job market is concerned. Admission requirements are easier than those for Master degrees and students may enrol when they are not admitted to Master degrees or when they register for a Master programme but are unable to continue their studies for one reason or another (e.g. not passing the comprehensive exam, not being able to complete the thesis etc.)

Vocational higher education is available in Jordan in a number of specialties, such as administration and finance, agriculture, applied fine arts, applied sciences, engineering disciplines, tourism and hotel management, information management and libraries, para-medical subjects, shari'a and Islamic civilisation etc.. Students who wish to pursue their profession in vocational education join a Community College (*Kulleyat Mujtama'*) after successfully completing high school.

Types of tertiary education institution

Jordan has a total of 28 universities as of 2012: 10 public, 16 private and two regional universities. In addition, there are three university colleges (*Kulleyat Jame'ieh*). As for Community Colleges (*Kulleyat al-Mujtama'*), there are a total of 50: 18 governmental that follow the Al-Balqa Applied University, two follow the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees, four follow the Ministry of Health, five follow the Jordan Armed Forces and 21 private colleges. The University of Jordan was the first to be established in 1964. A public university is established by a decision of the Cabinet and endorsed by a Royal Decree. Private higher education started in Jordan in 1989 and establishing a private university requires a decision from the Board of Higher Education.

As of 2011, about 230 000 students are registered for Bachelor degree programmes in all universities in Jordan. Out of these, about 120 000 are females. Thus the female ratio is close to 52 %. Students registered in public universities number about 162 000, while those at private universities number only 68 000. Thus public universities absorb about 70 % of all the students registered for Bachelor degrees.

The number of graduate students in Jordan in 2011 was about 17 540. Out of these, 8 390 are females. Thus the female ratio is about 48 %. Out of the graduate students, 13 054 students (about 74 % of the total) study for Master degrees, 2 116 students (about 12 % of the total) study for a Doctorate and about 2 370 students (about 14 % of the total) study for a Higher Diploma (*al-Diplome A'lee*). If we look at the female ratios, we find that about 45 % of those studying for the Master degrees are female, while the female ratio among PhD students is only about 34 %. The ratio of female students in higher diploma (*al-Diplome A'lee*) programmes is about 74 %. The great majority of graduate students are enrolled in public universities. The numbers of students enrolled in these universities are approximately 11 150 in Masters programmes, 1 700 in PhD programmes, and 2 370 students are enrolled in the Higher Diploma. Therefore, about 87 % of all graduate students are in public universities, while those at private universities represent about 13 % of the total.

The number of foreign students in Jordan in 2011 was 29 028. Of these, 9 907 are females. Thus the female ratio is about 34 %. The majority of these students (25 360 out of the total) study for a Bachelor degree, while 3 668 are graduate students, representing about 13 % of the total. The ratio of foreign students who are studying for a Bachelor degree as compared to the total number of students at this level is about 11 %, while the ratio of foreign students at graduate level is about

21 %. The majority of graduate students (3 013 out of 3 668 i.e. about 82 %) study for a Master degree, while those studying towards a PhD number 438 and those studying for the higher diploma number 217.

Number of universities (in 2012)		
28		
Public	Private	Regional
10	16	2

Number of students (in 2011)	
230 000	
Male	Female
110 000	120 000
Public	Private
162 000	68 000

2. Distribution of responsibilities

Public universities are autonomous to a large extent, both from the administrative and financial point of view. The higher education law gave universities more autonomy. Universities are entitled to develop their academic programmes, curricula, study and research plans, conduct exams and grant degrees and certificates (including honorary degrees), in accordance with higher education policy. The Board of Trustees of a university and upon a recommendation of the University Council, may establish education, training and consultation centres and provide other services needed by the community. This Board nominates the Presidents of public and private universities for approval by the Board of Higher Education. The appointment of the President of a public university needs an endorsement by Royal Decree. Most academic decisions are made by the Deans' Council, which is chaired by the President and has the Vice-President(s) and Deans as members.

