

ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Licenciatura en Ciencias del Lenguaje at the
Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León,
Mexico**

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Programme accreditation Licenciatura en Ciencias del Lenguaje at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León

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1. The Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon (UANL)

The Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL) is a public university headquartered in San Nicolás de los Garza, a suburb of Monterrey in the Mexican state of Nuevo León. With about 153,000 students and nearly 6,400 professors it is the third largest university in Mexico. The university is also engaged in high school education: 36 high schools are part of the university.

According to its mission, the university is strongly committed to society and strives to educate high school students, students and researchers for a knowledge-based society with an awareness of regional, national and global issues while applying the university principles and values and being committed to the sustainable, financial, scientific, technological, and cultural development of humanity.

The programme "Licenciatura en Ciencias del Lenguaje" (Bachelor in Language Sciences) is offered by the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (School of Philosophy and Arts) which offers seven programmes on Bachelor level, three Master programmes and two PhD programmes in the area of Philosophy and Arts with a total of about 2,700 students. With about 1,300 students the Language Sciences programme accounts for nearly half of the students of the School.

The Language Sciences programme, which started 60 years ago due to the demand in the region, is a five year programme on the Bachelor level that educates students in applied linguistics and offers specialisations in the fields of English language teaching, French language teaching, bilingual education and translation. The current curriculum of the programme was established in 2012 and is now in its third semester.

As in all universities in Mexico, students have to pay tuition to study at UANL. However, in public universities tuition fees are usually lower than in private universities. Moreover, about 95 % of all students at the Language Science programme receive a scholarship. The majority of the students of the programme come from the Monterrey region.

2. The accreditation procedure

The assessment procedure was carried out with an informed peer review on the basis of a self-evaluation report of the programme provided by UANL, a site visit of an expert team, an assessment report by the expert team and the accreditation decision which is taken by **evalag's** Accreditation Commission.

The procedure applies the fitness for purpose approach which assesses to what extent a programme complies with the criteria for programme accreditation. These are formulated in coherence with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

These criteria focus, first of all, on the profile of the programme and its curriculum. Further, the criteria cover all aspects of the implementation of a study programme, its quality assurance and its resources. With regard to the criteria of programme profile and curriculum, **evalag** assesses also if the programme meets academic standards that are accepted in Europe and internationally.

The following six criteria are used:

- Programme profile
- Curriculum
- Organisation of the study programme
- Students assessment
- Quality assurance
- Resources

Depending on the degree to which the programme meets the criteria, the programme will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited. The detailed description of the assessment criteria can be found in Annex 1.

As a first step of the procedure and as a preparation for the site visit, UANL produced a self-evaluation report based on guidelines provided by **evalag**.

evalag formed an expert team consisting of four experts including one student expert:

- Yannick Brandenburg, student of Ancient Languages and Cultures - Greek Philology and Latin Philology (MA) at Universität zu Köln and Indo-European Linguistics (MA) at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany
- Prof. em. Dr. Liesel Hermes, Professor of English Literature, former rector of Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe, Germany
- Professor Andrew Rothwell, PhD, Professor of French and Translation Studies, Swansea University, United Kingdom
- Dr. Verónica Sánchez Hernández, Lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Languages, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico

All experts declared to be free of any conflict of interest.

The site visit (Annex 2) took place on 9th and 10th October 2014 at UANL. During the site visit the expert team met with the Leadership of the School, academic staff and students and visited the facilities of the School.

The expert team produced an assessment report of the programme with an accreditation recommendation which was submitted to **evalag's** Accreditation Commission. The commission took the final accreditation decision on 27 February 2015.

From **evalag's** side, Harald Scheuthle coordinated the accreditation.

The following assessment report is structured according to the six assessment criteria, which are the basis for the decision about the programme accreditation. Each chapter starts with a presentation of the current status regarding the criterion which is based on the information in the self-assessment report and the information gathered during the site visit. On this basis, the expert team assesses the compliance with the criterion and makes recommendations for further improvement.

3. Programme assessment

3.1 Programme profile

Current situation

The Language Sciences programme prepares university bachelor degree students in Language Sciences who after successfully completing the programme should be able to use English, French and Spanish in order to teach language and contents and translate technical, literary, legal, medical, media and specialized texts in those languages in both directions. These professionals will be competent in applied linguistics for language teaching and translation, in course design, planning and implementation, in educational administration and leadership and in research. The programme will provide graduates with the professional skills necessary to work as a language teacher or translator and fosters the life values of UANL which include Truth, Equity, Honesty, Freedom, Solidarity, Respect for Life and Nature, Integrity, Professional Ethics, Justice and Responsibility in their professional and personal contexts, and encourages the creation of a sustainable society.

A specificity of the Language Sciences programme at UANL is its strong focus on applied linguistics. This is the core of the programme and differentiates this programme according to the teaching staff from other programmes in this field in Mexico. The objective is to give students a solid foundation in the understanding and use of languages, which can be applied in different fields.

The Language Science programme follows the UANL Bachelor Academic Model, which is a competence-based model for all Bachelor level degrees of the university. The academic model was developed recently and is currently being implemented in the university. The model itself uses competences and learning outcomes to plan and describe study programmes and is oriented towards results and evidence. This will lead – according to the School – to a cultural change at the university.

According to the self-evaluation report, students of the Language Sciences programme should obtain the following competences:

- “The mastery of a second language, English or French, through five basic skills: writing, reading, listening, speaking, and comprehension in order to produce highly accurate academic texts.
- The implementation of teaching and translation proposals, with linguistic awareness and understanding for native language culture (Spanish) and the second language culture (English or French) so as to propose solutions to methodological, theoretical, practical, linguistic, and contextual problems of language.
- The interpretation and translation of technical, scientific, literary, documentary, legal, cinematographic, and artistic texts directly and inversely in both written and oral formats using the knowledge of writing rules and language usage to satisfy the working field needs in this area of knowledge.
- The implementation of quality educational processes in didactics, administration, and educational management fields, linking language and academic contents through the appropriate usage of the mother tongue and foreign language in a particular social and academic context in order to contribute English or French learning in a formal and informal educational institution either public or private.

- The design of research on applied linguistics, teaching of foreign language and mother tongue, and translation fields in order to contribute to the development and innovation of theories and practices in these fields of knowledge.”

During the site visit, the teachers appreciated the competence based model, as learning outcomes and competences help the teaching staff to present the usefulness of courses and their contents transparently to students and make them more aware of what they are studying. Furthermore, competences help teachers to develop new student assessment strategies. Altogether, the programme description follows the competence-based model, and uses the descriptive format, which is prescribed by the university.

