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## **Jordan**

### Overview of the Higher Education System

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## 1 Overview

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is located in the heart of the Middle East. Amman is the capital. Countries bordering Jordan are: Saudi Arabia to the South-East, Iraq East, Palestine West, and Syria North. Jordan has access to the Red Sea via the port city of Aqaba, located at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba. Jordan is named after the Jordan River, which passes on its western border. The country has an area of 89,213 square kilometers. Jordan's natural and ecological diversity is vast.

Jordan has a population of around 7.93 million people (July 2014 estimate) with a young population: about 56.4% is under 25 years of age, which suggests that an investment in youth can be an instrument for national development. Those between the age of 15 and 24 represent 20.4% of the population. The official language is Arabic, and English is the first foreign language. Arabs make up 98% of the population. There are other ethnicities in Jordan: Acharx (1%) and Armenians (1%). The official religion is Islam. About 92% of the population are Muslims, 6% are Christians, and 2% are Druze.

Jordan is an upper middle-income country, with a per-capita GNI of US\$4,380. The country has limited natural resources, and potash and phosphate are its main export commodities. The agricultural land is limited and water is severely scarce. The country ranks as the fourth poorest country worldwide in terms of water resources. Services account for more than 70% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 75% of jobs. As one of the most open economies of the region, Jordan is well integrated with its neighbours through trade, remittances, foreign direct investment (FDI) and tourism.

According to Jordan's Department of Statistics, about 13% of the economically active Jordanian population residing in Jordan are unemployed. Education and literacy rates and measures of social well-being are relatively high compared to other countries with similar incomes. One of the most important factors in the government's efforts to improve the well-being of its citizens is the macroeconomic stability that has been achieved since the 1990s.

### 1.1 Fundamental Principles and National Policies

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The sector of higher education in Jordan plays a key role in the process of comprehensive development at various levels and areas. During the last two decades, the sector of higher education in Jordan witnessed a prominent development as well as progress evidenced by the increasing number of higher education institutions, enrolled students, faculty members, administrative and academic staff members, and the size of expenditures in this significant sector. In spite of the limited financial resources in the kingdom, higher education lies within the priorities of the country because of the role it plays in promoting the economic, social and knowledge level of the Jordanian citizen.

The laws that govern the higher education system and public and private universities were revised and new laws were issued in 2009. These are the "Law of Higher Education No. (23)" (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo/en/GovPapers/law%20of%20higher%20education%20and%20scientific%20research%201.pdf>) and "The Jordanian Universities Law No. (20)"

<http://www.mohe.gov.jo/en/GovPapers/the%20jordanian%20universities%20law%20no%202020.pdf>". Due to these laws, Jordanian universities have become more independent in managing the administrative as well as financial matters, and the following units were created within the ministry's organizational structure:

- **Policy Analysis and Planning Unit:** it assumes the responsibilities of collecting data and information on the higher education sector, conducting studies in order to support the work of the Council of Higher Education (COHE) and many other tasks stated in the law.
- **Unified Admission Coordination Unit:** it assumes the responsibility of students' admission into public universities according to the principles approved by the Council of Higher Education.

## 1.2 Lifelong Learning Strategy

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There is no national policy for lifelong learning in Jordan. However, Jordanian universities embrace the concept of lifelong learning in their vision, mission, framework and practices. One of the goals of universities in Jordan is "growing to become a leading university among world-class universities, providing students with quality education and learning experience, adopting research program, producing and disseminating theoretical and practical knowledge, contributing effectively in building up the culture of lifelong learning, and improving the quality of life within its local, regional and international community". Nearly all Jordanian universities have training centres that offer programs and specialized courses and training in various subjects such as: computer and technology, modern languages, business administration, accounting and finance, educational sciences, secretarial, libraries, law, graphic design, nursing and others.

In Jordan employability and its relationship with higher education has become a more important issue over the past years. The new graduates will have to be self-sufficient, self-directed and lifelong learners. They will have to understand when they need information and what kind of information they need. Consequently, the last five years have witnessed an accelerating speed of commitments with employability within the higher education sector. In some institutions, they have been developed into an integrated, holistic strategy, most recently linked to the learning and teaching policy. Evidence suggests that the employability strategies within higher education are implemented through this integrated approach.

In this context it is important to mention the Tempus project on "Development of Joint International Master Degree and Lifelong Learning Framework in Mechatronics" (ref. n°516686), which was selected for funding in 2011, with partners from Jordan, Egypt, UK, Poland and Germany and that aimed at developing a lifelong learning framework in Mechatronics.

## 1.3 Organisation of Private Education

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There are two types of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Jordan: public and fully private. There are no grant-aided universities. A private university is established through a decision by the Council of Higher Education, based on an application by the owner, and in accordance with

the conditions and guarantees prescribed in the regulations. It is a legal entity that is financially and administratively independent. As such, it may carry out all legal transactions, such as concluding contracts, accepting aids, donations, grants and wills, and has the right of litigation.

A private university is an independent academic institution endeavours to achieve the objectives of higher education and scientific research. In order to achieve such objectives in accordance with the higher education policy, it may design its study and research programs, curricula and plans, hold exams, and grant scientific and honorary degrees and certificates.

Private universities in Jordan have been operational for over a quarter of a century, and now accommodate about one-fourth of the student population in the country. Facilities of the private universities must meet the requirements for institutional accreditation, and their programs, curricula, and study plans must comply with the prevailing regulations enforced by the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC). Consequently, these universities undergo regular accreditation and audit visits by committees set by the HEAC as well as staff of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in order to obtain their accreditation. The number of teaching staff and number of students that may be admitted in each program are controlled by the relevant authorities, and fines are imposed for any violation.

#### **1.4 National Qualifications Framework**

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The initial work on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) took place through the collaboration of the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Ministry of Education, the Balqa Applied University, the Vocational Training Corporation, the Employer's and Employees' Association and other projects (SIYAHA and SABEQ). The ETF created awareness about NQFs, and provided the technical and financial support for the team, which met frequently under the leadership of the National Centre for Human Resources Development.

The NQF in Jordan is still at the design phase. By the end of 2008 a draft qualifications framework was developed, and the broad descriptors were defined as knowledge, skills and competence. The goal was to develop national standards of knowledge, skills and wider competences between all levels of formal, informal and non-formal education and training. Furthermore, steps were taken to develop a NQF for the tourism sector, which will serve to guide the development of the tourism workforce in Jordan. This NQF integrates lifelong learning approach to tourism education and training based on international standards. It equates levels of experience and learning with formal training and education.

There has been a renewed interest lately by a number of stakeholders to resume the planning and development of NQF for Jordan. This resulted in preparing the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in HE proposal "Towards a National Qualifications Framework for Jordan", which was selected for funding under the first call in 2015 (project number 561895). The project has 9 partners from Jordan and partners from Spain, Belgium, Ireland and Estonia. The project aims at outlining the basic features and standards of qualifications on a large scale depending on the new global trends. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Higher Education Accreditation Commission are both partners in this project.

