

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program

2023-24

Name of Institution: Ajman University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Karim Seghir, Chancellor

Name of Unit: College of Mass Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Dr. Hussam Salama, Dean

Date of Accrediting Visit: January 20-23, 2024

Date of the previous accrediting visit: N/A

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: N/A

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: N/A

Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team: ACCREDITATION

Team Chair

Name and Title: Marie Hardin, Professor and Dean, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications

Organization/School: Penn State University

Signature



Team Member

Name and Title: Hyunjin Seo, Professor and Associate Dean, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Organization/School: University of Kansas

Signature

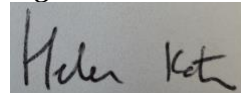


Team Member

Name and Title: Helen Katz, EVP Research

Organization/School: Publicis Media

Signature



Team Member

Name and Title: David D. Kurpius, Professor and Dean, Missouri School of Journalism

Organization/School: University of Missouri

Signature



PART I: General information

Name of Institution: **Ajman University**

Name of Unit: **College of Mass Communication**

Year of Visit: 2023 - 2024

1. Check regional association by which the institution now is accredited.

Higher Learning Commission

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

New England Commission on Higher Education

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:

The institutional-level international accreditation granted by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of UK.

2. Indicate the institution's type of control; check more than one if necessary.

Private

Public

Other (specify)

3. Provide assurance that the institution has legal authorization to provide education beyond the secondary level. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.

Ajman University was founded in 1988 as Ajman University College of Science and Technology (AUCST) by virtue of an Emiri Decree issued by His Highness Sheikh Humaid Bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Ajman. It is the first private university in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the first higher education institution in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to accept expatriate students. On May 3, 1994, it was licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST). The licensure was most recently renewed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) in the Ministry of Education in October 2019.

In order to better reflect the importance of diversity of offered programs, the university name was changed, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, to Ajman University (AU) in October 2016. Presently, AU has nine degree-conferring Colleges, through which it offers 22 undergraduate, 1 graduate diploma, 10 master's and 2 doctoral programs, all accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education. Fifteen of these academic programs have achieved international accreditation from well-known accreditation bodies.

Please refer to the [decision of the Ministry of Education for the renewal of licensure of Ajman University](#). Which demonstrates that AU is operating in the field of higher education.

Please refer to [HE Institute - CAA](#)

4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?

Yes

No

If yes, give the date of the last full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC?

NA

6. Insert here the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

The preparation of distinguished graduates in the fields of mass communication, who are able to keep abreast of the latest developments and new technologies, possess a high level of the professional practicing skills to achieve the national accreditation standards and conducting scientific researches that serve the community issues and achieve sustainable development.

The last revision of the mission statement was during the academic year 2021/2022.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Fall and Spring Semesters of 16 weeks

8. Check the programs offered in journalism/mass communications:

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

9. List the specific undergraduate degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. *Indicate online degrees.

The Bachelor of Mass Communication Program includes three specializations:

-Integrated Marketing Communication

-Graphic Design for Media

-Radio and TV Production

10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

- 126 Credit hours.

- The maximum credit hours per semester is 18.

11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience. (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

- (120 internship experience hours) = 3 Credit hours

12. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered and give the name of the person in charge. Add lines as needed.

Name of Sequence or Specialty

Person in Charge

-Integrated Marketing Communication -- Prof. Shaymaa Omar

-Graphic Design for Media -- Dr. Mervat Medhat

.Radio and TV Production -- Dr. Safa Osman

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:

- First Academic Semester 2022 - 2023: **5754 students (Unit 599)**

- Second Academic Semester 2022 - 2023: **5563 students (Unit 588)**

- First Academic Semester 2023 - 2024: **6128 students (Unit 687)**

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed.

First Academic Semester 2022 – 2023

Major	Students (Male)	Student (Female)	Total
Integrated Marketing Communication	90	139	229
Graphic Design for Media	67	151	218
Radio & Television Production	54	67	121
Total	211	357	568

Second Academic Semester 2022 - 2023

Major	Students (Male)	Student (Female)	Total
Integrated Marketing Communication	83	138	221
Graphic Design for Media	73	147	220
Radio & Television Production	65	64	129
Total	221	349	570

First Academic Semester 2023 - 2024

Major	Students (Male)	Student (Female)	Total
Integrated Marketing Communication	135	151	286
Graphic Design for Media	77	146	223
Radio & Television Production	79	78	157
Total	291	375	666

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2024 visits. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

Please refer to [this folder](#)

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2023–2024 academic year:

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

Budget Item	2023 - 2024 (Self-study year)
Teaching salaries (full time)	\$1,786,615
Instructors and Teaching Assistants	\$305,385
Total	\$2,092,000

Please refer to the [College Budget 2023-2024](#)

17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.

S.N.	Load Employee Name	Rank
1	Hosam Ali Ali Slama	Associate Professor
2	Emad Eldin Tag Elsir Fageer Omer	Associate Professor
3	Sang Lee	Professor
4	Tarek Ismail Mohamed Abdellatif	Professor
5	Maha Abdelmegid Salah A. Attia	Professor
6	Shaymaa Elsaid Salim Omar	Professor
7	Safa Mahmoud Osman Mohamed Darwish	Associate Professor
8	Mustafa Hameed Kadhem	Associate Professor
9	Khaled Mostafa Ahmed Mohamed	Associate Professor
10	Amal Mohamed Nabil A. A. Badr	Associate Professor
11	Nasrelden Abdulgader Ali	Associate Professor
12	Nidal Mahmoud Al Said	Assistant Professor
13	Alya Anter	Assistant Professor
14	Dina Elkhattat	Assistant Professor
15	Mervat Mohamed	Assistant Professor
16	Samar Ben Romdhane	Assistant Professor
17	Layal Ayoub	Instructor
18	Manar Dhaher	Instructor
19	Asmaa Altemnah	Teaching Assistant

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2023. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2023. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2024, also provide the spring 2024 adjunct list in the updated information.)

S.N	Name	Rank
1	Mohammed Ahmed Abdelfattah*	Assistant Professor
2	Ruchi Agarwal*	Associate Professor
3	Rania Aalia-Hamwy*	Assistant Professor

* An updated list of adjunct faculty will be provided during the term preceding the site visit and during the site visit.

19. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates from the unit.

2022-23 academic year: 119

2021-22 academic year: 150

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Ajman University, founded in 1988, is the first private university in the Gulf Cooperation Council and the first university in the UAE to accept expatriate students. The university has nine degree-conferring colleges offering 22 undergraduate programs, a graduate diploma, 10 master's and two doctoral programs. All are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education, and some are internationally accredited. In recent years, the university has aggressively moved to increase its international stature. For instance, its first QS World Ranking was in 2018; it is now ranked at #551 globally, and #22 in the Arab region, where there are more than 120 institutions of higher education. In 2020, Ajman University became one of the first six higher education institutions in the world to receive global accreditation from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), based in the U.K. The university currently enrolls more than 6,000 students, almost 700 of whom are enrolled in the College of Mass Communication. The College was founded during the 2000-2001 academic year. It has undergone several additional reorganizations (and names) since then and is now the College of Mass Communication. Degrees offered by the College, including specializations and minors, have also evolved over the years. In 2021, the program was re-accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education in offering a Bachelor of Arts program in Mass Communication with the following specializations: Integrated Marketing Communication, Graphic Design for Media, and Radio and TV Production.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, meaningful short-term measurements, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.**

The College's mission statement is: *The preparation of distinguished graduates in the fields of mass communication, who are able to keep abreast of the latest developments and new technologies, possess a high level of professional practicing skills to achieve the national accreditation standards and conducting scientific researches that serve the community issues and achieve sustainable development.* Its vision is: *Towards an academic environment that stimulates innovation to prepare graduates who are able to compete in the labor market in line with the national and international accreditation standards.*

The College's 2022-2027 strategic plan is designed to align with that of the university. The College's plan has six strategic goals, each with meaningful objectives, KPIs and strategic, short-term initiatives. The goals are:

1. Strengthen academic excellence
2. Boost the excellence and influence of research
3. Craft a student-centered development pathway that leads to a successful career in the mass communication field
4. Foster meaningful community relationships
5. Build a diverse and brilliant student body
6. Enhance financial sustainability

The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

See the College's vision, mission and strategic plan here: <https://www.ajman.ac.ae/en/masscom/vision-and-mission>

Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented, plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?