One important focus of the last revision of the programme was to strengthen the international employability of its graduates. The graduates of the programme will mostly work as foreign language teachers or as translators depending on the courses taken during their studies. With these profiles, the programme responds to the labour market demands in the region which demand language teachers in private and also public schools or translators in internationally active companies. The demand for these jobs is especially large in the Monterrey region as one of the main business regions in Mexico and with its geographical position in close vicinity to the United States of America as main trading partner. Therefore, especially proficiency in English as a foreign language is vital for Mexicans involved in international business which secures a growing demand for English language teachers throughout the entire education system.

Whereas the education of teachers for public schools is the domain of the *escuelas normales* (teacher education schools), university graduates in the field of education can only work in the private school sector. However, due to the lack of language teachers, university graduates can now also work in the public school sector. The university graduates stand out with a more academic education than graduate of the *escuelas normales*. The teaching staff notes during the site visit an especially high demand for bilingual education, i.e. the delivery of content through the medium of Spanish and English or French, at the moment.

The School tries to keep close links with employers. Therefore, it maintains its contacts with employers of the social service and the practice training and organises a yearly meeting of employers with students and regular employers' fairs on campus. The teaching staff pointed out that the UANL students have a good reputation on the labour market. According to the development plan of the Faculty, more than 80 % of the Language Sciences graduates find a job in less than six months and 95 % get a job in their field of expertise. During the site visit, the teaching staff notes that many students already find a job starting at their 6th or 7th semester thus well before graduation.

For those graduates who want to pursue their academic career, the School of Philosophy and Arts offers an MA programme in Applied Linguistics of Foreign Language Teaching and a PhD programme in Education. However, there is no MA offer specialising in Translation Studies. The teaching staff encourage students to continue with a master after their bachelor degree, as a higher academic degree increases their career opportunities and salaries. Often, as was noted by the teaching staff, graduates start working after their Bachelor degree and come back later for a Master degree.

Whereas the Language Sciences programme caters mostly to the professional job market, the programme also includes an education for research and accordingly prepares students who want to continue their academic career. The programme contains

five courses on research methods: academic writing, introduction to research, quantitative research in language sciences, qualitative research in language sciences and a thesis seminar, which add up to a total of 20 credits which corresponds to nearly one full semester of 22 credits. However, students do not have to write a compulsory thesis to finish their degree. A thesis is merely voluntary, but encouraged by the teaching staff. Since 2010, however, only 16 theses have been registered.

The Language Sciences programme has a clear international dimension since it is about teaching, learning and translation of foreign languages. Furthermore, the objective of the programme is to prepare graduates for work in an international environment. Therefore, the programme also offers international exchanges. These activities are coordinated and promoted by an international office that informs and advises interested students and supports them in their application procedures. The university also offers scholarships for outgoing students and maintains several exchange programmes, the newest with universities in Ireland and Spain. However, the absolute number of exchange students is fairly low. Since 2009 there have been 22 international exchanges. Currently, the programme hosts about five incoming students from China and Costa Rica. The teaching staff of the programme is predominantly Mexican.

The teaching staff sees a major reason for the low level of outgoing student exchange the high costs involved, which are often not affordable for the Mexican students at a public university. Similar reasons do also apply to outgoing staff mobility. Many of the students are also working during their studies. The students also mention that they prefer to finish their degree quickly, some of them plan to go abroad after their studies. As reasons for the low level of incoming mobility the teaching staff mentions the security situation which used to be bad in recent years in Monterrey due to the high level of violence. As the situation seems to be improving, mobility should increase as well, especially as the programme used to be more popular for foreign students and staff before. Due to the security situation the programme also has difficulties with collaborative agreements, especially with universities in English speaking countries.

Assessment

According to the expert team, the objectives of the Language Sciences programme are well in line with the profile of the university and do reflect the competence-based academic model of the university. The programme objectives are clearly defined and the intended learning outcomes and competences do reflect the necessary competences in the field of the programme. However, the expert team also notes that on the level of individual courses the learning outcomes seem to mention some learning outcomes that do not completely fit the respective course. This is due to the documentation format provided by the university that lists a comprehensive list of learning outcomes for each course, which do not always fit individual courses.

The expert team appreciates the focus the programme gives to employability without neglecting the academic and theoretical foundation of the programme in applied linguistics. The documentation provided and the discussions during the site visit prove that the employability of the graduates is good. This applied especially to graduates specialising in language teaching. The employability seems to be less pronounced in the field of translation as there are fewer direct links to employers and as students of translation have fewer possibilities for practical training during their studies. The statement during the site visit that graduates in the field of translation often have jobs both in translation and language teaching supports this observation.

The expert team acknowledges research-related activities in the programme which stretch through the entire curriculum and will give graduates a solid foundation to write a research-based thesis and continue with a master degree. On the other hand, however, the programme lacks in research content as the research output by its staff is comparatively low. This applies especially to the field of translation studies where there are hardly any research staff. Thus, the expert team sees a disproportion between the research done in the school and the weight of research related classes in the curriculum.

Although there are a number of research-related mandatory courses in the programme, a thesis at the end of the programme is entirely voluntary, with the consequence that hardly any student writes one, although the teaching staff encourage the writing of a thesis. It seemed to the expert team as if the sheer quantity of research-related courses in fact discourages students from pursuing research.

Altogether, the expert team is convinced that the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme meet the international academic standards of the discipline. Graduates of the Language Sciences programme should be in principle well prepared to continue a Master programme at universities internationally. The learning outcomes are ambitious for a Bachelor level programme. The teaching staff proved to be well qualified for the provision of the programme in the field of language teaching. In the field of translation the expert team notes a tight personnel level.

The experts commend the programme for its highly committed staff in the international office and the good support provided to interested students and staff and note a high dedication to internationalisation in the entire programme. The absolute level of internationalisation is, however, rather low – although growing – for a programme related to foreign languages. Especially for the proficiency in foreign languages the contact with native speakers is vital. On the other hand, the expert team acknowledges the difficult situation of UANL to increase internationalisation and exchange due to adverse external conditions. The difficult security situation in the country and the low salary level compared to the target countries impedes exchange of students and staff and employment of native speaking teaching staff.

As mobility in the programme is low and difficult to realise for the majority of the students, the programme could strengthen the internationalisation at home by providing students with internationally related contents in the study programme. This could be achieved by international lecturers or by adding international contents to the courses. Especially language and translation sciences do not only live from the linguistics and literature alone but also from the socio-cultural context which produced the language and which helps to understand it. Especially the recent academic developments in the field of translation studies stress the importance of the cultural context for translation.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends reconsidering the research-related parts of the curriculum. The current curriculum awards a large quantity of credits for research in a programme, which mainly caters to the labour market. A possibility could be to reduce the number of courses directly related to research and integrate some of their contents into the professional training courses. This could strengthen the applicability of the research methodologies for students. Another possibility could be reducing research courses in the compulsory part of the curriculum and moving them to the elective area which would allow students who plan to continue with a master to specialise in research methods.