## 1.5 Statistics on Organisation and Governance

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Number of students (academic year 2014/2015)	
Total: 286,957	
Females: 156,032	
Public	Private
Total: 216,877	Total: 70,080
Females: 128,105	Females: 27,927

Number of HEIs (academic year 2014/2015)		
84		
University (30)	University College (3)	Community College (51)
10 (public)	3	18 (public)
18 (private)		4 (governmental)
2 (regional)		21 (private)
		6 (Military)
		2 (UNRWA)

## 1.6 Distribution of responsibilities

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The **Council of Higher Education (COHE)** is chaired by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and comprises the Secretary General of the Ministry, the President of the Higher Education Accreditation Commission, seven persons who have expertise in academia and higher education and hold the rank of Full Professor, and the Director of Education at the Jordanian Armed Forces. The members of the board are appointed by a decision of the Cabinet, which is endorsed by a Royal Decree. The Council 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,
- Allocating (distributing) 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 the Presidents of the private universities.
- Recommending the appointments of Presidents of the public universities.

The **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR)** is responsible for implementing the higher education policy, ensuring the coordination among HEIs, conducting agreements with other countries, recognising the universities and the degrees from other countries, assisting the Council of Higher Education and providing it with necessary studies. The **Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC)** aims at improving the quality and the equity in higher education in Jordan whether in assessment, ranking, or conducting valid, reliable, and unbiased testing services. It also strives to improve the status of higher education in the Kingdom; assuring its quality; motivating higher education institutions to open up to and interact with universities, scientific research institutions, and international accreditation and quality control commissions; and developing higher education by employing internationally-comparable standards. The **Scientific Research Support Fund** aims at encouraging and supporting the scientific research in the kingdom.

## 2 Higher Education Funding

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### 2.1 Public Education

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Universities are designated in the Law as “financially independent” institutions. This independence, however, is more nominal than real. Financial resources of a public university consist of: tuition and fees, government appropriations in the annual national budget, gifts and grants, and income gained from consultation and research outcomes and results. Governmental funding covers only 10%-15% of the overall operational expenses. Universities are trying to become more self-financed by introducing the so called "parallel program".

In the past, the Government imposed a special tax, called the university tax, which was 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 with 10 public universities, this tax is quite small, compared with the needs of the universities. The situation became worse in the 2011 tax law, when this tax was merged with other taxes, without any reference to universities anymore. In general, approximately one half to two thirds of the budget of public universities comes from the tuition fees paid by the 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 improve the financial situation. The most popular of these is called the “Parallel Program”. 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 COHE is responsible for the distribution of the governmental financial assistance 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 the different faculties and new infrastructure projects are taken into consideration. Newer universities are sometimes favored over older ones, to enable the new ones to complete new buildings/complexes that are needed to match the continuously increasing number of students.

### **2.1.1 Financial Autonomy and Control**

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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. The President is appointed by a royal decree upon recommendation of the COHE.

There are two mechanisms that monitor and control budget expenditures at public universities. The Audit Bureau, which is a governmental unit, has offices at each university and every transaction shall be reviewed and approved by a representative of this office before making the payment. Additionally, each university has established a unit for audit and internal control, which is directly responsible to the President, for the application of the items contained in the university budget including the revenues, expenditures, contracts and obligations. The President and the external auditor submit a report to the university council to be approved by the BOT and then to be endorsed by COHE.

### **2.1.2 Fees within Public Higher Education**

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At public universities, the tuition and fees required from students vary significantly, depending on the specialties, type of admission, and degree sought. Tuition and fees vary also according to the universities. Generally speaking, there are fixed fees per semester, and then tuition that is charged per credit hour. Assuming a student load of about 35 credit hours per year, the average amounts for tuition and fees at public universities for the bachelor degree may be estimated as shown below:

- For students admitted in the regular programmes, the tuition and fees per year are as follows: students in the faculties of humanities, social sciences and education pay about 750 Jordanian Dinars (JOD) (1,000 Euros), sciences 1,100 JOD (1,450 Euros), agriculture, architecture, and engineering 1,200 JOD (1,580 Euros), pharmacy 1,250 JOD (1,645 Euros), medicine and dentistry 1,750 JOD (2,300 Euros).
- For students admitted in the parallel and international programmes, the tuition and fees are different for Jordanian and foreign students. Jordanian students pay the following tuition and fees per year: students in the faculties of humanities, social sciences and education pay about 2,500 JOD (3,280 Euros), sciences 3,025 JOD (3,980 Euros), agriculture, architecture, and engineering 3,900 JOD (5,130 Euros), pharmacy 4,600

JOD (6,050 Euros), medicine and dentistry 7,400 JOD (9,730 Euros). However, foreign students pay the following tuition and fees per year: students in the faculties of humanities, social sciences and education pay about 5,500 USD (5,040 Euros), sciences 6,550 USD (6,000 Euros), agriculture, architecture, and engineering 9,350 USD (8,570 Euros), pharmacy, medicine and dentistry 18,100 USD (16,600 Euros).

Tuition and fees for the graduate programmes are usually higher than those for the bachelor programmes if we consider the tuition per credit hour. However, students take less credit than in the bachelor degrees. Fees also vary depending upon the specialization, and fees for foreign students are higher than those for Jordanian students. The average tuition and fees for the Masters and Ph.D. for Jordanian students vary between approximately 3,000 and 4,000 JOD (4,000 and 5200 Euros) per year. Tuition and fees for foreign graduate students vary between about 7,750 and 10,000 USD (7,100 and 9,100 Euros) per year, depending upon the specialization. Many Jordanian families believe that fees and tuition are high compared to their income.

## **2.2 Private Education**

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Private higher education institutions are owned by a non-governmental body established in accordance with the Universities Law. Not only do they finance themselves, but they also make a profit, that goes back to the owners. A private university has its own independent budget prepared by the president, discussed by the university council, endorsed by the board, confirmed by the board of trustees, and ratified by Council of Higher Education. Furthermore, private higher education institutions must open a private account, independent of that of the owner, in a bank inside the Kingdom. All university's allocations shall be deposited in this account according to the budget, and any withdrawal therefrom shall be approved by the president.

The financial resources of a private university come mostly from tuition fees paid by the students. The university has an internal monitoring and audit unit; its director is appointed by the Board of Trustees based on the president's recommendation. The unit is directly accountable to the President and supervises administrative and financial matters in the university and submits monthly and semi-annual reports to the Board of Trustees. Each university has an external legal auditor who audits university's accounts, provided that the president of the Board of Trustees shall send a copy of the auditor's report to the Higher Education Council.

### **2.2.1 Financial Autonomy and Control**

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University presidents in the private sector are appointed by the COHE based on recommendation of their Boards of Trustees (BOT). The primary decision-making role in important academic decisions (e.g. academic programs, number of students, admission standards) tends to lie outside the BOT. The decision lies within the mandate of the COHE which might affect the ownership. The BOT according to universities law is responsible for determining the fees and tuition. Final budgets should be approved by the COHE. Strategic and critical decisions and power in private universities still lie within the hands of the owners reflecting more emphasis on commercial issues rather than academic quality measures.