The plan is not detailed in terms of its references to technology or pedagogical trends, although it certainly addresses the need for ongoing improvement in terms of professional career preparation for students (For instance, one initiative under Goal 3 is to secure feedback from industry partners and employers to improve experiential learning.)

The self-study reports that the leadership team in the College has responsibility to meet goals outlined in the plan. The Dean is annually expected to demonstrate that the College is meeting KPIs that align with the university and College plan. Where the College is not meeting its KPIs, he must present an improvement plan.

There is ample evidence that the strategic plan does not live only “on paper,” but is played out in the life of the College, in its priorities and activities. One simple example is the initiative, under the objective, “Diversify the Student Body” (Goal 5), to “Expand cultural celebration activities within the College of Mass Communication.” The College’s Cultural Forum, held last year, is an example of the way this initiative has been realized.

(b) The unit’s administration provides effective leadership within the unit and effectively represents it in dealings with university administration outside the unit and constituencies external to the university.

The College is led by Dean Hussam Salama. Dr. Emad Eddin Omar serves as program coordinator and Department Head, reporting to the Dean. The Dean also relies on a team of professors to oversee essential operations, such as assessment, career preparation for students and course offerings, in the College.

Characterize in depth the leadership of the unit as an agent for progress, advocate for the unit’s fields of study within the university and aggressive connector with alumni. What significant achievements can be attributed to the leader? Has the leader built partnerships within the university? Is the leader seen as a strong advocate on matters of diversity, inclusion and equity? Is faculty and student diversity improving? Do scholars and professionals work collaboratively? Is creativity in curriculum, teaching and research sought and rewarded? Is the leader driving forward the curriculum (while respecting faculty governance and required process) to keep up with a rapidly changing media world?

Conversations with stakeholders across the university and with alumni and professionals on site indicate that the Dean is seen as dynamic and well regarded. His faculty describe him as very friendly, supportive, a good listener, open-minded, inspiring, and a sincere advocate for students. He is expected to teach 6 credits each semester in addition to leading the College and managing its budget. He is a familiar face to many students in the College, and his leadership team is comfortable sharing ideas and leading initiatives with his support. He is well-versed on contemporary issues and technologies such as AI and immersive realities, and on issues in higher education in general. He is seen as an effective leader of a unit whose students and faculty are considered assets for the university’s internal and external marketing and communication.

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).

The University is not currently listed on the database.

(d) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts them annually in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its websites.

The data on enrollment, retention, progression and graduation rates for each college at AU is gathered and disseminated at the university level. It is published in a Fact Book that is publicly available for download (https://www.ajman.ac.ae/upload/docs/AU_Fact_Book_2021-20221.pdf?v=1696509306). The most current publicly available data at the college level is for the 2021-22 academic year. It indicates that the College of Mass Communication has retention and graduation rates that are comparable with those in other units across the university. For instance, AU's progression rate (the percentage of students from the previous fall semester with a grade-point-average that allows them to continue progression in the degree program) in the 2021-22 AY was 95%, compared to 92% university-wide. Its graduation rate in the same time period was 97%, compared to a university-wide rate of 94%.

On indicators (e), (f) and (g) the site team should make sure the unit operates within accepted academic norms and need only report in detail on extraordinary situations, cases or variances from policy.

(e) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.

The university's comprehensive Faculty Manual provides guidance for the unit. Policies and procedures include those that govern academic freedom and faculty roles and responsibilities. Faculty roles include the expectation that they participate in development of curricula; participate in the governance of the unit and institution; review and update instruction; and recruit faculty. The university defines academic freedom as *"the right to unrestricted exposition of subjects within one's field in a responsible manner. AU supports academic freedom through a professionally responsible manner with full compliance of the laws, rules and regulations of the United Arab Emirates. This includes the right to unrestricted scholarly research and publication of findings and expression of ideas and beliefs within the limits imposed by the acknowledgment of teaching, learning and academic research activities directly related to one's discipline consistent with the relevant Code of Conduct."*

The College has a roster of faculty-composed committees that includes those dedicated to research, advising, institutional effectiveness and events and activities.

(f) The institution and/or the unit defines and uses a process for selecting and evaluating its administrators.

The university's Policies and Procedures Manual contains a Talent Acquisition Policy that applies to the selection and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators. The self-study provided further detail on how the policy is implemented.

(g) Faculty, staff and students have avenues to express concerns and have them addressed.

The university's Faculty Handbook provides guidance for faculty members to file a complaint, grievance or appeal. Its Policies and Procedures Manual contains guidance for staff and student complaints, grievances and appeals. These policies are applicable to the College.

SUMMARY:

The College of Mass Communication is a well-run unit of the university, with effective, supportive leadership, a robust committee system and faculty members who are active in curricular development, assessment and other elements of the student-learning experience. Its mission and vision are shared by stakeholders and its strategic plan, aligned with that of AU, is a guide for its priorities.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Students in the unit complete academic requirements for a baccalaureate degree that meet the liberal arts and sciences/general education requirements of the institution.

Ajman University requires all students to complete 30 credit hours of general education coursework to develop a breadth of knowledge and critical thinking external to the College. This includes 15 credit hours of “obligatory courses” on Islamic culture, Emirates society, English language, innovation & entrepreneurship, and Arabic writing. Another 15 credit hours of elective general education courses allow students to choose a course in each of five categories (humanities and arts, natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, technology and quantitative science, and data analysis).

In addition to the university’s general education requirements, there are 39 credit hours of “supporting requirements” that add courses on economics, human rights, research methods and techniques, digital photography, critical & creative thinking, research methods & techniques, and social psychology, among others.

College of Mass Communication requirements fill out the broad aspects of the curriculum with 21 required credit hours providing an overview of the field for students. These courses include Introduction to Radio & TV Production, Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication, Introduction to Graphic Design, English for the Media, Arabic Language for the Media, Media Laws & Ethics, and Communication Theories.

Finally, students choose an area of specialization within the College. The three options are Integrated Marketing Communication, Radio & Television Production, and Graphic Design for Media. Within each specialization, students complete 30 credit hours of “compulsory major requirements” and six credit hours of “elective major requirements” chosen from a list in each area of specialization. These courses are the professional practice experiences and labs that provide the majority of the skills-building aspects of the curriculum.

The overall structure directs students along a path of developing a strong liberal arts and sciences background in their college careers with application of their breadth of learning in final years of study. Students must earn 126 student credit hours to graduate, including 36 student credit hours in the major. The university has a systematic process of managing students through coursework to promote on-time graduation and compliance with College requirements. Faculty advisors follow a schedule of meetings and interactions with students to ensure progress and help solve curriculum issues.

(b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.

The College actively works to balance theoretical and conceptual courses with professional skills courses in the curriculum. All students take five required departmental courses that are theoretical/conceptual in structure. Students experience a split of skills and theory instruction in the courses required for their major. Skills courses that match to a career path are more prominent in the last two years of the program. A graduation project is required for each specialization.

Required theoretical core courses include:

- Principles of Economics

- Communication Skills in English
- Knowledge Society
- Human Rights in Modern Time
- Foresight Future
- Life Coaching
- Intercultural Coexistence
- Critical & Creative Thinking
- Research Methods & Techniques
- Social Psychology
- Regional & International Organizations
- Public Opinion
- Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication
- English for the Media
- Arabic Language for the Media
- Media Laws & Ethics
- Communication Theories

Other required courses for all students include:

- Digital Photography
- Introduction to Radio & TV Production
- Introduction to Graphic Design

Students must choose one of three specializations. Each specialization requires 30 credit hours of required courses and six credit hours of elective courses in the specialization. One required course in each specialization is a graduation project.