3. Governing bodies of the higher education institutions

- Each university has a Board of Trustees (BoT). The BoT of a public university consists of a Chairman and 12 members, while the BoT of a private university has 14 members in addition to the Chairman. The BoT of a public university is appointed through a Royal Decree upon recommendation by the Prime Minister, while the BoT of a private university is appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

- The BoT undertakes a number of responsibilities, including the following:
 - Drawing up the general policy of the university.
 - Approving the strategic and annual plans of the university, based upon the recommendation of the University Council and follow-up of its implementation and evaluation.
 - Evaluating the performance of the university from all aspects (academic, administrative, financial and infrastructure).
 - Appointing the Vice-Presidents and Deans.
 - Recommending to the Board of Higher Education the establishment of faculties, departments, institutes and centres, as well as academic programmes and specialisations.
 - Determining the tuition and study fees and approving the annual budget and annual report, after recommendation from the University Council.
- The University Council is chaired by the President and comprises of representatives from the various categories of stakeholders, including representatives from the local communities. It is responsible for the quality of the services offered by the university (teaching, research, training and community service). The review of the annual plan for infrastructure and recommending it to the Board of Trustees, recommending tuition and fees, approval of the annual budget and performance and accomplishment reports before submission to the Board of Trustees. It is to be noted that although the above-mentioned Councils & Boards include good representation from enterprises, faculty and department Councils have only limited numbers of representatives from enterprises.

4. Financing

The Government has imposed a special tax, called the *university tax*, which is collected by the relevant governmental departments on a number of services and paid to universities through the Ministry of Finance. The amount of this tax was reasonable when Jordan had just one public university, but now with 10 public universities, this tax is quite small, compared with the needs of universities. In general, approximately one half to two thirds of the budget of public universities comes from the tuition fees paid by students. Most public universities introduced special programmes whereby students pay much higher fees than

those students who are admitted on a competitive basis, in an attempt to help the financial situation. In addition to fees and government contributions, universities have (a small) income generated from services provided to the public or from their own resources or investments.

The Board of Higher Education is responsible for the distribution of the university tax to public universities. There are no clear guidelines for this process and they change from one year to another. However, in general, the number of students in different faculties and new infrastructure projects are taken into consideration. Newer universities are sometimes favoured over older ones, to enable the new ones to complete new buildings/complexes that are needed to match the continuously increasing number of students.

Private universities are owned by companies. Not only do they finance themselves, but they also make a profit, that goes back to the owners. Student fees at private universities are, in general, (much) higher than the fees at public universities. Moreover, they are run in a more efficient manner, as far as the number of employees is concerned. In addition, they often try to spend as little as possible, even in issues related to teaching. However, most public universities suffer from a lack of efficiency, which makes their financial situation more difficult. In general, private universities have no problem in financing, whereas financing at public universities is a major challenge. There are many reasons behind this fact that may be investigated.

5. Students' contributions and financial support

At public universities, the fees required from students vary significantly, depending on the specialties and type of admission. Fees are determined per credit hour, where the normal student load is about 18 credit hours per semester. For students on regular programmes, fees are lowest for arts specialties (around Euro 5 per credit hour), then increase for technical specialties such as engineering and pharmacy, where they are about Euro 20-30 per credit hour and reach Euro 40 or 50 per credit hour for medicine and dentistry. Hence, for students on regular programmes, fees range from about Euro 100 per semester to about 1 000 Euros per semester.

Students who are not on regular programmes in public universities may apply for admission to other programmes, commonly known as the *Parallel* or *Evening Programmes* (see section 7). Fees in these programmes are much more expensive. Students may pay around Euro 1 000 per semester in natural sciences, social

sciences or arts, around Euro 2 000 in engineering or pharmacy, to about Euro 8 000 to 10 000 per semester in medicine and dentistry programmes.

Universities and the Ministry of Higher Education provide financial support to students, but this is very limited. Students who are top in their classes (first in each class) usually obtain scholarships that cover their tuition. Assistance provided by the ministry comes in the form of loans. The previous income tax law used to allow parents some deductions if they have children at universities, but the current tax law that became effective in the year 2010 does not allow any deductions related to educational expenses.

6. Licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and/or programmes

The *Higher Education Institutions Accreditation Commission (HEIAC)* was established in 2007 on the basis of the law issued in March 2007. This Commission replaced the *Accreditation Council*, which lasted from 1999 to 2007. The Commission is autonomous, from the financial and administrative points of view. The 2007 Accreditation Commission Law was amended in 2009 to make the Commission report to the Prime Minister instead of the Minister of Higher Education. The Commission aims at enhancing the quality of higher education, provides quality control and encourages Jordanian higher education institutions to be open and interact with international institutes and organisations in charge of accreditation and quality control. It also aims to develop higher education using international norms and standards.