## **2.2.2 Fees within Private Higher Education**

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University fees in all majors are determined by the Board of Trustees based upon a recommendation by the university council. Each university has its own fees. Fees are generally higher than the fees at public universities, and vary widely among universities. Private universities do not distinguish between Jordanian and International students in terms of fees. Neither private universities nor their students receive financial support from the government. For students studying for the bachelor degree, the tuition and fees per year range between 1,000-2500 JOD (1,320-3,300 Euros) in the faculties of humanities, social sciences, business administration, and education, and between 2,400-5,000 JOD (3,200-6,600 Euros) in the faculties of agriculture, architecture, sciences, engineering, and pharmacy.

The grant-aided higher education sector doesn't exist in Jordan.

## **2.3 Financial Support for Learners' Families**

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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 anymore. In general, there are no measures that target learners' families. All of the existing measures apply to students directly.

## **2.4 Financial Support for Learners**

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Universities and the Ministry of Higher Education provide financial support to students, but this is very limited. Students who are top-ranked 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. Additionally, the government provides scholarships to top students in the high school secondary certificate national exam (Tawjihi). The Ministry supports outstanding students in need who study at the public Jordanian universities:

- Scholarships for the Kingdom and districts top students,
- Grants and loans presented by the Student Support Fund,
- Grants for the outstanding graduate students presented by the Scientific Research Support Fund, which also provides grants for outstanding graduates.

A Student Support Fund was established in 2004 to finance students in need and those who demonstrate academic excellence. The directives of the Student Support Fund comprise the rules and standards by which the Fund attributes grants and loans. They are based on the highest points the candidate achieves according to the following rules and standards: minimum of high school certificate, enrolment in an ordinary programme of the bachelor's degree or intermediate community colleges diploma, inability to pay the fees in accordance with the monthly income, number of siblings in universities and intermediate university colleges, residence, cumulative average. If a family has at least three siblings not benefiting from the Fund's grants and loans, one of them will have the right to benefit from such grants and loans.

### 3 The structure of the Higher Education system

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The general higher education policy objectives are based on nine pillars defined in the National Strategy for Higher Education (2014-2018). These are:

**University Governance and Management:** enabling the Higher Education Council (HEC) to oversee HEIs in general.

**Admission Policies:** review of admission policies to achieve justice and equal opportunities to guarantee a high level of higher education and the quality of its outputs and harmony with the labor market.

**Finance:** securing and diversifying adequate and stable sources of funding for universities.

**Accreditation and Quality Assurance:** harmonization of higher education outcomes and labour market needs.

**Scientific Research and Graduate Studies:** provision of necessary financial support for scientific research.

**University Environment:** building a model for university attractive environment which contributes to shaping an integrated student personality.

**Academic Programs:** improving quality of programs, plans, and curriculum in higher education institutions.

**Human Resources:** raising the level of leadership in administrative positions and the efficiency, diversity, and excellence of human resources.

**Technical Education:** achieving the aspirations of Jordan's strategy towards the concept of technical education, culture and expansion, development through the realization of technical education.

The general objectives of higher education include: the preparation of qualified human resources in various fields of knowledge to meet the needs of the community; contributing to the development of knowledge, developing knowledge and skills of students, creating a coherent institutional link between the public and private sectors, enhancing the scientific, cultural, artistic and technical cooperation in the field of higher education and scientific research with other countries and international organizations.

The "Higher Education and Scientific Research Law of 2009" applies to both public and private higher education institutions. Higher education in Jordan is provided by/at universities and colleges that are either public or private. The higher education system in Jordan includes two types of studies: academic studies at universities and applied studies primarily at colleges of applied studies and occasionally at universities as well.

The structure of higher education in Jordan follows the three-cycle system:

**The bachelor degree** (*Darajat al-Bakalorius*) requires four years to all disciplines except engineering, pharmacy and dentistry which require five years, and medicine which requires six years.

**The master degree** (*Darajat al-Majestair*) requires on average one and half to two years of study. In a number of universities, students have the option to obtain a master degree with a thesis or with a comprehensive exam.

**Doctorate degrees** (*Darajat al-Doctorah*), including a minimum of 3 years of study.

### **Organization of the academic year**

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. However, the summer session is optional for the students and staff. In other words, students are allowed to study in the summer if they wish, or alternatively they can work in the summer. Each semester lasts for 16 weeks (including the exam periods) and the summer session lasts 8 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 early June. The summer session lasts from mid-June to mid-August.

### **3.1 Types of Higher Education Institutions**

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There are two main types of higher education institutions in Jordan: Universities (*Jamea't*) and Community Colleges (*Kulleyat Mujtama'*).

**A university** is an independent higher education institution, which can carry out academic, and/or vocational/applied study programmes at each of the three levels of study. A university integrates the functions of all of its constituent institutions and units - notably faculties - through unified policies aimed at the on-going promotion of the quality of courses and improvement of scientific research and artistic creativity.

**Community Colleges** (*Kulleyat Mujtama'*) are institutions of higher education that provide affordable one or two-year postsecondary education as a pathway to a four-year degree.

In addition, there are few **University Colleges** (*Kulleyat Jame'iah*) which offer bachelor's degrees in some selected disciplines after four years of study.

### **3.2 First Cycle Programmes**

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**The Bachelor degrees** (*Darajat al-Bakalorius*) are offered at public and private universities in Jordan. Students enroll in tertiary education after successful completion of secondary education and obtaining the secondary school certificate or its equivalent at the age of 18.

Bachelor degrees 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.

### **3.2.1 Branches of Study**

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In arts and natural science disciplines, a bachelor degree requires 4 years of study. In architecture, engineering, dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine, a bachelor degree requires 5 years. Medicine requires 6 years of study. Main branches of higher education studies in Jordan are:

Humanities faculties: Arts, Business Administration, Economics and Finance, Shari'a (Islamic Studies), Educational Sciences, Law, Physical Education, Arts and Design, International Studies and Political Science, Foreign languages, Archaeology and Tourism, etc.

Scientific faculties: Natural Sciences, Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Engineering and Technology, Information Technology

Health faculties: Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Allied Health Sciences.

### **3.2.2 Admission Requirements**

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The Council of Higher Education is responsible for determining admission policies, requirements and criteria for both public and private universities. For public universities, this Council also determines the admission procedure and number of students in each university and programme within the university. The minimum grades in the general secondary school certificate are set by the Council 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 Council has established a centralised admission office where all students apply after successfully completing high school, indicating their preferences in terms of universities and programmes at public universities. Admission criteria takes into consideration the general 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. 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. 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 sons and daughters. All in all, 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, in accordance with the number of staff and facilities available in that programme, the HEAC determines the upper limit of students each university is allowed to admit in each programme. It is the universities' responsibility to admit the students provided that they adhere to the admission policy and criteria as mentioned above and to the numbers determined by HEAC.

Many universities have special programmes for 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 to provide life-long learning to citizens irrespective of age.