The expert team recommends further strengthening the international dimension of the programme. This should be done on two levels: strengthening international exchange of students and staff and strengthening the internationalisation at home for those students, who are not able to participate in an exchange.

In order to strengthen international exchange, the existing support services and scholarships should be made more public. Therefore, the programme should continue its path to use students who already did an exchange as multipliers. Furthermore, all teaching staff should stress the importance of an international exchange for language training and should encourage students to consider an exchange year. These efforts could be accompanied by transparent recognition procedures that allow students to continue their studies without loss of time. The expert team also recommends establishing close relations with foreign universities as well as with international exchange organisations – i.e. via ACA, the European Academic Cooperation Association and its members – to increase the possibilities for exchange scholarships for students and staff.

In order to strengthen internationalisation at home, the programme should increase its efforts in internationalising its teaching staff. This could also be achieved by inviting international short-term lecturers for block seminars or summer courses. Furthermore, the programme could strengthen internationally related contents to its courses and put a stronger emphasis on the socio-cultural context of language.

3.2 Curriculum

Current status

The Language Sciences programme is a ten semester programme on the Bachelor level. It uses a cumulative credit system with 22 credits per semester which add up to a total of 220 credits for the programme. One credit corresponds to 30 working hours and comprises class hours and free study time. Currently, the curriculum is in transition to the newly developed study plan as shown below which now runs in its third semester.

In Mexico, university education also includes a general education. At UANL this general education is twofold. In the first two semesters students study 40 credits of core curriculum courses, which are provided by the School of Philosophy and Arts for all their students and cover the study of social life and human development, providing students with a deep understanding in a holistic way of how culture evolves in a social-historical construct. These courses are, thus, not directly linked to the contents of the programme. The second part is 20 credits of general university education courses which are spread across all ten semesters and which provide graduates with comprehensive training and general competences for their degree. Each faculty of the university offers courses specific for their study programmes. Thus, these courses also include knowledge applicable to teaching and translation where students learn to apply their linguistic knowledge to teaching or translation. However, students are allowed to take these general courses in any school of the university.

During the site visit, the students criticised the 'late' start (third semester) of studying the real subject since the core curriculum courses do not include much language related content. According to the teachers' point of view the added value of the general education will be perceptible by the end of the studies.

Study plan of the Language Sciences Programme

1st Semester	2nd Semester	3rd Semester	4th Semester	5th Semester
2C Communicative Competence M GUEC	2C Application of Information technologies M GUEC	2C Arts appreciation M GUEC	2C Environment and sustainability M GUEC	2C Professional social context M GUEC
4C History of mankind M CCC	4C Contemporary history M CCC	4C Introduction to linguistics M PTC	4C Structural grammar M PTC	4C Comparative grammar M PTC
4C Development of scientific knowledge M CCC	4C Methodological approach in human and cultural sciences M CCC	4C Academic writing M PTC	4C Introduction to research M PTC	4C Quantitative research in language sciences M PTC
4C Human societies M CCC	4C Dynamic of social change M CCC	4C Elective PTC a) Learning psychology of English language b) Learning psychology of French language c) Contrastive translation and writing E PTC	4C Elective PTC III a) Educational psychology of English language b) Educational psychology of French language c) Methods and procedures of translation M PTC	4C Comparative phonetics and phonology M PTC
4C Philosophical and anthropological perspectives in culture interpretation M CCC	4C Debates and contemporary problems in human and cultural sciences M CCC			4C Introduction to literary genre M PTC
4C Social and cultural problems of the world M CCC	4C Social and cultural Mexican problems M CCC	8C Elective PTC II a) Intermediate English b) Intermediate French E PTC	8C Elective PTC IV a) Advanced English b) Advanced French E PTC	4C Elective PTC V a) Teaching methodology of English language b) Teaching methodology of French language c) Translation methodology M PTC
22 C	22 C	22 C	22 C	22 C

Symbology					
	GUEC General University Education Courses		PTC Professional Training Courses	Elective	E
	CCC Core Curriculum Courses		ECA Elective Curricular Area	Mandatory	M
	SS Social Service			Credits UNAL 30 hrs	C

6th Semester	7th Semester	8th Semester	9th Semester	10th Semester
2C Selected topics on social sciences, arts and humanities E GUEC	2C Selected topics on academic and professional development E GUEC	2C Selected topics on foreign languages and cultures E GUEC	22C Professional practices Semiotics Anthropological linguistics Hermeneutics Modern writing Ethics of education Management of groups in language teaching Audiovisual translation Dubbing and subtitling lab Consecutive interpretation lab Foreign language certification lab Terminology and translation Educational management and administration Pronunciation workshop Educational communication Creative writing E	2C Ethics, society and profession M GUEC
4C Functional grammar M PTC	4C Discourse Analysis M PTC	4C Selected topics on human development, health and sports E GUEC		4C Professional overview of language sciences M PTC
4C Qualitative research in language sciences M PTC	4C Thesis seminar M PTC	4C Elective PTC VIII a) Design and planning of English language courses b) Design and planning of French language courses c) Literary translation M PTC		4C Psycholinguistics M PTC
4C Semantics M PTC	4C Sociolinguistics M PTC	16C Social Service M SS		4C Renaissance Literature M PTC
4C Contemporary literature M PTC	4C Romantic literature M CCC			8C Elective PTC IX a) Teaching practice of English language b) Teaching practice of French language c) Practice of simultaneous interpretation E PTC
4C Elective PCT VI a) Methodology of English-Spanish bilingual education b) Methodology of French-Spanish bilingual education c) Translation of technical texts E PTC	4C Elective PTC a) Learning evaluation of English language b) Learning evaluation of French language c) Inverse translation of legal texts O PTC			
22 C	22 C	22 C	22 C	22 C

Symbology					
	GUEC General University Education Courses		PTC Professional Training Courses	Elective	E
	CCC Core Curriculum Courses		ECA Elective Curricular Area	Mandatory	M
	SS Social Service			Credits UNAL 30 hrs	C

The main part of the study plan includes 122 credits of professional training courses, which stretch from the third to the tenth semester. The professional training courses provide a thorough education in applied linguistics which comprises courses on linguistics plus literature and research methods. These courses provide the linguistic foundation for both language teaching and translation. This curricular area also includes 46 credits for electives, where students can choose courses related to the three main programme specialisations of English language teaching, French language teaching and translation. The ninth semester is entirely devoted to the elective curricular area of 22 credits, where students can freely choose elective courses which can be related to their studies but also courses from other faculties.