According to the Accreditation Law, the HEIAC develops accreditation and quality control criteria, ensures that higher education institutions abide by such criteria and other relevant laws and regulations, accredits institutes and their programmes and ensures that institutions conduct self-assessment. Both public and private universities fall within the mandate of the HEIAC.

Establishing private higher education institutions needs the approval of the Board of Higher Education. There is a well defined procedure concerning the application form and documents that should be submitted for this purpose. In general, the application should be well justified to secure the approval of the Board, especially as there are now about 20 private universities in Jordan and all geographic areas and programmes of study are covered by private and/or public universities. Public universities are established, based upon a recommendation of the Board of Higher Education and endorsed by a Royal Decree.

7. Admission

The Board of Higher Education is responsible for determining admission policies, requirements and criteria for both public and private universities. For public universities, this Board also determines the admission procedure and number of students in each university and programme within the university for Bachelor degrees. The minimum grades in the secondary school certificate are set by the Board as follows: 85 % for medicine and dentistry, 80 % for pharmacy, engineering, architecture and veterinary medicine and 65 % for all other specialties except for private universities where the last minimum grade becomes 60 %. The Board has established a centralised admission office where all students apply after successfully completing high school, indicating their preferences in terms of universities and programmes. The application form allows students to indicate 30 choices and the office announces admissions to all universities. Admission criteria take into consideration high school certificate grades, the governorate of the student and schools with low passing rates. As an example, students from governorates away from the capital may be admitted with lower grades as compared to their peers from the capital. In addition, students from remote or underprivileged schools may receive preferential treatment for admission. Members of the armed forces (including retired persons) and of the Ministry of Education have certain quotas and compete among themselves for seats at public universities. Furthermore, the royal court sends lists of students to universities to be admitted in specific faculties. Finally, staff and employees at the universities also have quotas for their children. Overall, students who are admitted under free competition in some faculties (especially the most competitive ones, such as medicine and dentistry) are less than half of all students admitted in those faculties.

As far as private universities are concerned, the HEIAC determines the upper limit of students each university is allowed to admit in each programme, in accordance with the number of staff and facilities available in that programme. It is left to the universities to admit their own students provided they adhere to the admission policy and criteria as mentioned above and to the numbers determined by HEIAC.

Many universities have special programmes targeting students who are not admitted within the regular admission procedure. A very popular example at public universities is the *Parallel Programme*. Admission into this programme is more relaxed than the regular one, but tuition fees are considerably higher. In highly popular specialisations, such as medicine, students compete to obtain seats

through this programme as well. Apart from this, most universities have evening programmes or special courses for adult and vocational education and these are open to the public, irrespective of age, to provide life-long learning to citizens.

Admission policy and criteria for graduate studies are determined by the Board of Higher Education for all universities. Admission to a Master degree generally requires the grade "good" or above in a Bachelor degree, in addition to proof of proficiency in English. For the latter condition, universities usually require a certain score in an international test of English language proficiency, such as TOEFL or IELTS. Admission to a PhD degree requires a Master degree with the grade of "good" or above, in addition to the language requirement. In general, admission to graduate studies in Jordan is not very competitive. Many good students prefer to go abroad for their graduate studies, particularly to Western countries.

8. Organisation of the academic year

Since the first university in Jordan was established in the early 1960s, there has been consensus among universities, regarding the structure and characteristics of the academic year. When private universities were established in the late 1980s, the same structure was formalised by the Ministry of Higher Education and is still being used. In 2008, the Board of Higher Education decided to let all universities start and end the academic year on roughly the same dates, and hence it adopted and announced to public universities some important dates in the academic calendar. Usually private universities follow public universities in the beginning and the end of the academic year, with a slight delay of one to two weeks.

The academic year in Jordan consists of two regular mandatory semesters and an optional summer session. Students are required to study in the mandatory semesters, whereas they may study in the summer or find a summer job. Those who elect to study in the summer are likely to complete their graduation requirements in a shorter time and hence graduate earlier than their peers who do not study in summer(s). Each semester lasts for 16 weeks (including the exam periods) and the summer session lasts eight weeks, excluding any public, national or religious holidays. The first semester starts around mid-September and ends towards mid-January. The second semester starts early February and ends during the second half of May. The summer session lasts from mid-June to mid-August.