### 3.2.3 Curriculum

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Each institution defines its curriculum. The curriculum is first proposed and discussed by the concerned department, then submitted to the relevant faculty for a discussion and approval by the Faculty Council, then to the Deans' Council for final approval. A committee chaired by a Vice President which involves few Deans and may be other relevant officials (named the Curriculum Committee) usually discusses curricula submitted to the Deans' Council and this committee recommends to the Deans' Council the final curriculum for approval. Professional bodies, alumni, and employers often participate in discussions.

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

University requirements are mandated by HEAC on both the compulsory and elective groups. These 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. HEAC often determines 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.

### 3.2.4 Teaching Methods

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There are no specific rules for the first cycle studies regarding the teaching methods. Teaching methods applied in universities vary from one teaching staff to another and largely depend on the nature and content of course and level of study. However, the lecture-based method is the dominant type of teaching due to large number of students in the class. Other techniques include traditional laboratory-based work and seminars. Projects and problem-based/enquiry-

based learning are used in some cases. Lately, many lecturers began to use information technologies for delivering their lectures.

At the majority of HEIs in Jordan, lectures are held for large groups of students. The Higher Education Accreditation Commission sets the rules and regulations prescribing maximum numbers of students attending a lecture for every level and every branch of studies (technical, humanities and social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, medical sciences, arts). Teaching materials such as books and audio-visual materials are commonly used in the teaching process but are not provided to students free of charge. Nevertheless, students are expected to refer to those materials when preparing for their exams.

### **3.2.5 Progression of Students**

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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, he or she is 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 COHE 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.

Most universities impose a maximum duration within which the student must complete all graduation requirements and earn a degree. This is typically 6 years for specializations that require 4 years of study on the average (humanities, natural sciences, business, ...), and 7 years for specializations that require 5 years of study on the average (engineering, pharmacy,

...). Students that don't complete within the set duration may obtain an additional year to do so. If they fail to earn a degree, they are not allowed to continue anymore. Some of them may switch to another department and count part of their courses for another degree. Students must maintain a certain grade average during their studies. If the average falls below a threshold, they obtain an academic warning. If this warning is not removed within a specified time, they get a final warning. Again, if not removed, student is dismissed from the department. In faculties like medicine, if a student doesn't pass a year after two attempts, he/she gets dismissed from the faculty.

### **3.2.6 Employability**

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There are about 25 career guidance offices available at most universities. These offices were first established by a higher education development project funded by the World Bank, and then by King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD), in coordination with MOHESR and HEAC. These offices are responsible for providing career counselling and guidance services in the areas of human and political development as well as an access to better job opportunities through a series of new programmes and training courses provided to university students. Moreover, entrepreneurship and internship programmes are being introduced into universities' curricula.

There are many programmes and initiatives to equip students with the skills required by the labour market, in addition to job placement programmes integrated into the curricula of most scientific majors. Public and private sectors in Jordan have started a retraining-continuing education for restructuring qualifications of the unemployed university graduates to new interrelated or interdisciplinary skills for requalification and retraining in new-tasks emerged in the workforce. This was established jointly by ministry of labour and the private sector. The marketplace in the higher education sector is not limited to Jordan and graduates in larger numbers now compete for the regional and global markets.

### **3.2.7 Student Assessment**

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Usually each 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.) makes 60% and the final exam makes up 40% of the overall grade. In order to pass a course, a student must obtain 50% or more. 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%. If the cumulative grade of a student falls below these thresholds, they receive a written warning asking him/her to raise a grade within a given period. 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 (department or faculty) or the college.

### **3.2.8 Certification**

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Under the Jordanian Universities Law, universities are independent academic institutions and are allowed to grant scientific and honorary degrees and certificates. Upon fulfilment of the graduation requirements, a student is awarded a degree certificate and a transcript. These show the (professional) title of the degree earned, courses studied, number of credit hours for each course, course grade, when was the course studied, and final grade average.

### 3.3 Short-Cycle Higher Education

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Apart from the three main cycles described earlier, students may enrol in **one- or two-year programmes at community colleges** (*Kulleyat al-Mujtama*). A small percentage of students who successfully complete the national comprehensive exam may be admitted to regular programmes at 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.

Diploma programs are offered in large number of disciplines, such as humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, health, etc. Also, **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 catering, information management and libraries, para-medical subjects, shari’a and Islamic civilisation, etc. Secondary school certificate is necessary for admission; however, a passing grade is sufficient for admission. Students receive a diploma (*al-Diplome al-Mutawaset*) after successfully completing the programme requirements. 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.

### 3.4 Second Cycle Programmes

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#### 3.4.1 Branches of Study

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**The master degree** (*Darajat al-Majestair*) requires on average one and half to two years of study.. Master degree programs are offered in large number of disciplines, such as humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, health, etc. Most public and several private universities offer master courses.

#### 3.4.2 Admission Requirements

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Admission policy and criteria for Master studies are determined by the Council 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. In general, admission to Master studies in Jordan is not very competitive. Many good students prefer to go abroad for their graduate studies, particularly to Canada, England, Germany, USA, and others.

#### 3.4.3 Curriculum

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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. The language of instruction is Arabic or English depending on the course.

#### **3.4.4 Teaching Methods**

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Compared to the first level, (there is less students enrolling in the second level of studies. Although the teaching methods in general are applicable to both first and second levels, there are some differences at the second level. There is much more interaction and discussion activities, as it is easier to split the class in small groups to discuss certain topics. Practical classes are an important part of many programmes, and focus on the development of skills and research abilities. In addition, information technologies are being introduced as a way of learning.

#### **3.4.5 Progression of Students**

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Each course requires at least one written exam during a semester. The final exam may be substituted by projects, studies, or research. A student must pass the examinations in a given subject in maximum of 2 attempts. In a case of a failure to do so, a student is dismissed from the master program. There are no rules for progression from one semester to another except maintaining an average mark/grade of 75% in the courses studied and studying the prerequisites of registered courses. A student must complete all requirements in maximum of three years, which may be extended exceptionally by one more year.

#### **3.4.6 Employability**

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There are number of programmes and initiatives at the national level to equip students with the skills required by the labour market. In addition, outstanding graduates are granted scholarships on a competitive basis to pursue their PhD degrees in order to be hired later in the universities sending them. Finally, many of the graduate students are already employed.

#### **3.4.7 Student Assessment**

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During the course of study, students will be assessed through examinations, reports and presentations. Before graduation, the student must prepare and defend a thesis, which will be the basis for the graduation decision. Competency is measured by the ability to use and apply fundamental principles and knowledge in solving problems in each of the mentioned areas, or a comprehensive exam. Semester work for graduate courses has 50% weight and the final exam has 50% weight. Graduate courses require at least one written exam during a semester, and the other exam may be substituted by projects, studies or research. In order to pass a course, a 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 75%.

### 3.4.8 Certification

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Under the Jordanian Universities Law, universities are independent academic institutions and are allowed to grant scientific and honorary degrees and certificates. Upon fulfilment of graduation requirements, students are awarded a degree certificate and transcript.