The College integrates the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies into courses across the curriculum. The College provided an extensive chart to indicate where each of these values and competencies is taught, providing a visual indication of the scope of the integration into the curriculum. Instruction focused on multiculturalism and culturally proficient communication were primarily in the general education courses with additional elements found in the compulsory major required courses and specialization courses. Principles and laws of free speech and press in a global context were the core of the Media Laws & Ethics course, though were also spread across other departmental and specialization classes.

Two areas of core differences in the UAE stand out compared to the standards and legal constraints in the United States. One is multiculturalism and the other is speech and press freedoms. As such, this section provides more detail on the College and university approach to these areas.

Instruction on culturally proficient communication is structured as multicultural respect and understanding. The College has students from 28 nationalities and holds an annual event where students share their own culture and perspectives. The College actively works to ensure required courses expose students to multicultural perspectives. The multicultural approach in general education courses includes Islamic culture, Arabic Writing, Emirates Society and English Language. Electives offered as general education courses expand this through Islamic civilization, world literature and/or Francophone language, culture and society offerings. The College “supporting requirements” also include a human rights course and a course titled “Intercultural Coexistence.” These courses provide examples of the College’s approach to more theoretical instruction. The syllabus for the intercultural course covers concepts surrounding world cultures, coexistence and dialogue between peoples and civilizations with a focus on tolerance, cultural openness, cultural pluralism and areas of challenges in the UAE. The

reading list for the course engages students in a wide variety of perspectives related to the Middle East and the UAE in particular. The readings are split between English and Arabic titles and authors. The individual assignment is a paper on “monitoring tolerance initiatives in the UAE” and the group assignment is a culture case study of a UAE community. A third assignment requires students to attend and report on a cultural event. These concepts are applied in practice in the specialization courses within the College.

The free speech and free press elements fit the standards for the UAE and the region. The university has a policy on freedom of speech. Faculty and administrators said this policy allows individuals to express concerns within the boundaries of the cultural norms and community traditions of the region and without being harsh in their presentation. This is discussed extensively in courses, including guiding students on how they might best express their views. Faculty members and administrators said it is a process and students are encouraged to ask questions. The culture in the region encourages more indirect forms of expression with individuals combining indirect criticism with praise. The primary required course in this area – ETH301: Media Laws & Ethics – has clear learning outcomes recognizing the laws and professional/ethical controls placed on mass media. The five course learning outcomes stated in the syllabus are:

- Recognize the concept of ethical charters and legislation governing the practice of the media profession, its theoretical foundations, and its importance.
- Distinguish the professional and ethical controls for practicing digital media, the challenges they face, and how to deal with them.
- Discuss the functions and tasks performed by national media councils as well as media unions and professional associations.
- Review the laws, legislation, and regulations of the media in the United Arab Emirates.
- Analyze the types of professional violations and crimes related to media work and their various penalties.

Students engage with the content through two assignments reviewing college student awareness of the ethics of media work and social media use respectively. They also complete a project reviewing cases/examples of media practices given the UAE controls and restrictions.

All the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies were evident across the course syllabi and learning outcomes. A closer examination of individual course syllabi provided a better understanding of the depth of instruction for each value and competency. These are found primarily among the department compulsory courses, which include radio/TV production, integrated marketing communication, graphic design, English for media, Arabic for media, media law and ethics, and communication theories. In all cases, the syllabi indicated thoughtful readings, examinations on concepts and practical application of the concepts through individual and/or group projects that involved writing and critical thinking.

The specialization curriculum builds on the required College and university required coursework.

Integrated Marketing Communication

The Integrated Marketing Communication specialization provides a balance of theoretical/conceptual and professional skills courses. From Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication (PRI 101) and Crisis Communication Management (PRI 211) to Integrated Marketing Communication Campaigns (PRI 411) and Training in Integrated Marketing Communication (PRI 412), students receive a well-rounded learning experience that helps them gain conceptual understanding and hands-on skills. Students also gain critical thinking skills especially related to marketing strategy development. Course descriptions reflect that students learn writing, data analysis and content creation skills through projects involving real-world clients or topics.

Students in the Integrated Marketing Communication specialization must complete 30 hours of required courses, along with six hours of electives. The required courses are as follows:

PRI 111Public Relations & Corporate Communication Management
PRI 211Crisis Communication Management
PRI 212Corporate Reputation Management
PRI 213Protocol and Etiquette
PRI 214Writing for PR & Integrated Communication
PRI 311Design of Corporate Publication & Data
PRI 312Digital & Visual Production for PR
PRI 411Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns
PRI 412Training in Integrated Marketing Communication
PRI 413Graduation Project in Integrated Marketing Communication

Two electives (6 hours) can be chosen from the following:

PRI 121Government Communication
PRI 122Content Management via Social Media
PRI 221Advertising and Consumer Behavior
PRI 222Effective Communication Skills
PRI 321Electronic Marketing
PRI 322Customer Relationship Management (in English)
PRI 421Organizing of Activities and Special Events

Radio & TV Production

The Radio & TV Production specialization provides a balance of theoretical/conceptual and professional skills courses. From Introduction to Radio & TV Production (RTV 101) and TV Script Writing (RTV 211) to Documentary Films (RTV 313) and Training in Radio & TV Production (RTV 412), students receive a well-rounded education with a focus on both conceptual development and hands-on skills. The development of critical thinking skills is found in the Presentation & Delivery course (RTV 311) and Graduation Project in Radio & TV Production (RTV 413). Syllabi carefully detail student learning from the conceptual to the written to the practical with multiple opportunities for real world experience.

Students in the Radio & TV Production track must complete 30 hours of required courses, along with six hours of electives. The required courses are as follows:

RTV 101Radio/TV Production
RTV 111Radio Production
RTV 112TV Production
RTV 211Script Writing
RTV 212TV Direction
RTV 213Broadcasting News
RTV 311Presentation & Delivery
RTV 312Digital Media Production for Internet
RTV 313Documentary Films
RTV 412Training in Radio & TV Production
RTV 413Graduation Project in Radio & TV Production

Two electives (6 hours) can be chosen from the following:

RTV 121Special Topic in Digital Media (in English)
RTV 222Radio & Television Advertising
PRI 222Effective Communication Skills
GRD 311Graphic Design for TV
RTV 322Radio & TV Drama Production
RTV421Sports Media Production
RTV422Broadcast Criticism

Graphic Design for Media

The courses offered to Graphic Design for Media students are well balanced between theory and practice. Many of the classes include hands-on skill building, from the basic Principles of Drawing (GRD 111) and Brand and Visual Identity (GRD 112) through to the required Graduation Project (GRD 411). Yet conceptual material is covered as well in eight of the 10 required courses. Each of the Graphic Design for Media courses incorporate one or more of the 10 ACEJMC values and competencies. For example, GRD 212, Web & Smart Application Design, includes basic information on freedom of expression and multicultural understanding and advanced level discussion of writing skills, ethical conduct, and presenting images and information effectively.

Students in the Graphic Design for Media track must complete 30 hours of required courses, along with six hours of electives. The required courses are as follows:

GRD 111Principles of Drawing
GRD 112Brand and visual identity
GRD 113Infographic & layout
GRD 211Graphic for Print media
GRD 212Web & Smart Application Design
GRD 213Typography
GRD 2143D Design
GRD 311Graphic design for TV
GRD 312Training in Graphic Design for Media
GRD 411Graduation Project in Graphic Design for Media

Two electives (6 hours) can be chosen from the following:

GRD 220Multimedia Design
GRD 221Techniques & Materials (in English)
GRD 222Storytelling for social media
GRD 321Game Design
GRD 322Digital Drawing
GRD 323Animation
GRD 324Virtual Reality

(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, synchronous or asynchronous, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital and technological media competencies.

The faculty and College leadership reviews the course and faculty effectiveness annually through a structured process. The faculty work to ensure the course content meets industry standards and is regularly engaging with and working on projects with government and industry. This work keeps the faculty skills current and helps faculty to keep the course content and instruction up to date. The

facilities tour included examples of student work that demonstrated high-end project work and application of demanding concepts and skills, particularly in digital media. It was clear that the faculty push students to achieve high standards in their work.