Graduation requirements are defined in terms of credit hours. One credit hour is equivalent to

one lecture hour per week in the regular semester and two lecture hours per week in the summer session. Hence, one credit hour is equivalent to sixteen lecture hours. The student load for preparation, solving homework assignments and studying is not counted. As for laboratory work, each credit hour is equivalent to two to three actual hours per week, which the student spends in the lab working on experiments. Again, preparation prior to laboratory time or time spent after that for writing reports is not counted.

In most arts and science disciplines, a Bachelor degree requires 125-130 credit hours. In engineering and pharmacy, a Bachelor degree requires between 150-160 credit hours. Hence, when a student studies during the summer, he/she may shorten the time needed to complete the requirements and earn a degree. Since the total number of credit hours required for graduation in a certain discipline is fixed, students that take a greater load during a regular semester, or those who take a load in the summer will shorten the overall period necessary to complete the requirements and will be able to earn a degree faster.

9. Curriculum content

The structure of the curriculum is unified at all universities. Each study plan includes a specific number of courses that are required from all university students, irrespective of their field of study (these are called *university requirements*), other courses are required by all students in same college (called *college requirements*) and other courses required from all students in same department (called *departmental requirements*).

University requirements include courses of a general nature, such as languages, humanities, and information technology. College requirements include courses needed for the college. Departmental requirements include courses that are needed to acquire knowledge and/or skills in a particular discipline or specialty. Usually a degree requires somewhere between 24-30 credit hours of *university requirements*, followed by a number of credit hours for faculty (or college) requirements, followed by another number of credit hours for departmental requirements. Some departments specify a certain number of hours for specialty requirements, in those cases when a department offers different specialties.

Although there is no specific regulation from the ministry about this, some regulations from the Ministry of Higher Education may refer to such broad components of the curriculum. As an example, the ministry does not specify the particular courses that are needed in a certain department, but may determine the minimum number of courses (or credit hours) necessary for graduation. Each of the university, faculty,

and departmental requirements may include a number of obligatory courses and some elective courses. Very few electives may be totally free, but most of the elective courses must be selected from specific lists.

Taking the above structure and comments into consideration, each institution defines its own curriculum. The curriculum is first proposed and discussed by the concerned department, then submitted to the relevant faculty for discussion and approval by the Faculty Council, then submitted to the Deans' Council for final approval. A committee chaired by a Vice-President involving four to five Deans (named the *Curriculum Committee*) usually discusses in depth all curricula submitted to the Deans' Council and this committee recommends to the Deans' Council the final curriculum for approval.

10. Assessment, progression, certification and degree

Usually each Bachelor degree course requires students to sit for at least two semester exams and one final exam. Laboratory courses may require students to sit for one written exam and take one practical (oral) exam. Semester work (exams plus any other assignments, projects, etc.) has a 60 % weighting while the final exam has a 40 % weighting in the overall grade of the student. Graduate courses require at least one written exam during a semester, and the other exam may be substituted by projects, studies or research. Semester work for graduate courses has a 50 % weighting, while the final exam has a 50 % weighting. In order to pass a course, an undergraduate student must obtain 50 % or more, while a graduate student must obtain at least 70 % in each course. The grade point average for students to remain in good standing (i.e. not to be put under probation) and to graduate upon completion of all requirements is 60 % for undergraduates and 75 % for graduate students. If the cumulative grade of a student falls below these thresholds, they receive a written warning asking him/her to raise the grade in a period specified in the warning. If the student fails to do that, then they are given a final warning and if they still fail to raise the grade, the student will be dismissed from the university, college or department.

Departments usually develop study plans that guide students from the time they enter university until completing the requirements and obtaining a degree. A study plan guides the student for what courses to register in each semester. For obligatory courses, the courses will be shown in different semesters of the study plan according to their levels. Except for the entry level courses (those taken by students in their first year at the university), each course usually has one or more prerequisites. A student may enrol in a course

after successfully passing the prerequisite(s). As an example, English 1 that may be taken in the first semester does not need any prerequisite, whereas English 2 requires a student to pass English 1 before they can enrol in English 2. In a couple of specialties, namely medicine and dentistry, a student must pass one year in order to continue to the next. If a student fails one or two subjects, they are allowed to re-examination before the beginning of the next year. Only if they pass such subjects, may they continue to the next year. Otherwise the year will need to be repeated. Besides these cases, universities do not accredit any prior experiential learning such as work, community or volunteer experience.