### 3.5 Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

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Some universities offer postgraduate diplomas (Higher Diploma) (*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 (e.g., not passing the comprehensive exam, not being able to complete the thesis, etc.).

In medicine and dentistry, universities offer the opportunity to enable students to conduct residency programmes that make them 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.

### 3.6 Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

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#### 3.6.1 Organisation of Doctoral Studies

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**Doctorate degrees** are offered in a selected number of specialisations and in some universities and the numbers of students are still quite 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 very limited in terms of the programmes offered and the number of students enrolled.

#### 3.6.2 Admission Requirements

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Admission policy and criteria for graduate studies are determined by the Council of Higher Education for all universities. Admission to a Ph.D. degree requires a master degree with the grade of “good” or above, in addition to the language requirement.

#### 3.6.3 Status of Doctoral Students/Candidates

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Doctoral students are considered students and not employees. Universities don't provide any benefit or privilege to these students, such as social security, pension, etc.

#### 3.6.4 Supervision Arrangements

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The department committee supervises graduate studies issues in the department. It also abides by the graduate studies policies, regulations and the ethics of scientific research. The committee assigns an academic advisor to each student at the beginning of the academic year. The academic advisor is responsible for Introducing students to the philosophy, policies, system, and regulations of graduate studies in the university, helping students cope with the environment and acquire the skills required to succeed in their postgraduate studies, and following up the academic progress of students according to an advisory plan.

As for the dissertation supervisor, he/she is appointed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies based upon recommendations of the concerned academic department and faculty. He/she is responsible for the following: (1) supervising the student's progression in his/her dissertation, (2) directing the student and regularly keeping in touch with him/her, and (3) submitting a report about the student's progression level in the dissertation to the department committee every semester. It is possible to assign a main supervisor and also an associate supervisor to the student. In this case, the associate supervisor may be internal (from same institution) or external (from different institution). In special cases, a supervisor from outside the department, faculty, or university who meets the conditions of supervision might be assigned upon the recommendation of the department and faculty committees and the decision of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

### **3.6.5 Employability**

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Although there are examples of good cooperation between universities and enterprises in Jordan, there are no formal measures taken to facilitate the introduction of graduates of doctorate programs to enter into the job market.

### **3.6.6 Assessment**

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During the course of study, students are assessed through examinations, research, (midterm) papers, and presentations. At graduation, the student will face a dissertation defence which will be the basis for the graduation decision. Competency is measured by the ability to use and apply fundamental principles and knowledge in solving problems in each of the mentioned areas and a comprehensive exam.

### **3.6.7 Certification**

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Under the Jordanian Universities Law, universities are independent academic institutions and are allowed to grant scientific and honorary degrees and certificates. Upon fulfilment of graduation requirements, students are awarded a degree certificate and transcript.

### **3.6.8 Organisational Variation**

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Not applicable.

## **4 Teachers and Education Staff**

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### **4.1 Initial Education for Academic Staff in Higher Education**

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Jordanian public universities launched several decades ago a staffing development program strategy by providing a scholarship program to excellent graduates with high grade point average to the highest ranking universities in the West in various specializations and sub specializations needed in each discipline and subject matter. Upon their completion of the Ph.D. and graduation, they returned to their home universities. These now form the core of excellence in each university. In addition, those academic teaching staff and researchers formed a bridging of knowledge and joint research between Jordan and other universities.

When private universities started to appear the late eighties, the higher education law included an article on allocating a minimum of 2% of the private university budget to be allocated to scholarship abroad for Ph.D. and for research. HEAC checks that this item of the budget is executed fully. Otherwise they confiscate unused allocations to fund the National Research Fund at the ministry of higher education and scientific research.

After teaching staff join their universities, they usually participate in training workshops related to teaching and assessment. This type of training is often mandatory and is considered one of the requirements of promotion of faculty members. Most universities established centers for Staff Academic Development. Such centers offer variety of training workshops in teaching and learning related matters, such as skills in pedagogy, particularly in e-learning and blended learning. This subject of staff training centers is also governed to some extent by the criteria of accreditation and quality assurance set by HEAC.

## **4.2 Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education**

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Public universities have bylaws that govern all issues related to the conditions of service of academic staff. These bylaws are endorsed by the Council of Higher Education and approved by the Cabinet. The bylaws determine minimum qualifications needed for recruitment, broad guidelines for promotion, working time (teaching load) and duties, salaries and compensations, including end-of-service compensation, savings funds, health insurance, social security, etc. Beside this, each academic staff member is entitled to one year of paid leave every after every six years of service to be spent at another HEI to conduct a research project. Detailed requirements for promotion are often set by the Deans Council at each institution and implemented by the respective departments and colleges. Final decision for promotion is taken by the Deans Council, after external evaluations of the research output of the concerned faculty member.

Private higher education institutions often determine the salaries and compensation packages of their staff by their respective Boards, based on supply and demand. Teaching load and other academic duties at these institutions are set by the bylaws approved by the Council of Higher Education.

### **4.2.1 Planning Policy**

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Academic staff supply and demand is a main challenge in the Strategy of Higher Education and Scientific Research for the year 2014-2018. A brain drain has become a major concern of policy makers. Academic staff tend to leave their universities tempted by better conditions and higher

scales of salaries abroad. Policy makers are aware of the negative consequences of this trend on the quality of education. Thus, incentives and regulations within universities bylaws have been reconsidered for this end, and has been recently set in such a way to limit this phenomenon.

Moreover, a plan for sending out teaching staff for pursuing their academic degrees from prestigious international universities is ongoing. According to the acts of the Law of Universities, 2% of each university budget should be allocated for scholarships of its academic staff. It is important to mention that students to academic staff ratio are monitored by HEAC in order to be aligned with the national standards of quality assurance.

#### **4.2.2 Entry to the Profession**

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In accordance with the prevailing law, bylaw, and regulations each higher education institution determines its recruitment policy and specific requirements,. Moreover, standards of accreditation are HEAC's authority, and recruitment at the HEIs should be compatible with standards set by HEAC to ensure that such staff members are counted during accreditation visits. Recruitment of academic staff members in HEIs is carried out through an open recruitment procedure conducted by the concerned faculty in cooperation with the unit responsible for human resources at the institution. Decision of appointment is made by the Deans Council based on recommendations of the concerned department and faculty.

Appropriate degree, documented scientific work, and ability to perform teaching and research activities are among the criteria for recruitment. The degree and academic requirements for specific titles are summarized as follows:

- Teaching assistant: B.Sc. or B.A. in the subject matter with “good” grade or above.
- Assistant Lecturer: M.Sc. or M.A. in the relevant field.
- Lecturer: M.Sc. or M.A. in the relevant field and at least three years of teaching experience.
- Assistant Professor: Ph.D. in the relevant field from a recognized HEI, and published scientific papers;
- Associate Professor: Ph.D. in the relevant field, at least five years in the rank of Assistant Professor, and published scientific papers comparable to those needed for promotion at the HEI or better.
- Full Professor: Ph.D. in the relevant field, at least five years in the rank of Associate Professor, and published scientific papers while in this rank that are comparable to those needed for promotion at the HEI or better.