The eighth semester includes social service worth 16 credits. The social service is compulsory for all UANL undergraduate students and is administered by the Social Service Department which advises students and guides them through the social service. For the Language Sciences programme the social service can be used as a teaching practice in one of the university high schools or in a private school.

While the programme used to have defined tracks that students had to choose, the current study plan gives students more flexibility in choosing their elective courses. This was changed due to recommendations of the national accreditation, which recommended more flexibility in the study plan and due to university regulations which do not allow fixed tracks within one study programme. As a result, tracks or majors are no longer mentioned on the degree certificate.

The programme, however, still allows students to specialise in one of the four areas English language teaching, French language teaching, bilingual education and translation. There are no specific courses on bilingual education in the electives, but bilingual education is implemented in several courses within the professional training courses. Semesters three and four are usually considered as orientation where students can find out their preferences for the specialisations offered in the programme. In order to assist students in their selection of courses the programme has implemented a tutoring system. At the beginning of the semester the programme coordinator holds an information meeting to guide students through the course selection process. Additionally, each student has one of the teachers as tutor who advises them on the choice of electives and career opportunities. It is recommended for a proper specialised education in one of the fields to follow at least 90 % of the specialised courses. The electives in the ninth semester allow students to take missing courses or to add a "minor" to their qualification profile.

Whereas the courses of the general education are taught in Spanish, the professional training courses are taught in the target language (English/French) or bilingually. Therefore, the programme requires a good language proficiency level. The programme, however, does not include a compulsory foreign language acquisition. Due to the recent programme change to a credit system, language courses had to be eliminated as they did not fit any more within the maximum amount of credits for the programme. The programme offers, however, additional optional language courses in the School's own Language Centre. These courses are paid but subsidised for students of the programme. Additionally, there are opportunities for scholarships.

Together with the admission test for the programme, prospective students also take a language exam, which determines their language proficiency level. Based on the results of the exam, the programme recommends students to take appropriate language courses in the Language Centre. These courses are usually taken during the first four semesters. According to university regulations, language proficiency is not allowed to be established as an admission requirement for the programme due to equity reasons. This, however, leads according to the teaching staff to wide heterogeneity in language

proficiency. Especially the French teachers mentioned during the site visit that language proficiency of students has declined in the new programme and is sometime too low for them to follow classes.

The curriculum also provides some opportunities for practical training, especially in teaching. The professional training courses include micro teaching which starts in the sixth semester and ten hours of supervised teaching practice in the tenth semester. The supervision may also include videotaping of the session and individual feedback by the teacher. Additionally, students can use their social service to teach in different types of schools (high schools and primary schools), which is recommended for students specialising in teaching. However, due to the large demand for social service in teaching, both students and teachers admit that there are not enough places for all interested students to do their social service in the desired field. Students also would appreciate more and earlier opportunities to practice teaching.

In the field of translation students have the opportunity to practice translation and interpretation in the language lab. These sessions are recorded and students get individual feedback from their teachers. However, students specialising in translation do not have the opportunity to do social service related to their professional field. This lack is mentioned by teachers and students during the site visit.

The programme uses a wide variety of teaching and learning methods. Types of classes include lectures, seminars, workshop or field work and practice in the language lab. The courses include about 80 % in class hours and about 20 % out of classroom hours. According to the teaching staff, the out of classroom hours were increased in the new programme structure. Following the competence based academic model, teaching and learning methods include collaborative work, assessment, authentic assessment and project based learning. The programme strives for a close link between developing theoretical skills and implementing these skills to teaching or translation.

Assessment

According to the expert team, the curriculum provides a thorough and rigorous applied linguistics education and offers a good combination of a theoretical linguistic foundation and its practical application to strengthen the employability of the graduates. By and large, the programme provides students with the necessary knowledge for their future profession. The compulsory modules give students the foundation of language sciences and educate them as specialists in language sciences who know the language system. Furthermore, the curriculum provides the communicative skills necessary in the discipline.

However, the experts note that the language proficiency of the students is not guaranteed due to the lack of language acquisition courses in the curriculum. The language exam at the beginning of the programme gives students recommendations on optional language courses, but the experts are not sure whether an optional language acquisition, which additionally is not included in the tuition, will be used by all students who need it. Especially, it seemed that not all students are aware of the scholarship opportunities for language classes of the Language Centre. The experts acknowledge, however, that both programme teachers and the School are in favour of a language prerequisite as an admission condition but that university regulations do not allow for its implementation.

The experts are also not sure, whether abolishing the previously defined tracks was in the interest of the students. It became clear during the session with the students that the students of the old programme strongly identify with their chosen track. According to the expert team, the courses offered within one track provide a coherent knowledge

profile in the specific discipline. The absence of these tracks may lead to a lack of competences of graduates especially as the experts doubt that Bachelor graduates can be specialists in both language teaching and translation. It would be preferable to specialise in one of the fields to do a professional job as a bachelor graduate. Therefore the experts commend the programme to its tutoring system, which guides the students through the programme and advises them in the selection of courses. Again, the experts note that the tracks were abolished due to university regulations and not the choice of the programme management.

The programme provides good opportunities for practical training in the field of foreign language teaching. The social service proves to be an ideal opportunity to integrate practical training in the programme. The programme should, however, take care that it provides enough places for all students and assures that students are allowed to actually teach during the social service. A more systematic supervision, especially the supervision of teaching during the social service could greatly improve the effectiveness of the practical training. The experts are as well in favour of an earlier introduction of micro teaching while reducing it in later stages of the curriculum in favour of real teaching.

In the field of translation there are fewer practical training opportunities. Apart from practices in the translation lab, there are hardly any real life practical experiences offered as the social service does not offer many opportunities for translators.

The expert team sees the programme as well positioned in the field of foreign language teacher training. With its strong foundation in linguistics the programme provides solid methodologies for teaching languages in general that can be applied to several languages, something, which is highly appreciated by the students. Some of the students for example also learn languages, which are not in the core of the programme. The programme also provides teaching methodologies for different target audiences from children to adolescents and adults, which open wide employment opportunities for the graduates. The students confirm that they feel well prepared to teach young children and have the possibility to practice with young children. While the sequence of courses seems by and large well balanced, the experts would place the course "Pronunciation" earlier in the curriculum as it helps students to learn the correct pronunciation as early as possible. Also the course "Psycholinguistics" could be placed earlier as it lays the foundation to language teaching methodologies. Finally, the expert team notes that literature classes are placed rather late in the curriculum.