In the past few years, the ministry has introduced exit exams to assess the quality of graduates and their universities. These exams were conducted in few disciplines as a pilot scheme and hence they were not obligatory. But the results of the exams were published, showing the ratios of students passing in different universities. In the case of professional specialties (engineering, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, medicine, dentistry, law etc.), a student needs to register in the professional association. Some associations have further requirements such as practical experience or internships. As an example, both medicine and law require students to conduct supervised practice for one year before they are allowed to practice on their own.

11. Academic staff

The majority of academic staff (around 90 %) has Doctorate degrees (PhD) from institutions that are recognised by the Ministry of Higher Education, while a small percentage only hold a Master degree. Staff members who hold a Master degree are appointed with the rank of *lecturer*. When a staff member is appointed after obtaining a PhD, they are appointed with the rank of *assistant professor*.

After five years of service at the university and publishing a number of papers in international journals and conferences, they may apply for promotion. After an internal and external assessment of the candidate's profile, they may be promoted to the rank of *associate professor*. After a similar period and comparable number of publications or more, a candidate may be promoted to the rank of *full professor*. Staff members may be tenured one year after their promotion to the rank of associate professor, provided they have a good record of teaching and community service. Although faculty members are appointed in regular jobs, they remain under probation for at least six years until a decision is made by the Dean's Council to grant them *tenure*, after which they become permanent.

During this period (i.e. before tenure), a regular assessment is made of each faculty member regarding their quality of teaching, research and community service. Part of this assessment is external, by sending research publications for peer evaluation. Tenure is usually granted one year after promotion to associate professor.

The Deans' Council makes decisions regarding the appointment, promotion and tenure of faculty members. However, before that, the relevant departments and faculties make their recommendations concerning all issues related to faculty members. As an example, the quality of teaching and research is first assessed by faculty members in the concerned department. Only faculty members who have a higher rank than the candidate participate in such assessments. Theoretically speaking, the appointment of a faculty member at public universities may be terminated before tenure, but practically this is rather difficult to implement. In private universities, faculty members are appointed through contracts. The duration of the contract may be one to three years in most cases and is subject to renewal with the agreement of both parties.

12. Research activities

Universities not only encourage research, but publishing quality papers is a prerequisite for tenure at the university. Universities differ in their promotion regulations and hence the level and quality of research varies. All universities have modest budgets for research and faculty members are encouraged to apply for research grants. However, the Scientific Research Fund as well as the Higher Council for Science and Technology have research budgets, that are also available to faculty members through competitive procedures.

13. University-enterprise cooperation

The Board of Higher Education, as well as the Boards of Trustees and University Councils have good representation of people from enterprises (industry, services sectors etc.), but only limited numbers of faculty and department Councils have any representatives of enterprises. Overall, the involvement of employers in defining curricula is still very limited.

Several programmes of study (especially in professional areas) include a practical and/or internship component. These are indeed very useful in introducing students to the employers and this often helps good students to secure jobs right after graduation. Universities have been holding job fairs lately where they invite employers to the campus and this provides opportunities to students to meet potential employers. Most universities have established

alumni associations, encouraging alumni and their employers keeping in touch with the universities and their students.

14. International cooperation

In general, Jordanian institutes are relatively open to international cooperation. The best students from public institutes regularly benefit from scholarships to obtain higher degrees (Doctorate in particular) in order to come back and teach at the university after graduation. Some private universities have been doing this also but on a very limited scale because of the cost factor. Where internship or elective courses are part of study plans, universities assist their students to go for such periods outside Jordan, if students have the financial capability to do so. The German-Jordanian

University requires all its students to do an internship for several months in Germany, as part of its graduation requirements.

Universities in Jordan try to promote their institutes to attract students from other countries. They participate in academic fairs in the region for this purpose. The environment in the country and simplicity of life are attractive factors, especially for students from nearby countries. Finally, most universities in Jordan have a number of agreements or Memoranda of Understanding with many universities outside Jordan, for the purposes of academic exchange. Some of these agreements have led to excellent cooperation over the past few decades.

II. Current challenges and needs

1. Trends and challenges

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has been working on the reform and development of the higher education sector in Jordan for several years and developed the national strategy of higher education and scientific research. This strategy addresses seven themes as follows:

- **Governance and university administration** to ensure the financial and academic autonomy of universities.
- **Admission standards** to develop admission criteria for achieving fairness and equal opportunity.
- **Accreditation and quality assurance** to develop a quality assurance system and apply it to all institutions and programmes of higher education.
- **Scientific research, development and graduate studies** to improve the research environment, encourage research teams from varied specialisations and support excellent graduate students in various higher education institutions.
- **Technical and technological education** to revise specialisations in community colleges and gear them towards technical education.
- **University finance** to establish a higher education fund and university student bank to offer loans and grants.