In private universities, the main factor that is observed in hiring staff or terminating their appointment (academic faculty and administrative) are the HEAC requirements, although some private universities are now trying to hire faculty members even if they are not immediately required for accreditation purposes, but they are distinguished in their field.

#### **4.2.3 Professional Status**

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Academic staff members are not considered as civil servants or public servants. This includes those working at public and private universities. They are subject to the regulations of the concerned HEI.

#### **4.2.4 Salaries**

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Salary scales at public universities are determined by a Cabinet decision based upon the recommendation of the Council of Higher Education. Such salary scales (one for academic and one for administrative staff) are part of the bylaws of the concerned university. There is a salary scale for each of the academic ranks with annual increments defined for that rank.

#### **4.2.5 Working Time and Holidays**

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The working time of academic staff, assignment of different tasks and holiday allocation are all subject to the acts of the universities bylaws. All staff members must contribute to the three main activities of the HEIs: teaching, research, and community service. Number of teaching hours per week depends upon the rank of the staff members. Numbers of teaching hours per week are as follows: 15 for the Lecturer, 12 for the Assistant and Associate Professor, and 9 for the Full Professor. Teaching is usually conducted over the two main semesters, 16 weeks each. Most HEIs pay extra compensations for staff that teach in the summer session. No specific allocations are made for the other two components and are left to the staff member and the department.

Staff members are entitled to annual holiday. The holiday is 11 weeks for staff members in the faculties of arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, engineering, business, education, pharmacy, agriculture, etc. One of these 11 weeks is between the first and second semester, and the remaining 10 weeks are in the summer session. On the other hand, staff members in the faculties of medicine and dentistry are entitled to 7 weeks annual holiday.

#### **4.2.6 Promotion, Advancement**

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The majority of academic staff (around 90 %) have doctorate degrees (PhD) from institutions that are recognised by the Ministry of Higher Education, whereas 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, he/she is appointed with the rank of assistant professor.

After five years of service at the university and the publication of a number of papers in international journals and conferences, staff members 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.

#### **4.2.7 Retirement and Pensions**

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Circumstances relating to pensions and retirement of academic staff (official retirement age, years of service) are subject to the university law and prevailing bylaws. Academic staff members are allowed to work at the public universities in Jordan until the age of 70. There is no discrimination between males and females. Moreover, if the staff member wishes, and if the department needs, he/she may continue to work after the age of 70, but through annual contracts.

Staff members are eligible for pension. The pension age for men is 60 years and for women 55, provided that they have a minimum of 18 years of working experience according to the current Law. Staff that reach the indicated age but have not served for 18 years can continue their enrolment in the social security until they serve the 18 years, and they start getting pension after that. Alternatively, if a person serves 18 years before reaching the indicated age (60 for males and 55 for females), he/she may be eligible to apply for pension but the salary will be reduced proportionally. Finally, for those who reach the normal retirement age, are allowed to benefit from the pension and their salary from the HEI at the same time.

#### **4.3 Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education**

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##### **4.3.1 Organisational Aspects**

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There are no requirements stipulated in the regulations of the HEIs for continuing professional development of academic staff members. However, it is encouraged often and HEIs cover the costs to enable staff members to participate in such activities. Examples include participation in professional conferences, seminars, workshops, short courses, etc. Moreover, HEIs sometimes send staff that holds a bachelor or master degree to continue study towards a higher degree, at the expense of the HEI, depending upon the need. Also, professional development in the form of published scientific papers and other publications is essential for faculty promotion and is supported by the HEIs. All such activities, when approved by the HEI, are considered part of the work of the staff member, and are performed within the regular working hours.

##### **4.3.2 Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities**

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Research work is necessary to enable academic staff to publish their results in international journals and conferences. Upon the completion of certain number of refereed papers, a staff member is entitled to submit an application for promotion to the next academic rank. This improves the salary of the staff member. Some HEIs also offer financial incentives for papers published in highly reputable journals. Such compensations increase with the rank, which means full professors get higher incentive than staff in other ranks. Faculty members may submit research proposals to the Scientific Research Fund, and if they succeed in obtaining a grant to support their research, part of this grant may be for extra compensation for their efforts. Staff members are also entitled for a sabbatical leave after every six years of service at the HEI. This is a fully paid year that they can spend outside their institution to conduct research.

Additionally, if it is spent at one of the distinguished research centers, they are entitled to double their salary from the home institution.

## **5 Management and Other Education Staff for Higher Education**

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### **5.1 Requirements for Appointment**

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The president of a public university is appointed by a Royal Decree upon the recommendation of the Council of Higher Education. The president of a private university is appointed by a decision of the Council of Higher Education upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees, provided that he is not a partner or shareholder in the company that owns the university. Vice-presidents and deans are appointed by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the president. Head of departments are appointed by the president based upon recommendation of the relevant deans. A search committee may be involved in the appointment of a president, but it is not always the case.

The president of a private HEI is accountable to the Board of Trustees regarding the management of university's affairs. Moreover, he/she exercises the following powers: representing the university before all official and judicial authorities, bodies and individuals, and signing contracts on its behalf, managing the university's scientific, financial and administrative affairs, submitting university's annual work-plan to the Board of Trustees, preparing and submitting the university's draft annual budget, suspending the study wholly or partially in cases he/she deems appropriate to do this, recommending the Board of Trustees to appoint deputy presidents and deans of the university.

### **5.2 Conditions of Service**

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A university president is appointed for 4 years renewable once. He is appointed at the highest salary in the salary scale. The term the president shall come to an end upon the expiration of his appointment, resignation or discharge from office. In any of these cases, he may continue occupying the rank of professor in the university at the highest level. The vice-president is appointed for a term of 3 years renewable once, and the dean for 2 years renewable once.

## **6 Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

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### **6.1 Responsible Bodies**

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External quality assurance is the responsibility of the the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC). 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, HEAC 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 HEAC.

## **6.2 Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance**

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Jordan has started a standard system for accreditation and quality assurance. There are six pillars: teaching, learning-assessment, student achievement, student support and guidance, learning resources and quality management. Basic criteria are in place with each university responsible for its own standards. Until now, no comprehensive assessment mechanism exists. On a pilot basis, 10 Jordanian universities have participated in an evaluation of their overall procedures and capabilities. Based on the results, students will be able to make the right choices regarding to which university to apply, and businesses can then decide from which universities to recruit their future employees. In Jordan, private universities are subject to such regulations, but public institutions are not.

Quality Assurance Standards in Jordan are managed by HEAC and centered around: (1) vision, mission, objectives, and planning, (2) educational programs and their effectiveness, (3) students and student support services, (4) faculty members, (5) scholarships, research, and creativity, (6) library and information resources, (7) governance and administration, (8) financial resources, (9) physical resources, (10) institutional integrity, (11) community engagement, and (12) quality assurance management.