Students noted regular real-world examples and experiences in classes. They reported the curriculum to be challenging with faculty pushing them to achieve at higher levels. They also commended the faculty for helping them succeed at each step of the process. Students universally praised the faculty for their engagement, caring and drive to help them succeed. Several students said the faculty were like family to them because of this deep level of care.

(d) The unit demonstrates efforts to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

The faculty and administrators actively work to connect to the industry and professionals in the field. Much of this comes through projects the faculty work on with media industries and UAE government. This professional development allows them to stay current and bring experiences back to the classroom. Students and faculty reported regular speakers from the professional ranks. Students showed excitement about the professional visitors and what they learn about the field from these visitors. They also said that connections made during visits could lead to internships and jobs.

(e) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses. Except for campaign courses, the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.

The College limits course enrollment in skills courses to 40. To meet the 20-1 ACEJMC standard in skills courses, the College reports students meet for the theoretical part of the course and then are split into labs. An inspection of enrollments in skills courses over the last two years found five skills courses exceeded the 20-student limit. Those courses were mostly in Graphic Design and Radio & Television Production courses. In some cases, other under-enrolled sections existed. In the meeting with students, they reported rare over-enrollment in skills courses. Both faculty and students said over-enrollments were the result of efforts to accommodate students and keep them on track. Several working students said the College was their first choice because of efforts to offer courses early and late in the day to allow them to adjust work schedules and still complete their coursework.

Students indicated no issues in their ability to get the classes they needed to stay on track to a timely graduation.

(f) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Units may award academic credit for internships in field related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter hours).

Students must complete at least three-credits' internship experience. Faculty make sure students know about opportunities. Internships and professional experiences are part of the curricular structure. The faculty and administrators reported significant, structured oversight of the students at internships. The internship oversight is based on a 100-mark scale with the faculty controlling 30 percent of the grade and the professional who is supervising the internship also contributes 30 percent of the grade. The final 40 percent is determined by a committee of professionals called a jury. The process uses rubrics to ensure consistency and rubrics to ensure consistency across students. The College places about 70

interns a year with most taking internships in the summer. Students reported multiple opportunities to work in professional settings while in school. Many of the students reported that they were so well prepared that they were immediately comfortable and ready to work at their internships and jobs. Several students noted that they or their peers earned full-time positions after completing their internship.

Integrated Marketing Communication: The Integrated Marketing Communication specialization assists students in applying for and completing internships as an important aspect of their education and professional preparation. Integrated Marketing Communication students generally hold internships at government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or public relations/advertising agencies.

Radio & TV Production: The Radio & TV Production specialization actively helps students connect with internship opportunities. Faculty, professionals, and a faculty jury all oversee and evaluate the internship experience. Students report good opportunities and experiences, though not all students reported having an internship. This may be a function of the students being early in their academic career. Radio & TV Production students typically have internships at digital and broadcast media organizations, government agencies, or even prominent opportunities with other departments at Ajman University.

Media Graphic Design: The Media Graphic Design specialization assists students in applying for and completing internships as an important aspect of their education and professional preparation. Students reported positive internship experiences, including the likelihood of receiving a job offer at the end of their time at a company or upon graduation.

SUMMARY:

The faculty and administration are focused on curriculum development and currency. This is evident throughout the structured program of assessment and industry connections to ensure they build courses to best prepare students for the field and that those courses are updated regularly. In this work, the faculty has thoughtfully balanced the conceptual/theoretical course work with the skills-based lab courses with a continual (every semester) focus on student learning and achievement. Their focus on serving and caring for students and ensuring their progression occasionally causes over enrollment in a few courses. Even here, the administration ensures these courses have skilled master's students helping as teaching assistants in the classroom to provide a good student experience. The students are encouraged to take internships for credit. Both faculty and students report good internship experiences that in many cases leads to employment. Also of note is the faculty focus on pushing students to achieve at high levels. The student work product seen during the visit was of high quality.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written assessment plan that has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media world.

The College of Mass Communication's written assessment plan is part of the Ajman University assessment plan. This is required by the university. The College of Mass Communication implementation of the assessment plan for student learning outcomes maps ACEJMC 10 professional competencies and values to specific courses and student work. The six faculty members on the College Institutional Effectiveness Committee are responsible for assessment following the university assessment process, protocols and data gathering. The assessment process is designed to identify student learning gaps each semester. The process relies heavily on faculty input of grades on specific assignments that are aggregated and tied to the learning outcomes specified in the plan. There is a campus system and requirement for assessment. Data is shared across campus with expectations of ongoing changes to improve student learning. This is closely monitored by the College and university administration. A link to the assessment plan is available via a link at the top of the College website.

The university assessment committee includes a representative from the College. AU also holds an annual retreat where each dean must present their assessment data and explain any areas that fall below the minimum standard. The Dean's contract and pay are partially determined by success in attaining effective student learning outcomes.

b). The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the professional Values and Competencies” of the Council. (See Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.)

The College closely ties its student learning assessment to the ACEJMC values and competencies. Almost every course is mapped to a learning outcome. The following are examples of courses used for assessment of the specific outcomes:

1) *Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located:*

a. *Basics*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society
- ii.GRD202: Digital Photography
- iii.LIF302: Life Coaching
- iv.CUL303: Intercultural Coexistence
- v.PRI101: Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication
- vi.ENG201: English for Media

b. *Intermediate*

- i.HUM203: Human Rights in the Modern Time
- ii.FUT302: Future Foresight
- iii.TH1304: Critical & Creative Thinking
- iv.RES401: Research Methods & Techniques
- v.ORG403 Regional & International Organizations
- vi.PUB404: Public Opinion
- vii.RTV101: Introduction to Radio & TV Production
- viii.COM401: Communication Theories

c. *Advanced*

- i.ETH301: Media Laws & Ethics
- ii.PRI412: Training in Integrated Marketing Communication
- iii.RTV412: Training in Radio & TV Production
- iv.RTV413: Graduation Project in Radio & TV
- v.GRD312: Training in Graphic Design for Media
- vi.GRD411: Graduation Project in Graphic Design for Media

2) *Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.ENG101: Communication Skills in English
- ii.KNO103: Knowledge Society
- iii.GRD202: Digital Photography

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.HUM203: Human Rights in the Modern Time
- ii.ORG403: Regional & International Organizations
- iii.PUB404: Public Opinion
- iv.RTV101: Introduction to Radio & TV Production
- v.COM401: Communication Theories
- vi.PRI111: Public Relations & Corporate Communication Management
- vii.PRI411: Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns

c. *Advanced*

- i.None offered at the advanced level

3) *Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts; diversity and inclusion:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.ENG101: Communication Skills in English
- ii.HUM203: Human Rights in the Modern Time
- iii.CUL303: Intercultural Coexistence

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society
- ii.GRD202: Digital Photography
- iii.ORG403: Regional & International Organizations
- iv.PUB404: Public Opinion

c. *Advanced Examples*

- i.GRD214: 3D Design
- ii.GRD311: Graphic Design for TV
- iii.RTV211: Script Writing