The translation specialisation of the programme seems to be less balanced to the expert team. The courses offered cover most of the relevant topics in translation theory, interpreting and audio-visual translation. It is, however, even more vital that students are well guided through the programme by its tutors as only the complete set of courses will provide comprehensive skills in translation studies. Altogether, the courses offered are rather general and do not provide very specialised knowledge for specific fields in translation. The focus of the programme is also rather on linguistics and neglects cultural issues of translation. This contrasts with recent developments in European translation sciences, which tends towards stronger specialisation and consideration of cultural issues in translation.

A gap in the programme is the topic of translation technologies and tools which is a well established topic and of high academic and practical relevance for future translators. Some software packages such as Wordfast are mentioned in one class and enough licences exist for the programme, but it seems that the software is not used systematically. The topic of translation technologies and tools should, however, be an addition to the curriculum. The students also note that they missed more subjects re-

lated to interpretation in the curriculum. Altogether the experts leave with the impression that the translation specialisation seems to be an addition to an applied linguistics programme.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends spreading the general education of the first two semesters across a longer time period. This would allow starting with the language education at an earlier stage of the programme and give the students the possibility to identify earlier with their principal field of studies.

The experts strongly recommend adding compulsory language classes to the curriculum, especially for the French language. Language proficiency is an indispensable prerequisite for language teachers and translators and would lead to a more homogeneous level of language proficiency in the professional training courses. The programme should consider reducing some topics of the general education of the research related courses in favour of language acquisition.

For a more effective practical training of the teacher training the experts recommend slightly restructuring the practical education. Micro teaching should be used especially in the early part of the curriculum in order to expose students as early as possible to teaching situations. In later parts of the curriculum real teaching situations should prevail and supervision should be systematised. The programme could rely more strongly on the social service as an integral part of the practical training for the programme and assure enough teaching places for all students and which are supervised and implemented in the curriculum.

The expert team strongly recommends strengthening the practical training for the translation part of the programme. The programme could establish relationships with local translation companies to provide places for internships. Another possibility could be setting up a student-run translation company which could offer translation services in a semi-commercial way for the university or for partner enterprises. This could be integrated in the social service.

The programme should consider moving contents such as pronunciation, psycholinguistics and literature to an earlier stage in the curriculum. Research related courses could be offered at a later stage in turn.

The expert team strongly recommends adding a course on translation technologies and tools to the curriculum to keep up with current developments of the discipline and the profession. The programme could seek contact with software manufacturers in order to support the university in training the teaching staff and equipping the language lab with relevant software and technologies.

3.3 Organisation of the study programme

Current situation

Students are admitted to the Language Science programme on the basis of a valid high school diploma and their score from the EXAN-II test, a national diagnostic test that prospective university students have to take. The School of Philosophy and Arts then selects the students to be admitted on the basis of the test results. Students of Language Sciences also have to take a diagnostic English exam, which determines

their level of language proficiency. This is, as described above, not used as a selection criterion.

Students also have the opportunity to get recognition for courses in the field taken at other universities. Therefore, the Head of Department analyses together with the relevant teacher in the field the courses on the basis of syllabi and determines the equivalence.

The study process itself is organised in semesters. Semesters have a duration of 20 weeks with 17 weeks of coursework and an exam period of three weeks. Students usually take six courses per semester. The teaching and learning process takes place in groups of about 30 students. The Language science programme is offered in two separate shifts. One group of students is studying in the morning, the other group of students studies the same courses in the evening. The evening shift caters especially to students who work already. Language classes of the Language Centre are usually offered in the afternoon, so that students of both shifts are able to attend.

As the programme uses a credit system, students can graduate once they have accumulated the necessary number of credits for their degree. Alternatives to accumulation are to write an exam or to write a thesis. These alternatives are not compulsory and only used by few students. In the discussions with the students and teachers, the expert team was satisfied that the workload of the programme is manageable.

The programme management mostly relies on its teachers. Apart from their teaching load and research all teachers have duties in tutoring and administration. Thus, the majority of the teachers have a function in the management of the programme or the School such as programme coordination, internationalisation, social service, general studies, community projects, research coordination and different student support services. The main responsibility for the management and organisation of the programme falls to the programme coordinator. The Language Sciences programme has – as a large programme of the School – additionally an assistant. The programme management is the main contact for both students and teachers and is responsible for planning the teaching and learning process, quality assurance, and serves as liaison to the Dean of the School.

The teachers also serve as tutors for the students. Each student is assigned to a tutor, who advises them in the organisation of the programme, course selection and administrative issues and individually supports their learning process. The tutors also motivate students and help them with any problems that may arise during their studies. The students appreciate this close relationship to their teachers.

Assessment

According to the expert team the Language Sciences programme is well organised. The organisation of the study process is clear and students have good support by their tutors who guide them through the programme. The roles and responsibilities in the management are clearly and appropriately structured. The experts especially appreciate that most of the teachers are involved in the management of the programme which leads to a good sense of community which was recognisable during the site visit. Particularly the dedication of the programme coordinator and the assistant are to be commended.

Through the tutor system, the students receive a good support during their studies. The experts believe that this is especially important in order to guide the students so that they make sensible choices with regard to their graduation qualifications as the

formal tracks, which existed in the previous version of the programme, are no longer extant.

The admission regulations seem to be sensible, although the experts would support the programme in setting language proficiency as an admission requirement. Having heard the students, the expert team believes that the workload of the programme is reasonable.

3.4 Student assessment

Current status

According to the competence based academic model of the university, the Language Sciences programme implements competence oriented student assessment. The programme uses – depending on the subjects and competences of the course – different types of assessments such as exams, final (research) projects at end of a course, presentations, teaching preparations or portfolio assessments. Teachers decide in teams on the appropriate assessments of a course.

At the beginning of the course, teachers present the type of assessment to the students. The dates of the examinations are published in a calendar of examinations. The teachers use rubrics as assessment criteria. These were developed by the teachers during a common workshop.

Examination regulations are codified in the “Reglamento Interno” which applies to all programmes of the school and which regulates all conventional aspects related to student assessment. According to these regulations, students have up to six attempts to pass an exam.

The programme also offers the possibility to write a thesis, although this is not a compulsory part of the programme. Mostly students interested in research do write theses. The teachers motivate students to do so as degrees with a thesis usually also increase employment opportunities of the graduates. Since 2010, 16 theses have been registered.