### **Steps and procedures for a obtaining of quality assurance:**

1. A HEI submits a request to HEAC in order to obtain quality assurance certificate.
2. Institution eligibility shall be examined by HEAC.
3. If the eligibility requirements are met, an institution is informed with the approval of request.
4. The HEI pays the fee to HEAC, and submits a self-assessment report.
5. The HEAC issues a decision with an approval or rejection within a maximum period of six weeks from the date of applying.
6. After a formal approval, detailed self-assessment report would be presented to HEAC accompanied with needed documents to measure institution performance of each standard. It is not permissible to add or eliminate any formal document or to make any amendments to the report by the institution.
7. The HEAC forms a committee of experts from specialists.
8. The expert-panel reviews the report and develops a schedule of institutional visits to verify the information in the report. This helps the panel to prepare a specific recommendation about the fulfilment and quality assurance criteria at the institution in

accordance with the instructions. A timeline is established for the panel to complete its work.

9. The Committee shall assess the mission and setting the final report with recommendations.

The Commission makes the final decision based upon the external experts' report and recommendations, and issues the Quality Assurance certificate (three levels: golden, silver and bronze).

## **7 Educational Support and Guidance**

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### **7.1 Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education**

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#### **7.1.1 Definition of the Target Group(s)**

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Students in the higher education system are all alike. However, there are different considerations for some students based on their status. In particular, disabled students are eligible for financial assistance and relaxation of admission requirements in some cases. Furthermore, needy students are eligible for receiving grants and loans during their study.

#### **7.1.2 Specific Support Measures**

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Disabled students are exempted from 90% of tuition fees. They are also allowed to bridging into Jordanian universities with scores lower than those required by other students; according to guidelines of bridging from community colleges into the Jordanian universities for the academic year 2015/2016. Moreover, approximately 45,000 students benefit annually from the [\(Student Support Fund\)](#) which is allocated 25% of the governmental overall fund to public universities, within the Ministry's budget. Finally, there are special measures for disabled categories that are determined in the accreditation standards of HEAC, in terms of teaching methods, special courses, facilities, etc.

### **7.2 Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education**

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#### **7.2.1 Academic Guidance**

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It is the norm in Jordanian HEIs that each student has an academic advisor that guides him through his studies, and at the different levels (first, second, and third cycles). Usually, special attention is given to students that have low averages and receive academic warning, in order to help these students raise their averages to an acceptable level through reducing study load, careful selection of courses to study, etc. Students have access to student guide and study plan that are available at the websites of the respective universities and often in printed forms. The learning management system also provides staff members with easy access to students' records with special marks or colors to students that need special attention as mentioned above. Each staff member has access to the records of students he supervises.

## **7.2.2 Psychological Counselling**

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Services for psychological counselling are provided through the deanships of student affairs of the HEIs. These are mandatory in accordance with the accreditation requirements. Furthermore, it is often the case that the office for such services includes both male and female, as female students are more comfortable to talking with a female about her problems and issues.

## **7.2.3 Career Guidance**

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Most universities have career guidance offices, technology transfer offices, alumni offices, or offices that link the university with enterprises. Also, several universities conduct employment fairs and invite prospective employers to participate in. All these activities help connect students with employers. However, this is not mandatory through any regulations.

# **8 Mobility and internalisation in Higher Education**

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## **8.1 Student Mobility**

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The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research have concluded a number of bilateral agreements with its counterpart in several countries to exchange students on fully paid scholarships to enable these students obtain their degrees from other countries. Through this scheme, the ministry supports the top students and grants them scholarships to pursue their study abroad. This matter is regulated through the “Regulation of Scholarships and Grants for Delegates No. (61) of 2010”. However, there is no mechanism at the country level that encourages short term student mobility.

The Ministry of Higher Education hosts the National Erasmus+ Office at its premises. The ministry strongly supports the mobility promoted under Erasmus Mundus and Tempus, as well as the opportunities offered by ICM and Special Mobility Strand for CB under Erasmus+. The ministry is also keen to develop its work and benefit from the new components within Erasmus+ program, which focuses on capacity building through participation in joint projects and structural measures projects to enhance harmony with the European community on different thematic levels.

The ministry has participated in the Tempus project "Modernization of Institutional Management of Internationalisation in South Neighbouring Countries: towards an Internationalisation Management Model (MIMI)" in the period October 2013-October 2016. The wider objective of this project is to favour HE Internationalisation in the ENPI South area by the adoption of an approach that is compatible with European standards and practices and enables development of regional linkages and relationships in the region.

At the university level, all universities are keen on participating in EU initiatives, especially those that aim at exchanging students for study and training. An outstanding example is the German Jordanian University, which is modelled on the German applied-sciences model, aims to play a key role in promoting academic and cultural links between Jordan and Europe, particularly Germany. So students spend part of their study and training in Germany to acquire the skills

which are compatible with the academic/technological/applied advancements. Another envisioned project that imitates a similar operating model would be the Chinese-Jordanian University for Technical Education, where students are expected to spend part of their study and training in China. In these cases, recognition of courses studied abroad or training are the responsibility of the concerned HEI and not the ministry.

The ministry assumes the responsibility of recognizing all non-Jordanian certificates according to its regulation of Recognizing non-Jordanian Higher Education Institutions and Equalizing their Certificates.

According to the instructions of RECOGNITION OF NON-JORDANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE EQUIVALENCE OF THEIR CERTIFICATES, the committee that is in charge of recognizing non-Jordanian certificates considers the equivalence of certificates granted by European educational institutions pursuant to the “Bologna Process” or to the system in force in the country of study, provided that such certificates are separate and that the first-level university degree is a prerequisite for obtaining the second-level university degree.

Jordanian higher education institutes have participated in several Tempus and Erasmus+ projects that are related to internationalisation and recognition of degrees.

## **8.2 Academic Staff Mobility**

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Within the reform package of the system of higher education and for the aim of keeping pace with the related international ratios of student to teaching staff, the ministry is funding a special program for sending out the teaching staff at public universities in order for them to get Ph.D. from prestigious universities in the world. Fund is allocated annually for this program since 2010 till now.

Within the framework of new sectorial initiative in Jordan, the ministry is participating in an EU program named “Skills for Employment and Social Inclusion”, along with the ministries of Education, Labour, and Planning and International Cooperation. This Program is funded by the European Union (52 million Euros) to assist the Government of Jordan to enhance social inclusion through increased employability and human resource development. This project includes actual commitment by all parties including the ministry to have its strategy compatible with National Employment Strategy 2011-2020 and the Employment and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy 2014-2020. Thus, it aims to increase employment rate and job opportunities through enhancing training component within different sectors. To this end, the ministry will develop new procedures that boost training component within study plans, and this entails starting with training-of-trainer programs which will be developed and designed with coordination of responsible bodies such as HEAC and Balqa Applied University.