4) *Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society

ii.FUT301: Future Foresight

b. *Intermediate Examples*

i.ARB301: Arabic Language for the Media

ii.PRI11: Public Relations & Corporate Communication Management

c. *Advanced*

i.PRI311: Design of Corporate Publication & Data

ii.PRI412: Training in Integrated Marketing Communication

iii.RTV101: Introduction to Radio & TV Production

iv.RTV111: Radio Production

v.RTV211: Script Writing

vi.RTV312: Digital Media Production for Internet

vii.GRD111: Principles of Drawing

viii.GRD112: Brand and Visual Identity

ix.GRD312: Training in Graphic Design for Media

5) *Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve:*

a. *Basics Examples*

i.ECO101: Principles of Economics

ii.PRI101: Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication

b. *Intermediate Examples*

i.HUM203: Human Rights in the Modern Time

ii.FUT302: Future Foresight

iii.RTV101: Introduction to Radio & TV Production

iv.RTV111: Radio Production

v.RTV112: TV Production

c. *Advanced*

i.ENG101: Communication Skills in English

ii.GRD202: Digital Photography

iii.Thi304: Critical & Creative Thinking

iv.ENG201: English for Media

v.ARB301: Arabic Language for the Media

vi.RTV211: Script Writing

vii.GRD312: Training in Graphic Design for Media

6) *Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity:*

a. *Basics Examples*

i.KNO103: Knowledge Society

ii.ENG201: English for Media

b. *Intermediate Examples*

i.RTV101: Introduction to Radio & TV Production

ii.PRI101: Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication

iii.GRD101: Introduction to Graphic Design

iv.RTV111: Radio Production

v.RTV112: TV Production

c. *Advanced*

- i.ARB301: Arabic Language for the Media
- ii.ETH301: Media Laws & Ethics
- iii.PRI213: Protocol and Etiquette
- iv.PRI411: Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns
- v.PRI412: Training in Integrated Marketing Communication
- vi.RTV412: Training in Radio & TV Production
- vii.RTV413: Graduation Project in Radio & TV
- viii.GRD211: Graphic for Print Media
- ix.GRD212: Web & Smart Application Design

7) *Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.ECO101: Principles of Economics
- ii.ENG101: Communication Skills in English
- iii.HUM203: Human Rights in the Modern Time

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society
- ii.LIF302: Life Coaching

c. *Advanced*

- i.THI304: Critical & Creative Thinking
- ii.RES401: Research Methods & Techniques
- iii.PRI211: Crisis Communication Management
- iv.RTV412: Training in Radio & TV Production
- v.GRD312: Training in Graphic Design for Media

8) *Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society
- ii.GRD202: Digital Photography

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.PSY402: Social Psychology
- ii.PRI311: Design of Corporate Publication & Data

c. *Advanced*

- i.RES401: Research Methods & Techniques

9) *Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.ECO101: Principles of Economics
- ii.CUL303: Intercultural Coexistence

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.ENG101: Communication Skills in English
- ii.GRD202: Digital Photography
- iii.LIF302: Life Coaching
- iv.RTV312: Digital Media Production for Internet

- v.RTV412: Training in Radio & TV Production
- vi.PRI411: Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns
- vii.PRI412: Training in Integrated Marketing Communication

c. *Advanced*

- i.GRD214: 3D Design
- ii.GRD311: Graphic Design for TV

10) *Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work:*

a. *Basics Examples*

- i.ECO101: Principles of Economics
- ii.ENG101: Communication Skills in English

b. *Intermediate Examples*

- i.KNO103: Knowledge Society

c. *Advanced*

- i.RES401: Research Methods & Techniques
- ii.PRI312: Digital & Visual Production for PR
- iii.RTV312: Digital Media Production for Internet
- iv.GRD212: Web & Smart Application Design

(c) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning.

The College of Mass Communication’s assessment plan uses both direct and indirect measures to assess the effectiveness of student learning. This work is extensive and is conducted each semester. Oversight of the plan and the resulting actions from assessment are overseen at multiple levels in the College, university and all the way up to the UAE Ministry of Education. The four instruments used are:

- Average marks of students mapped to 15 program learning outcomes (PLOs) using course learning outcomes (CLOs)-based assessment that directly ties to the 10 ACEJMC professional values and competencies (direct)
- Exit survey of senior students (indirect)
- Employers’ survey (indirect) – involves professionals
- Alumni survey (indirect) – involves professionals

(d) At least one direct and/or indirect measure should include journalism and mass communication professionals engaged in assessment data collection.

Both the employer and alumni survey involve professionals. Professionals are informally involved in additional aspects of assessment. For example, the College includes professionals through an extensive oversight of student achievement and experiences in internships. This data is included in the direct assessment of student learning.

(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction. There is substantial, concrete evidence of “closing the loop,” generally and specifically. Multiple examples of “closing the loop” are evident.

Ajman University, including the College of Mass Communication, operates an extensive assessment program with significant oversight and sharing of information at multiple levels. All faculty are involved in assessment and are held accountable for continually improving student learning outcomes. The university provides an assessment program and tool to monitor and continually improve course learning outcomes (CLOs) across all colleges. In this process, faculty map exam questions to one or more of the CLOs for each course they teach. Faculty fill out an Instructor Course Assessment Report (ICARs) form for each of their courses each semester identifying the specific test question that will be mapped to a specific CLO. Student grades on that question are entered into the university computer program called CAP (CLOs-based Assessment Program). The instructor enters the student grades for the identified question into CAP. The program compares the average of the student marks in the course for that question and CLO to the standard expected for students to achieve, which is a 70% threshold for undergraduates in the College (recently increased to 75%) and 80% for the graduate program. The computer program then looks at CLOs achievement across colleges. The College Assessment and Continuous Improvement Committee (ACIC) and the College Effectiveness Committee (CEC) both evaluate these reports. The CEC issues a Course Assessment Report (CAR), which initiates the process for faculty to improve student learning outcomes in the courses they teach. Faculty teaching courses where the threshold is not met must formally recommend corrective/improvement actions to improve student performance on that learning outcome. This process is completed and monitored each semester, thus closing the loop.

The student and industry surveys have resulted in changes to the curriculum and student learning outcomes. One prominent example provided is the introduction of a social and digital media course resulting from student and industry comments in the respective surveys.

SUMMARY:

The College of Mass Communication has an extensive and impressive assessment program that touches every course and every faculty member. Faculty are actively involved in the process at all levels. There is significant oversight by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee in the College. The College tracks progress, as does the university, to ensure implementation of changes to improve student learning outcomes.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written diversity plan that has been implemented and discussed annually, for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse, culturally proficient faculty, staff and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit’s definition of diversity, identify underrepresented groups and articulate key performance indicators upon which the unit intends to focus and improve.

Ajman University is rated as having one of the most diverse student enrollments (3rd) and faculty populations (8th) in the world, according to the 2024 QS World University Rankings. AU enrolls students from more than 70 different countries. It was the first university in the UAE to accept expatriate students. The university also received a “5-star” rating from the QS for inclusion and social responsibility.

The university’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2022-2027 acts as the diversity plan for the unit. It has four goals:

- *Develop policies, procedures, infrastructure and system to ensure progress towards diversity, equity and inclusion among faculty, students, and staff.*
- *Increase the number of nationalities and underrepresented minorities within the AU community potentially through the recruitment of a diverse faculty, staff, and student.*
- *Foster an inclusive organization culture that promotes inclusion for everyone regardless of their gender, ethnic, religious or marital backgrounds to achieve academic and professional excellence.*
- *Create an environment where differences are appreciated and there is access, opportunity and advancement for all stakeholders in every stage of their education and careers.*

Diversity is not specifically defined in the plan itself. However, the university’s Policies and Procedures Manual says the following:

Definitions

Diversity: *Diversity is expressed in a wide variety of ways, such as differences in race and ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, language and culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, disability, marital status, and parental status, etc.*

Equity: *Everyone, irrespective of their color, ethnicity, gender, ability, financial situation, other intersectional background, has an equal opportunity to achieve their goals. Achieving equity implies providing people with the resources they require based on where they are beginning from. It also implies fairness and justice.*

Inclusion: *AU campus will be a place where everyone is valued for who they are, where their ideas and experiences are heard and respected, and where they feel safe expressing themselves openly within the political and cultural sentiments of UAE.*

The College’s strategic plan (aligned with the university) also specifically mentions diversity in its priorities. Its fifth goal is “Building a diverse and brilliant student body.” Performance indicators include the number of nationalities represented among new students in the program, and initiatives include expanding events that recognize and celebrate cultural diversity. It also has an initiative to implement policies to promote “diversity, inclusiveness, and equity.”

(b) The unit’s curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit’s curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.

The curriculum includes classes that speak to culturally competent communication, with special emphasis on communication in a global society. All students in the program take a course called Intercultural Coexistence, which focuses on components of culture and the values of tolerance, cultural openness, cultural pluralism, and areas of coexistence between peoples, in addition to the cultural challenges of virtual society and the reality of cultural coexistence in the UAE.