- **University environment** to build university character and reinforce loyalty and democratic practices.

A detailed action plan was also developed to implement the strategy components and both the strategy and action plan were approved by the cabinet.

These efforts led to the development and approval of a number of laws in 2009, amended in 2010, including the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law, the Jordanian Universities Law and an amendment to the Higher Education Institutions Accreditation Commission Law. These laws provide more autonomy to higher education institutions and more involvement of enterprises in university structures. They also reduce greatly the influence of universities on the Board of Higher Education. Pursuant to these laws, Boards of Trustees of Jordanian universities were re-established in November 2009.

Although reasonable progress has been made in legislation, Jordan still faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed. The appointment of officials to senior academic positions (President, Vice-Presidents, Deans, and Chairpersons) at higher education institutions does not go through a proper and transparent selection process that considers the quality of candidates and their suitability for positions. The accountability of executives is another area of concern that needs to be addressed. The quality of higher education in

general, the quality of research and the relevance of graduates to the job market, also need good attention. Admission criteria, which result in more than half the students who are admitted to public higher education institutions by 'special exemption', also need to be revised

and rectified. The programs offered at Community Colleges and the skills gained by students at these colleges should be aligned with market needs.

2. The Bologna Process¹

General Information

Level of integration in the Bologna Process		Bologna-Signatory Country
	X	Non Bologna-Signatory Country
		Bologna Process officially embedded in the education system
		Bologna Process being implemented by ad hoc groups under the supervision of the Ministry of Education
	X	No particular mechanism supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process

Bologna cycle structure

Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process	Another three-cycle structure exists
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Student workload/duration for the most common Bologna programmes			
Bachelor programmes	Another three-cycle structure exists	Master programmes	Another three-cycle structure exists

Bachelor/Master cycle structure models most commonly implemented	Another three-cycle structure exists
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European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Definition of the Learning Outcomes Concept	No definition of learning outcomes at national level
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Level of implementation of ECTS	Another credit system
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Indicative number of hours of student workload corresponding to one ECTS	Another credit system or student workload not in use to define ECTS
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Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS)

Level of implementation of the Bologna Diploma Supplement	No Diploma Supplement issued
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Diploma Supplement issued	No Diploma Supplement
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¹ Source: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. 'State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Partner Countries (2012)', A Tempus Study, No 9, April 2012, EACEA, Brussels.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Stage towards establishing a National Qualification Framework	X	Not yet started formally/not foreseen.
		Step 1: Decision taken. Process just started.
		Step 2: The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is under way including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
		Step 3: The NQF has been adopted formally and the implementation has started.
		Step 4: Redesigning the study programmes is ongoing and the process is close to completion.
	Step 5: Overall process fully completed including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	

Quality Assurance Practices

National Quality Assurance body				
Name	Higher Education Institutions Accreditation Commission			
Status	A single or several independent national bodies for quality assurance have been established.			
Year of establishment	1999			
Main outcome of the review	X	A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate		
		Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality		
		Both permission and advice		
		Not available		
Involvement in external quality assurance process		Decision-making role	Participation	No participation
	Academic staff	X		
	Students			X
	International Experts			X
Cross Border Evaluation: Institutions are allowed to choose a foreign quality assurance agency.				

Recognition of foreign qualifications

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications for academic study	Recognition for academic study by central or regional governmental authorities	
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications for professional employment	Recognition for professional employment by social partner organisations or individual employers	

Joint Degrees

Establishment of joint degrees and programmes in higher education legislation	Joint programmes and joint degrees are allowed in the higher education legislation.
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III. Participation in EU Programmes

1. Tempus

Jordan has participated in the Tempus Programme since 2002.