Assessment

The expert team appreciates the variety of assessment methods used in the programme. The amount and organisation of the assessments seem to be appropriate and the examples of exams reviewed during the site visit correspond to a Bachelor's degree. Defined assessment criteria exist and are transparent. However, the experts note that the grading system is used inconsistently. The system sometimes stretches from one to seven sometimes from one to four. Usually the highest grade marks the best result, but there are exceptions where the scale is reversed. The expert team also questions the regulation that students have six attempts to pass an exam as this could tie a large amount of teacher's workload to assess exams. According to the teachers, these cases are rare and the great majority of students pass after the second attempt as teachers usually give special care to students who fail their first exam. The expert team regrets that a thesis is not a compulsory part of the programme as it could increase the research orientation of the programme and encourage the programme to motivate students writing a thesis as the research oriented courses of the programme give students a good preparation for their thesis.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends harmonising the grading system for more transparency.

The experts encourage the programme to increase their efforts to motivate and support students to write a thesis. Especially students interested in research and those who want to continue with a master degree should be encouraged to write a thesis.

3.5 Quality assurance

Current status

The main responsibility for quality assurance and programme development lies with the teaching staff. The main objectives and the strategy for the development of the programme portfolio of the faculty is laid down in the Strategic Plan of the School of Philosophy and Arts which is aligned to the objectives and strategies of the university strategic plan.

On the programme level, the main decisions regarding quality assurance are taken in agreement with the colleagues working in the programme. At the beginning of the semester there is a meeting to plan the activities of the semester and organise the programme. During the semester, regular meetings take place and at the end, there is an evaluation meeting to discuss the entire semester and the teaching methodologies of the programme and innovations in education and translation. The teachers reported during the site visit that they were in charge of developing the new programme. To be prepared for the development, they received a workshop on programme development.

On the level of the faculty, strategic discussions and quality assurance is the task of the programme board whose members are the dean, the academic secretary and the programme coordinators, who hold monthly meetings to discuss general and specific aspects regarding the programmes of the School.

The general quality assurance strategy of the university is to allow programmes to seek individual international programme accreditations. In general, all programmes in Mexico are programme accredited by the national quality assurance agencies. This also applies to all programmes of the School of Philosophy and Arts. UANL additionally seeks international programme accreditation for its programmes in order to improve its programmes according to international standards and to develop programmes that are among the best in its fields in Mexico. Therefore, the university works with a pool of international quality assurance agencies, e.g. from Chile, Argentina, USA, UK, Germany, etc. The programme to be accredited may select the agency that fits best its profile.

In order to support the quality assurance in the programme, the School employs a series of surveys that provide feedback to the teachers. The General Performance Survey is a course feedback survey by students, which is carried out every semester for each course. The teachers receive the results for the reflection of their professional development. Moreover, they are also used to determine promotion and training for teaching staff. The Graduate Survey asks students who are about to graduate about the programme in general. The Work Environment Survey and the Teaching Methodology and Teacher Evaluation Survey asked teachers about the working conditions and about the quality of the teaching process. These instruments are used by the evaluation office of the School of Philosophy and Arts, which also provides statistical information on the study programmes of the faculty. Other surveys are from time to time

launched on the university level; among them a survey of employers is currently being conducted. The results of these instruments are discussed and used in the programme development meetings.

During the site visit, the experts discussed the issue of drop-outs from the Language Sciences programmes, which seems to be relatively high (about 30 %). To reduce the drop-out rate, the teachers are currently planning strategies. According to the teaching staff, a common reason for drop-out is that students leave the programme in order to improve their language skills and come back to the programme later. The university statistics, however, do not yet account for these cases.

The teachers are mainly in charge of quality assurance, however, other stakeholders are also involved in these processes, either indirectly via the survey or directly in decision making bodies. The main body on the level of the faculties is the Faculty Board, a body with 100 persons (half teachers, half students) which takes decisions according to the majority principle. As teachers are in close contact with students as their tutors, arising problems can be detected early. Students are also closely involved in the management of the university as they get student positions in many of the administrative services and offices of university and School. The teachers also keep close contact with employers via the social service and regular employment related events at the university. Additionally, many employers in the field of Language Sciences are former students of the programme themselves.

Assessment

The expert team values the high commitment and integration of the teaching staff in the development of the study programme and its quality assurance. The quality assurance involves most of the teaching staff. Specific tasks are distributed to different persons in order to spread the tasks and responsibilities. The main coordination, however, is done by the programme coordinator.

In general, the experts assess the internal quality assurance of the programme as functional. The regular meetings on the programme level ensure that teachers discuss quality related issues on a regular basis and are able to react quickly to emerging problems. The close contact to students allows the programme to include student feedback closely in the development process. The regular meetings on the level of the School allow the discussion of common issues and alignment with the School strategy.

According to the self-documentation and the discussions during the site visit, the internal quality assurance relies mainly on qualitative information and the discussions among teaching staff. There was no evidence that structured quantitative information – apart from the survey results – is used on a systematic basis although the School maintains an evaluation office that could be able to provide such information. This could help the programme tackling some specific issues, such as giving more detailed information in order to discuss possible reasons and solutions for drop-out.

Accreditations seem to be well integrated in the quality assurance system. The national accreditations are complemented by international accreditations for those study programmes that wish to improve their international reputation and their results are used for the improvement of the programmes. The Language Science programme for example implemented the language exam and the translation lab due to recommendations from the national accreditation.

The expert team commends the programme for its community spirit which was felt clearly during the site visit and which strongly nurtures a quality culture in the programme. Teaching staff are highly committed to their teaching tasks and devote much

of their time to it. It was evident, that the programme strongly relies on the team work of its teachers to manage and constantly improve the programme. Additionally, by taking over administrative tasks, the teachers share the responsibility for managing the programme and the School. Also students are well involved in the management of the programme as they assist their teachers with administrative functions.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends to closely monitor the performance of the newly developed programme. Therefore, the programme should set clear and observable objectives. These should be in line with the objectives of the redesign of the programme in order to find out whether the new programme design meets its expectation or whether adjustments might be advisable. This could be done within the current quality assurance of the programme taking into account the issues mentioned by the expert team in the previous chapters.

The programme may consider using more systematic quantitative information on the programme performance in order to detect emerging problems more easily and find possible solutions. For large programmes as the Language Science programme, quantitative information may provide a highly valuable addition to qualitative information and direct feedback of students.

3.6 Resources

Current situation

Funding

As a public university UANL receives funding from three sources: from the federal government (66 %), from the state government (24 %) and from its own institutional funding sources (10 %). The institutional funding sources are student tuition fees and – in the case of the School of Philosophy and Arts – income from services such as the Language Centre. Salaries are fixed by union contracts and funded by the central university. The faculties also receive competitive funding on the basis of predefined criteria (e.g. internationalisation). The budget for the Language Sciences programme in 2014 amounts to ca. 27 Mio pesos (ca. 1.6 Mio €).