Other courses available to students include Islamic Culture and Emirates Society, which explore cultural values and practices in the UAE. English for the Media and Arabic Language for the Media, which enhance communication skills in diverse media contexts, and Social Psychology, which promote understanding and coexistence between cultures. In the major: Media Laws & Ethics addresses issues of cultural awareness. Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns and Public Relations & Corporate Communication Management integrate cultural elements. Documentary Films and Radio & TV Drama Production explore cultural perspectives. Graphic Design for TV and Web & Smart Application Design consider cultural implications.

The College and the university – aligned with their strategic plans – also conduct large, annual events designed to encourage an appreciation of diversity. The university hosts a Global Day, which involves speakers, musical performances and exhibitions. The College’s Cultural Forum in 2023, organized by students, was themed “Our Richness in Our Diversity.” It featured diverse artistic works reflecting the concept of sustainability and the principle of cultural coexistence through printed, audio, and visual exhibits.

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to enhance all faculty members’ understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and ability to develop culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit also demonstrates intentional efforts to recruit and retain faculty and professional staff who are from demographics that are historically, domestically marginalized.

Faculty members in the College are from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, South Korea and North America. Women compose more than half the faculty, and the Dean’s leadership team is also mostly women. The university provides an orientation for faculty members and professional development related to cultural competency in teaching and advising students. The College also provides new faculty members with a “guide” (mentor) who can act as a resource for new faculty in navigating the needs of a highly diverse classroom that is also sometimes (but not always) segregated by gender, oftentimes by a simple divider in the middle of the room.

Faculty members take pride in creating a learning environment that is accommodating to students from across cultures and nationalities. One, for instance, said that on the first day of class, she tells students that she is on a “learning journey” with each of them, as she expects to learn more about their unique experiences, values and perspectives through the semester. The Dean sets the tone for this approach. “Diversity enriches our student experience,” he said. “Each student should have the opportunity to express themselves.”

Students in discussion groups with the site team reported experiences that seem to reflect the College’s emphasis on inclusion. When asked about classes and activities that help them build cultural competency, students uniformly reported that faculty foster such an environment. “We are all linked together,” one student said.

(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit, retain and graduate a student population reflecting the diversity of the population the institution aims to serve.

The College operates in a university that takes great pride in attracting, supporting and graduating a highly diverse student body. Attracting and enrolling students is a centralized function of the university, but the College prioritizes the retention, progression and graduation of a diverse student body. The College itself has students from 28 nationalities, and students from multiple countries were part of the student discussion groups with the site team. They reported a supportive environment in the College for all students, along with advising and faculty support that is critical to strong retention and graduation rates for all cohorts.

(e) The unit demonstrates that it has an inclusive climate, free of harassment and all forms of discrimination, in keeping with the acceptable cultural practices of the population it serves, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.

The College, like all units at AU, is subject to the Non-Discrimination Policy in the Policies and Procedures Manual. The policy aligns with the UAE Law No. 2 (2015) Against Discrimination and Hatred, which prohibits contempt of religions, discrimination and hatred against one another and extremism of views. The university defines discrimination as *“treating or showing preference to a specific individual or a group of individuals based on nationality, sex, age, religious belief, race, color, or marital status; in matters of educational programs, recruitment, promotion, or access to institutional services.”*

Similarly, the College is subject to the university’s policy in compliance with the UAE’s National Policy for Empowering People with Special Needs. The self-study contained multiple examples of the College’s efforts to accommodate students with disabilities to support their academic success.

SUMMARY:

The university and College operate in a region rich in cultural diversity, and that is reflected among the students and faculty. Although many facilities – and classes – are physically partitioned in a way that segregates by gender, they are adjacent and similar in size, scope and access to technology and opportunity. Women are the majority among students, faculty, and the Dean’s leadership team. Furthermore, the faculty take pride in their efforts to create a culturally rich learning environment – one in which students thrive and are prepared for the modern workplace.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

Academic year: 2023 – 2024 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Middle-East/North Africa	8	47.1	6	33.9
Asian/American	0	0	1	6.25
Two or more races	1	6.25	1	6.25
Other race				

Academic year: 2023 – 2024 Part-time/adjunct faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Middle-East/North Africa	1	33.3	1	33.3
Asian	1	33.3	0	0
Other race				

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity and service.

In the three years prior to the site team visit, more than 95% of core and required courses offered by the unit were taught by full-time faculty (96.6% in 2020-2021; 95.7% in 2021-2022; and 97.4% in 2022-2023). Full-time faculty also lead initiatives on curriculum development and innovation within the College and engage in research and creative activity and community engagements. The self-study notes that faculty members represent the College on university committees on budget allocation, facilities planning and institutional policies.

(b) The unit's faculty (full- and part-time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.

There is an appropriate balance of professional and scholarly experience in the College's faculty. As of fall 2023, the College had a total of 19 full-time faculty members: four full professors, seven associate professors, five assistant professors, two instructors and one assistant instructor. All 16 full-time faculty members at the assistant, associate and full ranks have Ph.D.s. Two of the three part-time faculty members (one associate professor and two assistant professors) have Ph.D.s. Most full-time and part-time faculty instructors have more than a decade of teaching experience each, and a majority have professional experiences in the media industry. Overall, faculty members are active in national or international professional and scholarly associations (e.g., Middle Eastern Public Relations Association) as leaders or members.

As part of professional development opportunities, the College regularly offers workshops on educational technology tools, research activities and industry collaboration as well as networking opportunities for faculty to build connections with industry professionals.

Travel funds including Research Travel Grants are provided to support faculty members' conference participation and other professional development opportunities. Several faculty members commented that the College had supported their participation in faculty exchange programs, leadership workshops or other professional activities outside the university.

(c) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear.

The College requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. These activities are valued in terms of generating new ideas and knowledge, incorporating them into the classrooms and contributing to national, regional and global communities.

Support for faculty research and creative activity is provided in various ways including sabbatical leaves, course releases, internal grants, travel funds and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities. The Faculty Exchange and Sabbatical Leave Program is designed to strengthen the research capacity and facilitate international collaboration efforts of faculty members. Faculty exchanges and sabbatical leaves span one or two semesters, and detailed guidelines are provided in the university Faculty Manual. The Research Travel Grants program allows faculty to utilize research resources including software programs and hardware equipment that are not available within the university. In addition, the university provides training and administrative support for faculty seeking external grants both within and outside the UAE. Many faculty said they felt supported in their scholarly activity.

The university regularly conducts faculty performance evaluations of research, teaching and service activities. Expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity are described in College guidelines for faculty evaluation as well as the university Faculty Manual. The self-study summarized these criteria and provided links to relevant documents. The university does not offer tenure with all faculty being contracted for specific terms. Most faculty members have renewable contracts.

(d) Faculty members communicate the results of research, creative and/or professional activity to other scholars, educators and practitioners through presentations, productions, exhibitions, workshops and publications appropriate to the activity and to the mission of the unit and institution.

Faculty members have been active with relevant academic and professional groups in sharing their work. The self-study identified four awards and honors, eight external and internal grants, 116 articles in refereed journals, nine scholarly books, eight textbooks, five book chapters, 27 refereed conference papers, 10 invited academic papers, 19 articles in non-refereed publications and 21 juried creative works during the review period. These accomplishments reflect activities by four full professors, seven associate professors and five assistant professors.

Faculty research and creative/professional activity include publications in peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books and book chapters, textbooks, conference papers and creative works. Refereed journal articles are published in some of the leading journals in related fields including *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, and *Journalism Practice*. A majority of peer-reviewed manuscripts are published in journals focusing on the Arab region such as *Arab Journal for Media and Communication Research* and *Journal of Arab Media & Society*.

College leadership noted that while faculty research productivity has increased significantly in recent years, it remains an area for growth. To further support faculty research activities, the College provides incentives for those who publish in top-ranked journals. Such incentives include covering journal article processing fees, extending the duration of the contract, course releases and additional support for conference participation.