At university level, the Law of Universities No (20) year 2009 and its amendments <http://www.mohe.gov.jo/ar/GovPapers/20-2010.pdf> include the following article:

“The university shall allocate (3%) of its annual budget for scientific research, publication and scientific conferences. **Moreover, it shall allocate (2%) for delegations aiming to acquire master degrees and doctorates in order to develop the academic cadres according the regulations effective in the university.** The surplus of the percentages mentioned in this article shall be transferred to the Scientific Research Support Fund, if they are not spent within three years of their date of allocation for the abovementioned purposes.”

Short-term mobility of staff is highly encouraged by HEIs. Staff members that spend their sabbatical leaves at reputable universities and research centers are sometimes entitled to double their salaries from their home institutions, as compared to normal salary if they spend this year in Jordan. A staff member must submit a report after return showing activities performed and results achieved, mostly in terms of papers submitted or accepted for publications. If the report is not accepted by the relevant committees, the extra salary will be returned. This sabbatical year is counted towards the staff normal service and promotion at his institution, and the staff receives all benefits during this year, such as social security, health insurance, etc.

### **8.3 Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Higher Education**

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#### **8.3.1 European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development**

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Within the strategy of the higher education sector in Jordan for the years 2014-2018, dimension of internationalisation has been prioritised highly on the scale of competitiveness as well as innovation. This strategy outlined the optimal planning for investment of all constituents and components of the higher education system to create internationalisation in various layers, within the following strategic components: governance and university management, accreditation and quality assurance, scientific research, and academic programs. Different approaches and measures among universities are tailored based on the extent to which international dimension is targeted by universities top management, and within what layers.

#### **8.3.2 Partnerships and Networks**

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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.

Two Tempus projects helped establish “National and International Networks” for professionals and organizations working in the sectors of renewable energy and environment respectively. Each network includes some 80 organizations both in Jordan, southern Mediterranean region, and the EU.

Furthermore, through “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. 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.

## **8.4 Bilateral Agreements and Worldwide Cooperation**

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### **8.4.1 Bilateral Agreements**

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In accordance with the Law of Higher Education and Scientific Research No. (23) year 2009 and its amendments (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo/ar/GovPapers/23-2010.pdf>), the ministry assumes the responsibility of conducting agreements and cultural exchange programs with countries outside the Kingdom. Accordingly, there are many agreements conducted with third countries that set the framework of such cooperation. Cooperation includes exchange of students on scholarships in accordance with the acts of a special regulation that was adopted specifically for this purpose ([Regulation of Scholarships and Grants for Delegates No. \(61\) of 2010](#)). Furthermore, such agreements regulate the recognition of degrees and certificates obtained in different countries, and other matters.

At the institutional level, agreements with other countries are within universities' authority, since the HEIs are autonomous independent entities. However, as stated in Law of Universities No (20) year 2009 and its amendments (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo/ar/GovPapers/20-2010.pdf>), the Board of Trustees of the HEI recommends to the Council of Higher Education in order to approve scientific, technological and cultural cooperation agreements with other universities abroad, provided that the scientific programs and majors resulting therefrom meet the terms and conditions of prevailing regulations.

### **8.4.2 Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations**

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No information available.

## **9 On-going reforms and Policy developments**

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### **9.1 Overall national education strategy and key objectives**

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The National Strategy for Higher Education in Jordan for the years 2014-2018 has number of components, including: university governance and management, admission policies, finance, accreditation and quality assurance, scientific research and graduate studies, university environment, academic programs, human resources, and technical education.

The general objectives of higher education include preparation of qualified human resources, encouraging, supporting and upgrading the scientific research especially the applied scientific research aims at community service and development, and creating a coherent institutional link between the public and private sectors.

### **9.2 Overview of the education reform process and drivers**

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The higher education Law is currently undergoing through changes. Meetings with heads of private and public universities and concerned officials of the trade unions are held to solicit their views and come out with common understanding. Circulars are also being sent to universities and students' councils at the universities for discussion and ask them to write their opinions regarding this matter. Committees were formed to review all ideas and opinions. The Council of Higher Education will look into all available information and opinions to take the necessary action to proceed with the Law according to the legislative process.

The Higher Education Reform Experts are playing an important role in the higher education reform process in Jordan. They delivered seminars over the past several years at most public and private universities to students and staff. The seminars addressed different subjects, such as the Bologna Process, Learning Outcomes, e-learning, qualifications frameworks, graduate attributes, diploma supplement, and others. They also had many meetings with ministry officials and university administrations discussing these topics.

### **9.3 National reforms in Higher Education**

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#### **9.3.1 2015**

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National Strategic plan for 2014-2018 was developed (available in Arabic) during 2015. Draft laws for higher education and Jordanian universities are being discussed for possible approval. A trend towards technical education is discussed. As a result, there is an article in the draft law for establishing a new unit for technical education, and the restructuring of the Balqa Applied University to separate the academic and professional programs.

#### **9.3.2 2014**

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Implementation of capital projects regarding developing technical and vocational higher education.

#### **9.3.3 2013**

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Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates offered grants to the government to be used for higher education projects. Two of these projects are the following:

1. Development of technical education at the universities: This project is funded by Saudi Arabia. It aims at developing, updating and adding laboratories necessary for universities in technical education services.
2. Development of technical education at community colleges: This project is funded by the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi) and supervised by Balqa Applied University. It aims at developing, updating and adding the necessary laboratories to the public community colleges to attract students to join technical community colleges.

Expenditures on these capital projects as contained in the higher education budget and funded by the Gulf were as follows:

Project	Donor	Total Cost (Million JOD)	Amount of Payment				
			2013	2014	Nov. 2015	Total	Completion Rate
Developing technical education at universities	Saudi Arabia	19.99	2	6.8	10	18.8	94.0%
Developing technical education at community colleges	Abu Dhabi	6.44	0.3	2.24	1.2	4.04	62.7%
Total sum for technical education		26.43	2.30	9.04	11.50	22.84	86%

## 10 Legislation

- Law of Higher Education and Scientific Research No. (23) for the year 2009
- The Jordanian Universities Law No. (20) for the year 2009
- Regulation No. (25) of 2010: Regulation on Recognizing non-Jordanian Higher Education Institutions and Equalizing their Certificates
- Regulation No. (42) of 2010: Regulation on the Scientific Research Support Fund
- Regulation No. (54) of 2010: Regulation on the Attestation of Academic Certificates and Documents issued by Higher Education Institutions
- Regulation No. (56) of 2010: Regulation on the Licensing Fees of Private Higher Education Institutions
- Regulation No. (61) of 2010: Regulation on Scholarships and Grants for Delegates
- Regulation No. (59) of 2002: Regulation on Higher Education Students' Service Bureaus and its Amendments
- Directives No. (1), 2011: Scholarships and Grants for Delegates
- Directives No. (2), 2011: Service Bureaus of the Students of Higher Education Institutions
- Directives No. (4), 2011: Recognition of non-Jordanian Educational Institutions and the Equalization of their Certificates and the Amendments Thereto
- Directives No. (3), 2010: Student Support Fund in the Official Jordanian Universities
- Directives No. (1), 2010: Financial Directives on the Equalization of non-Jordanian Certificates and the Attestation of Academic Certificates and Documents Issued by Higher Education Institutions