1. Statistics

Number of projects in which one or several institutions in the country have been involved (as coordinator, contractor or partner)

	TEMPUS I and II	TEMPUS III	TEMPUS IV				
	1990-1999	2000-2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Joint Projects	-	18	3	3	5	3	4
Compact Projects	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structural & Complementary Measures (Tempus III)	-	5	0	1	0	0	1
Structural Measures (Tempus IV)	-						
Total	-	23	3	4	5	3	5

Higher education institutions with highest TEMPUS participation during TEMPUS IV (2008-2012)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JP	SM
PRINCESS SUMAYA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (PSUT)	9	8	1
HASHEMITE UNIVERSITY	8	7	1
UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN (AMMAN)	7	7	0
GERMAN-JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY	5	5	0
MUTAH UNIVERSITY	5	4	1
AL-HUSSEIN BIN TALAL UNIVERSITY	5	4	1

Higher education institutions coordinating TEMPUS IV projects (2008-2012)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JP	SM
PRINCESS SUMAYA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (PSUT)	2	2	0
UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN (AMMAN)	1	1	0
YARMOUK UNIVERSITY	1	1	0

2. Impact of the Tempus Programme

Tempus has made a good contribution towards the reform and development of the higher education system and institutions in Jordan. The most visible and sustainable contributions were in the area of curriculum reform. Through Tempus projects, Jordanian universities were able to develop, with the assistance of European experts, a number of new Master degree programmes in several fields of study. Examples include establishing Master degree programmes in adult health nursing, community health nursing, archaeological sciences, cultural heritage, inclusive special education, water resources management, wireless communications, renewable energy, mechatronics, environmental engineering and climate change, sustainable engineering and others, as well as establishing a new Bachelor

degree programmes in biomedical informatics, biomedical engineering, ICT and media and others. One project assisted in the development of higher diploma in public policy and child rights, whereas other projects have developed service-learning and civic engagement partnerships across the curriculum, established a network for the internationalization of higher education across MEDA region, assisted in reorienting university curricula to address sustainability, achieving sustainable programmes in entrepreneurship and promoting the modernization and strengthening of financial autonomy.

To be able to teach the new courses, several new facilities were established and some existing ones were enhanced. These include mainly computer labs with state-of-the-art professional software, servers to host the e-

learning material, video conference facilities, and specialised equipment for certain disciplines. Several Tempus projects introduced the use of ICT in teaching, learning and in the classroom and several projects developed a number of courses on the web that may be used for open learning. Examples of these projects include *Open Learning Models and Technologies*, the *ICT Learning Pentagram* and *Diploma Public Policy and Child Rights*.

All these efforts, together with the experience gained through the exchange of faculty members between Jordan and Europe, have enhanced the way faculty members in Jordan teach their courses and interact with students. Such activities have equipped teaching staff with a number of techniques that enhance the way they deliver their courses, which will improve the skills and quality of graduates.

Tempus projects have enhanced the quality of the academic programmes through the involvement of EU professors and experiences in the definition of some curricula and the development or revision of other programmes and study plans. Furthermore, these projects also enhanced the methods of preparing for the courses and their assessment and evaluation. As an example, the project *Facilitating the Introduction of a Modern Quality Assurance System for Technical Education in Jordan* has contributed to the development of a framework for ensuring the quality of technical education in Jordanian universities. A number of courses were taken as case studies in this project and the results were disseminated to faculty members concerned.

Jordanian students benefited from Tempus and other EU programmes directly and indirectly. Tens of Jordanian students participated in exchange visits to Europe and comparable numbers of European students participated in exchange visits to Jordan. Through these visits, students attended short summer courses (of two to four weeks duration), conducted case studies and did internships. Through these activities, Jordanian students were able to be exposed to and better understand the European system of higher education, the educational structure in Europe, the institutions involved and to have a better understanding and appreciation of universities in Europe. For European students, these activities exposed them to different cultures and environments and provided them with opportunities to do practical field work, such as study related to cultural heritage and the rehabilitation of historic cities, which would not be possible without Tempus funding. As a result of these projects and the activities involved, many Jordanian students from those who were involved in Tempus projects have already gone to Europe to continue their graduate studies.

Universities worked closely with enterprises in several Tempus projects, which resulted in enhancing the links between academia, on the one hand and industry, services sectors, NGO's and employers on the other.

Through the *Establishing Quality, relevant and Collaborative Industry-Oriented IT Education* project, the German-Jordanian University concluded a number of agreements with the main industries in Jordan and Germany, to allow students do their internships and teaching faculty to spend some time in industry. Such agreements also increased the presence of representatives from these sectors on the academic boards of the institutions and departments, which would improve the relevance of courses to the needs of community and would result in better and more suitable jobs for the graduates. The University of Jordan and Al-Hussein University worked closely with a number of specialised NGO's through the project *IB for Support of Inclusive Special Education*, which greatly enhanced the relevance of the project to serve the community in the middle and south of Jordan. This project also contributed to the training of a number of trainers from community organisations in the area of special education, which would be effectively used to train large numbers from the community.