(e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship, the quality of education and the scholarly contributions the unit provides.

University administrators and representatives from other units on campus give the College strong marks for collaboration and service as well as for the quality of education it provides students. They noted contributions to university strategic planning and other initiatives by the College's faculty, increased research productivity, and collaborations with industry partners and community organizations, among other things. In addition, those who have interacted with students in the College lauded student professionalism and skills in media production, writing and technology. Students in the College often produce multimedia content for university events including videos of graduation ceremonies.

SUMMARY:

The faculty actively engage in research and creative works, are award-winning teachers and have respect across the campus for their contributions to university strategic planning and other campus initiatives. About 84% of full-time faculty members hold PhDs, and a majority have professional experiences in media industry. Though research productivity in the College has increased over the past several years, the College, in line with the university's strategic plan, aims to further strengthen its research profile. Overall, faculty feel supported in their research and creative activity and teaching endeavors.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (16)
		Full Professors (4)	Associate Professors (7)	Assistant Professors (5)	Other Faculty** (-)	
Awards and Honors	4	4				4
Grants Received Internal	7	3	2	2		7
Grants Received External	1	1				1
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	9	1	8			9
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	8	5	3			8
Books Edited	1		1			1
Book Chapters	5	3	1	1		5
Monographs	5		5			5
Articles in Refereed Journals	116	35	67	43	1	145
Refereed Conference Papers	27	19	6	2		27
Invited Academic Papers	10	5	5			10
Encyclopedia Entries						
Book Reviews						
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	19	7	12			19
Juried Creative Works	21	1	10	10		21
Non-juried Creative Works						
Other (please specify)			Arbitration of scientific papers (12) Workshops and courses (15)			

* Co-authored work should be counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However, if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors. **Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. Many faculty in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit provides students with the support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.

The College provides students with the support and services necessary for them to complete their degrees in a timely manner. Through various touch points including new student orientations, advising meetings, faculty office hours and peer advisor sessions, the College stays in close touch with students to ensure that they comply with degree requirements and supports them with necessary course corrections during their academic career. Every undergraduate student is assigned a full-time faculty member as an *academic advisor* who is responsible for checking with the student at major milestones in the academic calendar and providing guidance for the student's academic progress and personal growth. Within the College, each faculty member serves as an academic advisor for 40-45 students. Students described their faculty academic advisors as "friendly," "supportive," and "approachable." In addition, each student is assigned a *co-advisor*, who is a teaching assistant or lecturer within the College and assists in various administrative duties related to advising. A *lead advisor* plays a central role in managing the entire advising process while working closely with academic co-advisors and coordinating communication between the College and university academic services. Detailed roles and responsibilities of academic advisors, co-advisors and lead advisors are provided in the Faculty Manual. The College also has the Effective Academic Advising Department Committee that organizes activities in support of students and collects feedback from students.

(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.

Students reported that faculty do a good job of providing students with academic and professional advice and help them identify internship and job opportunities during and immediately after their time at the College. In addition, they mentioned opportunities to work with industry partners through skills courses to help them gain real-work experiences that support their academic and professional pursuits. Students felt well equipped to go into media-related industries after graduation.

(c) The unit keeps students informed about its policies, activities and requirements.

There are various ways the College keeps students updated on activities, requirements and policy changes. Examples include regular information sessions and academic advising meetings as well as the College's website, email, newsletter and social media.

Students indicated they keep up to date through information sessions, email messages and social media for the College.

(d) The unit and institution provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities relevant to the curriculum and that help develop the students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.

The College provides students with relevant extracurricular activities that showcase their professional skills and academic interest. For example, the Media Club allows students to participate in various media projects including interviews with media professionals and covering major media events in the UAE. The Design Club is for those interested in graphic design, visual communication and other related

creative works to collaborate on designing promotional materials and exhibitions showcasing their design concepts and creative works. The Art Club serves as a space for aspiring artists to engage in visual art activities including painting, drawing and sculpture. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in major media events in the UAE such as the Media Congress and Expo Gulf as event organizers, reporters or social media content creators to gain valuable real-world experiences. The College has partnerships with media organizations to further enrich students' professional experiences.

(e) The unit uses retention and graduation data to improve student services, such as advising, and to reduce barriers to student success.

As evidenced in the self-study and confirmed through the site team visit, the College has used enrollment, retention and graduation data during the review period to improve and enhance advising services for students. The university's Student Information System is used to keep track of each student's academic activities and progress. Through Annual Fact Books created by the university's Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, the College compares its data with the rest of the university identifying its strengths and areas of improvement. This is in addition to the significant amount of time faculty members dedicate to working with students individually to support them with academic and professional development.

SUMMARY:

The College has a robust strategy in place to help students navigate their degree requirements and complete their degrees in a timely manner. Students have easy access to academic advisors and faculty who provide quality advice on extracurricular and professional opportunities. Faculty members' close collaborations with industry partners help students gain valuable hands-on skills and graduate ready for the professional workforce.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.

The College of Mass Communication has a detailed budget that is developed each year with input from faculty, then approved by the Dean before review by the university's Planning and Budgeting Committee. Once approved there, the budget requires approval from the Board of Trustees. The university utilizes a zero-based budgeting model so that each year is considered 'starting from zero'.

The College budget for the 2023-2024 year was \$2.774 million USD. This is a +5% increase over the 2021-2022 budget. Of this total, costs for faculty accounted for 68% of the total in 2023-2024. While there were several significant swings in individual budget line items from year to year (such as administrative salaries, supplies, and library resources), overall, the budget has been stable. The budget for the College does not include expenditures for building maintenance, student aid, or scholarships. There are no endowments or other major external funding sources. The College is, however, starting to offer its video production services to outside organizations and winning local competitive bids to do so. It has earned a small fee (\$6,800 USD) that can then be applied for its own needs.

According to the self-study report, the annual budget must be aligned with the long-range strategic plan of the university. A review of the 2022-2027 university plan indicates that this is indeed the case. Each of the six major strategic goals are reflected in the budgets for the College. For example, the goal to "boost the excellence and influence of research" aligns well with increases in the College budget line items for databases and research. There is a clearly defined process for budget setting. Six months before the start of each academic year, all units must submit their business plans to the Office of Budget and Planning, which ensures alignment as well as equitable allocation of funds across all units. The budget must receive final approval from the Board of Trustees. The Dean described the budget as a "tool to achieve our goals," noting that the many levels of approval required leave room for negotiation throughout the budget process.

The College budget is developed along four key pillars:

1. Projected student enrollment (tuition is the primary source of revenue)
2. Number of faculty
3. Operational costs
4. Capital expenditures.

Faculty are involved throughout the budget process, particularly with regard to their academic needs.

(b) Resources provided by the institution are adequate to achieve the unit's mission and are fair in relation to those provided to other units.

The resources for the College of Mass Communication enable it to maintain both high quality and cutting-edge equipment such as high-end digital drawing tablets or professional quality cameras and microphones. Most recently, the College has begun investing in a virtual reality lab to ensure its students are prepared for this latest industry capability. This is in addition to the digital photography studio, multimedia labs, and radio/TV facilities. There is a three-year funding plan in place for the new lab to acquire all the necessary equipment to run it effectively.

The unit believes it is treated fairly in comparison to other colleges on campus. As the self-study notes, it receives adequate funds to support the specialized needs of its student body.

(c) The unit's facilities and information resources enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.

The facilities of the College of Mass Communication are excellent. Housed in the vast J2 building, it shares the space with colleges of Business Administration, Engineering, and Information Technology. There are 56 lecture halls, 56 laboratories, and 204 faculty offices. The College has several labs on the ground floor. This includes two Mac Labs, one with 17 Macbook Pros and one with 16. A third Multimedia Lab has 21 PC computers. All computers are loaded with the Adobe Cloud suite. In addition, hands-on opportunities are available in the Digital Photography Studio for the students of graphic design in the college, through which students practice different photography skills after they have learned about the tools and techniques of digital photography. Students of TV and Radio have two studios for Radio and Television Production, with HD technology. Graphic Design students can practice and enhance their artistic skills in the Drawing Room, with access to an array of materials and techniques. The newest addition to the facility is the Virtual Reality Lab, which was launched in 2023, with plans in place to further develop it over the next several years. It gives students the opportunity to learn about and work with augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and mixed reality (MR). All students have access to the university Printing Center, which is in the Student Center adjacent to the College.