Staff

Teaching staff at Mexican universities have in general four functions: teaching, tutoring, research and administration among which teaching is the main function. Research is not a primary obligation of teachers, but teachers can earn higher salaries if they do successful research. Teachers are able to apply for research projects to a national body and will receive a salary component when successful. Nevertheless, the teaching staff report that it is not easy to carry out research, as teaching loads are usually high, thus, the research output of the School is rather low. In the Language Science programme full time teachers often have a teaching load of 20 hours per week plus ten hours tutoring which is higher than in many European universities. As university salaries are usually comparatively low, some of the teachers have an additional job.

The Language Sciences Department employs currently 56 professors, 28 of them in full time and 28 in part time employment. Six of them have a PhD degree and 45 hold a Master degree. 17 are in the process of doing a PhD, eleven of them at Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas, which cooperates with the department. The majority of the teaching staff have their expertise in applied linguistics and teacher training. Only about eight persons have their main field of expertise in translation studies. According to the programme management, it is difficult for the university to hire teaching staff in the translation field as the job market is rather tight and the salaries at the university are comparatively low.

The recruiting decisions are taken by the Head of Department and the Dean of the School after reviewing the qualifications and profile of the candidate. The process is completed by the Human Resources Department. During the site visit it turned out that high numbers of the academic staff are alumni of the Language Sciences programme.

The School is aware of the fact that only a low number of its academic staff hold a PhD degree. Therefore, the School supports the academic development of its staff members which is demonstrated by the number of staff members who are currently doing the PhD. The School plans to increase its ratio of academic staff members with PhD to about 40 %. PhD candidates can receive a scholarship from the school, which supports them during the dissertation phase. There are also national scholarships for professional development available, however, these would, according to the information given by the School, require that the staff members had to devote all of their time to research and their PhD which would prevent them from continuing teaching in that time.

Facilities

The Language Sciences programme uses the building of the School of Philosophy and Arts on the main campus of UANL. Additionally, the School has a separate building for its Language Centre. Currently, the main building is getting too small for the potential student intake of the programme. The Language Sciences programme had to reduce the number of admissions to cope with the capacity of its premises. Currently, the School is constructing a new building with additional classrooms in order to adjust to the students' demand. The building will open in summer 2015.

Apart from a central library, the School of Philosophy and Arts has a faculty library, which also offers books for the Language Sciences programme, a wide variety of databases and workspaces for students. The programme also uses a translation lab, which provides facilities for interpretation, dubbing and audio-visual translation. The lab also has 30 licences for the Wordfast translation software package.

For its teachers, the School provides an open-plan office with individual cubicles. Furthermore, the university provides the self-developed e-learning platform Nexus, which can be used by the teachers. The campus has Wi-Fi-Internet connection, which, however could according to teachers and students be improved.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the funding as adequate to sustain the programme.

The academic staff is – according to the experts – in number and qualification in general adequate for a programme on the Bachelor level and qualified to teach and to take exams for the Language Science programme. The number of teaching staff ensures a good student support. The expert team commends the teachers for their high commitment and devotion to teaching despite their high teaching load. They also appreciate

the efforts the School devotes to staff development. The experts nevertheless would prefer a higher academic profile of the teaching staff and a stronger commitment on research, as active research nurtures teaching on an academic level and inspires students to develop critical thinking and pursue research themselves.

Whereas the academic staff is well qualified in the field of applied linguistics and teacher training, the expert team sees deficits in the field of translation. The School employs only few explicit translation scientists, some classes are taught by applied linguists. The experts especially miss a specialist in translation technologies.

The high teaching load and the strong focus on teaching together with the low academic profile of the academic staff leads in turn to a rather low level of research in the programme. This also applies in particular to the field of translation studies, where there are barely any publications. A higher research output, however, could greatly increase the reputation of the School and the programme.

In terms of staff recruitment, the experts get the impression that the programme strongly relies on its own graduates and alumni as future teachers. This increases the community spirit but implies the danger of creating a self-replicating system which may reduce innovation.

The facilities of the programme are in general adequate for the Language Sciences programme. The library provides a large number of books, a wide variety of databases and good technological equipment. However, the number of books seems to be inadequate for a large programme as Language Sciences and many of the books are rather old. The number of French books is low. Although the translation lab offers in general good learning opportunities for students, it does not provide enough opportunities for training with translation tools and software. Wordfast is available, but it is apparently not used systematically and other software packages do not exist. The School confirmed, however, that in general, technical support for new tools and software would be available.

The experts support the decision of the School to invest in a new building in order to be able to meet the demand of the programme in the future. The experts also assert that the main part of the resources is devoted to the field of teacher education which is well staffed and endowed. The field of translation seemed to be less well resourced. Also the library – while being technologically well equipped – seems to lack recent books.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends strengthening the academic profile of the programme's teaching staff by increasing the number of teachers with PhD. Therefore, it should put more effort into staff development, for example by reducing teaching hours for teachers who are doing a PhD.

The programme should increase its efforts of hiring academic staff in the field of translation sciences. This field is only short staffed to cover the current fields in translation studies, especially experts in translation tools and software are missing. Apart from hiring new staff, the programme could as well consider retraining its current staff. The School could seek support in offering those trainings with translation software manufacturers. With better staffing the translation specialisation of the programme could greatly benefit as it would cover the complete width of the discipline and provide students the latest knowledge in the field. Furthermore, a larger faculty could reach a critical mass and increase its research output in the field.

The expert team invites the School to increase its search radius for academic staff in order to increase the diversity and heterogeneity of academic backgrounds of its teachers and increase its internationalisation. A higher heterogeneity may increase the innovative potential of academic staff by bringing in new thinking and new methods to the programme.

The expert team recommends the university to increase its efforts in the field of research in order to strengthen the academic profile of the university, the School and the programme. The experts are well aware of the structural constraints given by the current high teaching load of its academic staff. Nevertheless, research remains one of the prime tasks of a university and informs academic teaching and learning. Therefore, the experts invite the university to think about ways to set the condition for more research.

The experts invite the School to reconsider the current deployment of resources and devote more resources to the library in order to provide enough modern books for its students and teachers and to the field of translation studies in order to better staff the field and to provide modern translation tools and software to keep up the field with recent developments in the discipline. Therefore, the programme should get in contact with translation software companies, which sometimes make their products freely available to university translation programmes.

3.7 Overall assessment

The expert team assesses the Language Sciences overall as a solid Bachelor level programme that prepares students well for their future jobs as foreign language teachers and translators.

The programme objectives are clearly defined, convincing and well implemented in the programme structure. The programme meets clear societal demands and offers its students an education geared towards the needs of the labour market in the field.