The project *Developing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Partnerships across the Curriculum* serves to enhance communication between society and academia. It also serves to enrich the students' experience and deepen through service-learning in their local community. This project has had a great multiplier factor, as each of the several hundreds of students is able to do some activity with the community, thus benefiting many thousands of citizens.

Over the past ten years, about 15 Jordanian universities and institutions have established links and collaborated with their European counterparts. Tempus projects have assisted in establishing new links or strengthening existing ones. These links will form a good and solid foundation for future cooperation between Jordan and Europe that will last for many years to come. As a matter of fact, this has a considerable value, equal to or even exceeding the direct benefits gained from projects in their particular themes. In addition to links with the EU, Jordan has also established links with universities in seven Arab countries through Tempus projects.

In one of the projects, namely, *Rehabilitation of Historic Islamic Cities*, a dozen Jordanian students worked on projects and case studies with equal numbers of students from Syria and Europe. Some of the findings of the case studies were later used as Master theses both in the European and partner countries involved in the project. At national level, faculty

members in similar departments at different Jordanian universities were given the opportunity to collaborate more with each other through several Tempus projects. This has indeed helped educational exchanges at national level, in addition to those at regional

and European levels. Overall, one can conclude that the links established through Tempus projects at all levels have had great sustainable value that will trigger more cooperation, in order to make Jordan closer to Europe.

2. Erasmus Mundus

The Erasmus Mundus programme's objective is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education. It does this through three Actions:

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (Masters Courses and Joint Doctorates) - with scholarships

Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are operated by consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs) from the EU and (since 2009) elsewhere in the world. They provide an integrated course and joint or multiple diplomas following study or research at two or more HEIs. Masters Courses and Joint Doctorates are selected each year following a Call for Proposals. There are currently 131 Masters and 34 Doctorates offering offer EU-funded scholarships or fellowships to students and scholars.

Action 2 – Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (former External Cooperation Window) – with scholarships

Under Action 2, Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region, or geographical "lot" on the other. Together the partnerships manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate, post-Doctorate – and for academic staff.

Action 3 – Erasmus Mundus Attractiveness projects

This Action of the Programme funds projects to enhance the attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of European higher education worldwide. Action 3 provides support to activities related to the international dimension of all aspects of higher education, such as promotion, accessibility, quality assurance, credit recognition, mutual recognition of qualifications, curriculum development and mobility.

More information:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_en.php

Number of students/staff participating in the programme

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes

Year	MC Students	MC Scholars	JD Fellows**
2004 - 5	2	0	NA
2005 - 6	5	1	NA
2006 - 7	0	1	NA
2007 - 8	1	0	NA
2008 - 9	1	0	NA
2009 - 10	1	0	NA
2010 - 11	1	NA*	0
2011 - 12	1	NA*	3
2012 - 13	7	NA	1

* Since 2010, EMMC consortia have selected scholars over the course of the academic year, rather than at the beginning, so nationalities of selected scholars will only be known when final reports are submitted.

** First selection of doctoral candidates made for 2010-2011 academic year.

Action 2 – Erasmus Mundus Partnerships

	Undergraduate	Masters	Doctorate	Post-Doctorate	Staff	TOTAL
2007	9	11	9	5	4	38
2008	9	9	2	5	4	29
2009	9	9	3	6	6	33
2010*	16	10	7	7	9	49
2011*	14	16	12	11	27	80
Total	57	55	33	34	50	229

Institutions participating in the programme up to and including 2011

Institutions	Action 1 Joint Programmes	Action 2 Partnerships	Action 3 Attractiveness projects
Hashemite University		X	
Jordan University of Science and Technology		X	
Princess Sumaya University for Technology		X	X
Tafila Technical University		X	
University of Jordan		X	

IV. Bibliographical references and websites

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- Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research: www.mohe.gov.jo

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THE APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH EURYDICE, THE NETWORK ON EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND POLICIES IN EUROPE.

THE EXECUTIVE AGENCY WORKS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE COMMISSION DIRECTORATES GENERAL. FUNDS OF THE TEMPUS PROGRAMME ARE DELEGATED TO THE AGENCY BY THE EUROPEAID DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL AND THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENLARGEMENT.

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Last update: July 2012

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