In terms of information resources, the university boasts a large library with access to many resources, databases, and many international scholarly databases (such as ProQuest, EBSCO, and Scopus). There are two sections of the library (one for males, one for females); each contains 41,000 printed books, and both have ample space for students to study.

(d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment, or access to equipment, and technical assistance needed to support student learning, curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty

Students have ready access to equipment needed for their classes in Mass Communication, whether they are focused on Graphic Design, Integrated Mass Communication, or TV/Radio. Labs and studios have extended hours (until 8pm) and students noted they did not have difficulty accessing the equipment they need. They may borrow equipment or book the studio through the ORS online system. Students were proud of the fact that, unlike their peers at other institutions, they could take equipment such as cameras or microphones outside of the building to complete class projects.

SUMMARY:

The College is well funded and well resourced, housed in modern and expansive facilities where students and faculty have good access to the equipment and resources they need to pursue both studies and research. There is an ongoing effort to ensure that the unit stays on top of technologies through forward-thinking budgeting and planning.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni, and actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.

The College of Mass Communication is in regular contact with alumni and professionals. It has a seven-person College Advisory Board (which includes the head of the department and Dean). It was first established in 2016, meeting at least annually through 2023. Board participants have reviewed curriculum, discussed ideas for improving ties to industry, and encouraged more training to prepare students for the job market. The knowledge sharing goes both ways, as the College circulates job vacancies among interested alumni to help them secure employment. Subscriptions to six specialized news groups, funded by the College, are offered to graduates who are interested; currently, more than 600 have subscribed.

The College stays in touch with alumni through email, phone, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and online meetings. It sends out a newsletter several times a year to keep alumni informed about what is happening. In addition, it regularly solicits feedback from alumni. One successful initiative was the creation of Alumni Success stories, which involved contacting 1,385 working alumni to invite them to participate. So far, 88 have done so, letting their stories be included in a booklet and website. Several of those participants have come in as guest speakers to the classroom.

While the response rate was small (under 10%), the results of the latest alumni survey were generally very positive. Most learning outcomes were found by alumni to be above the acceptable threshold of 75 percent agreement. These included satisfaction with analyzing media messages, defining fundamental concepts, adhering to ethical standards, demonstrating leadership, and collaborating with teams. When asked to suggest areas for improvements, alumni proposed updates to align with industry, more required courses, and more practical training. New course ideas included topics such as the metaverse, social media planning, and new media. Overall, most alumni considered the program to be either *excellent* or *very good*.

The faculty engage with professionals through consulting or other projects. Professional guest speakers are regularly invited to campus. A total of 30 were listed in the self-study from 2021-2023, covering all areas of the program. Students are actively involved in several university clubs where they have the opportunity to network with industry professionals. These include the Media Club, the Design Club, and the Art Club. Additionally, they are often active participants in local or regional media events such as the Media Congress, Arab Media Forum, and Government Communication Forum. Their involvement varies from helping to organize the event itself to reporting on it or assisting with social media and content creation.

(b) The unit provides leadership in the development of high standards of professional practice through such activities as offering continuing education, promoting professional ethics, evaluating professional performance, and addressing communication issues of public consequence and concern.

The faculty are highly involved in developing and maintaining high standards of professional practice.

Examples include:

- Workshops, training, and presentations in the local, national, and international community, including the Ajman Society for Social and Cultural Development, Dubai Press Club, Saudi Media Forum, and Modern University for Technology and Information in Egypt.
- Developing documentary films and radio ads or stories for government and municipal organizations
- Taking students to participate in the Youth Media Forum, International Government Communications Forum, Dubai Design Week, and Arab Media Forum
- Helping students organize and lead the International Symposium on Advancing Sustainability as a Core Purpose for Higher Education
- Active membership in various professional organizations, including AIGA, the professional association for design; Association for Middle East Women’s Studies; and Middle East Public Relations Association

(c) The unit contributes to its communities through unit-based service projects and events, service learning of its students and civic engagement of its faculty.

The service contributions of the College to the communities it serves are numerous. Both students and faculty are actively involved in civic projects, including the following:

- Cooperating with the Department of Tourism Development in the Emirate of Ajman and the Arab Organization for Administrative Development at the League of Arab States by participating in the Forum for the Sustainability of Cultural Tourism in the Age of Digital Communication.
- Providing media coverage of the Emirati Society of Engineers celebration of the 51st National Day
- Production of a documentary film about the Architectural Heritage Association for its 20th anniversary, as well as direct coverage of the association’s celebration of that event.
- One faculty member received recognition for supervising students in providing design to Social Media Pioneers Association Emirates Vision Media Network.
- Participating as a mentor in the Association for Middle East Women’s Studies.
- Organizing an online external workshop “Digital Media and AI Challenges” at Modern University for Technology and Information, Egypt
- Designing a social media plan for Humaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi foundation during the holy month of Ramadan.
- Production of a documentary film for the Emirates Society of Engineers and TV coverage of the Arab Women Engineers Forum.
- Radio recordings for the Charitable Works Authority in Ajman.
- Preparing an advertising plan (photos and videos) to support and promote the business of family entrepreneurs in Dubai.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

There have been several activities undertaken to support scholastic journalism. Outreach to high schools is ongoing to attract potential students to the College. These include offering professional workshops in television production, graphic design, and social media content development, as well as lectures on educational media.

One noteworthy initiative is the National Ambassadors Program, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. This is an annual two-week long national program designed to encourage and train high school students who are interested in journalism and media. During the two weeks, students are introduced to topics that include storytelling, scripts, photography, and editing. They also learn about

creating social media posts, motion graphics for YouTube, animation and design. In 2022, 17 schools participated. A total of 21 students subsequently enrolled in the university.

SUMMARY:

This is an active and engaged faculty that regularly helps advance the various professions in which they are engaged by participating in community service, regional events, and professional associations. There is ongoing and regular interaction with alumni as well as other professionals. The College helps support the next generation of mass communication students through its outreach efforts.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- A curriculum that conscientiously addresses theory, digital/technological skills, and “soft skills.” For instance, all students are required to take a Life Coaching course. This helps prepare students for the demands of the modern, global workplace.
- A faculty, led by a dean, who are constantly striving together in their pursuit of student success and quality improvement for teaching. The result is a collaborative community that many faculty and students call “a family.”
- A culture that embraces and celebrates its international, multicultural environment across classes and programs. Uniformly for faculty and students, it is a point of pride – and rightly so.
- A highly visible, well-respected faculty on campus, who are the “go-to” resource for video production, graphic design and integrated marketing communication for the university.
- Strong government and industry connections, which help with faculty development and student opportunities for internships and employment.

Challenges and opportunities

- The College offers skills-focused labs in conjunction with the theoretical elements of its courses. Although the vast majority of these labs meet the required 20:1 student-instructor ratio, the College is encouraged to design a system to ensure that all labs meet the requirement.
- The studios offer students the opportunity to produce audio and video using professional equipment. The College is encouraged to continue to update the facilities and equipment.
- Though faculty research productivity has increased significantly in recent years, it remains an area for growth.

2) List the standards with which the unit is not in compliance.

N/A

3) In the case of a recommendation for accreditation or reaccreditation, *with standard(s) not in compliance*, list the deficiencies that need to be addressed before the next site team evaluation.

N/A

4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that should be addressed before the provisional status can be removed.

N/A

5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to the recommendation.

N/A

6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize *significant* deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance on the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.

N/A

7) Summarize the team members’ judgment of the self-study.

The self-study was adequate for the site-team needs. When site-team members asked for clarification or additional information, it was provided in a timely manner.