The curriculum and the study process are clearly structured and appropriate to reach the intended learning outcomes. The programme is strongly based on a rigorous applied linguistics education which offers its students a solid knowledge base on which they can specialise in their desired field. This specialisation process is accompanied by the tutors who guide the students through the programme. The expert team considers this guidance process as extremely important as the structure of the curriculum does not provide predefined tracks for the four specialisations offered in the programme: English language teaching, French language teaching, bilingual education, and translation. While the curriculum ensures students a comprehensive education in the field of foreign language teaching, the translation curriculum covers the basics of the field but lacks coverage of modern translation tools and software.

The experts miss an integrated foreign language education in the core curriculum of the programme which would assure an early and homogeneous language acquisition of students and a high level of language proficiency for the professional training courses of the programme. Another field of development are the practical training opportunities, especially in the field of translation.

The experts were impressed by the high dedication of the academic staff for teaching and constant improvement of the programme quality despite their high workloads and the respectful and cooperative culture in the programme which allows the academic

staff to work together as a team. They encourage the School to pursue the necessary efforts to develop the academic profile of its teaching staff.

3.8 Accreditation recommendation

According to the expert team, the Language Sciences programme of UANL meets the criteria for programme accreditation. Therefore, the expert team recommends awarding the **evalag** label for programme accreditation. The team recommends that UANL should consider and implement the recommendations in this report to further improve the programme.

3.9 Statement of the university

3. Programme assessment

3.1 Programme profile

Recommendations

The expert team recommends reconsidering the research-related parts of the curriculum. The current curriculum awards a large quantity of credits for research in a programme which mainly caters to the labour market. A possibility could be to reduce the number of courses directly related to research and integrate some of their contents into the professional training courses. This could strengthen the applicability of the research methodologies for students. Another possibility could be reducing research courses in the compulsory part of the curriculum and moving them to the elective area which would allow students who plan to continue with a master to specialise in research methods.

Reply

The Language Sciences programme contains four compulsory courses related to research: Introduction to research, Quantitative research in language sciences, Qualitative research in language sciences, and Thesis seminar, which was a strong recommendation given by COAPEHUM (a national accreditation organization in Mexico) since the previous programme contained two compulsory courses related to research and an elective one. We have even thought about the point you are commenting and regarding your recommendations for the future programme, only two compulsory research courses will be taken into consideration, one that integrates both areas of research, quantitative and qualitative, and one more that might be a thesis seminar. This way the contents of the learning units in the professional training courses can be strengthened by research projects.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends further strengthening the international dimension of the programme. This should be done on two levels: strengthening international exchange of students and staff and strengthening the internationalisation at home for those students, who are not able to participate in an exchange.

In order to strengthen international exchange, the existing support services and scholarships should be made more public. Therefore, the programme should continue its path to use students who already did an exchange as multipliers. Furthermore, all teaching staff should stress the importance of an international exchange for language training and should encourage students to consider an exchange year. These efforts could be accompanied by transparent recognition procedures that allow students to continue their studies without loss of time. The expert team also recommends establishing close relations with foreign universities as well as with international exchange organisations – i.e. via ACA, the European Academic Cooperation Association and its members – to increase the possibilities for exchange scholarships for students and staff.

In order to strengthen internationalisation at home, the programme should increase its efforts in internationalising its teaching staff. This could also be achieved by inviting international short-term lecturers for block seminars or summer courses. Furthermore the programme could strengthen internationally related contents to its courses and put a stronger emphasis on the socio-cultural context of language.

Reply

The school has an International Academic Development Department (DDAI in Spanish) which will promote the teacher and student academic growth through the international exchange, and making its programmes and agreements with other international academic institutions more public by means of electronic and printed devices and also informative talks with students and teachers for promotion of international exchange or internships. These talks will be developed by the head of the department, the university international exchange department staff, and students who have already participated in programmes abroad.

The International Academic Development Department will reinforce the agreements already established with some foreign universities and will look for more exchange programmes related to our curricular areas. To this respect the University has Education USA and Campus France offices which the School and the program will establish closer links to promote the international exchange and internships for students and professors, and also we will look for the possibility to re-establish the British and French international assistant student for our programme. This is an academic program the Education Department of the State and the British as well the French embassy already have with this University.

3.2 Curriculum

Recommendations

The expert team recommends spreading the general education of the first two semesters across a longer time period. This would allow starting with the language education at an earlier stage of the programme and give the students the possibility to identify earlier with their principal field of studies.

Reply

According to the University Educational Model, it has been established that the first two semesters would help students find their academic identity as School of Philosophy and Arts students.

Since the University Educational Model requires students to fulfill 22 credits per semester, the first two semesters have compulsory courses, which are common to the 7 bachelor degree programmes of the School. The reason why the language courses (English and French) are not included in the first two semesters is because they require 8 credits leaving not space enough.

Recommendations

The experts strongly recommend adding compulsory language classes to the curriculum, especially for the French language. Language proficiency is an indispensable pre-

requisite for language teachers and translators and would lead to a more homogeneous level of language proficiency in the professional training courses. The programme should consider reducing some topics of the general education of the research related courses in favour of language acquisition.

Reply

Since the University Educational Model requires students to fulfil 22 credits per semester, the first two semesters have common compulsory courses to the 7 bachelor degree programmes of the School. The reason why the language courses (English and French) are not included in the first two semesters is because they require 8 credits.

After having a language diagnostic test when entering our programme, students are strongly recommended to take extracurricular English or French courses at the Language Centre of the School in the first two semesters in order to fulfil the basic knowledge of the language. To this respect, the School provides the new students with a 50% off scholarship. In third semester students join curricular Intermediate English or French course and in fourth semester, they take Advanced English or French course. From third semester towards the end of the programme students are exposed to language contents either in English or French.

Recommendations

For a more effective practical training of the teacher training the experts recommend slightly restructuring the practical education. Micro teaching should be used especially in the early part of the curriculum in order to expose students as early as possible to teaching situations. In later parts of the curriculum real teaching situations should prevail and supervision should be systematised. The programme could rely more strongly on the social service as an integral part of the practical training for the programme and assure enough teaching places for all students and which are supervised and implemented in the curriculum.

Reply

The practical education starts from fifth semester where students would do microteaching and class observation in subjects such as Teaching methodology of English/French language, in sixth semester Methodology of English-Spanish/French-Spanish bilingual education and so on up to tenth semester Teaching practice of English/French language. This academic agreement is part of the programme curriculum.

Recommendations

The expert team strongly recommends strengthening the practical training for the translation part of the programme. The programme could establish relationships with local translation companies to provide places for internships. Another possibility could be setting up a student-run translation company which could offer translation services in a semi-commercial way for the university or for partner enterprises. This could be integrated in the social service.

Reply

The Social Service Department will establish links with the different University Departments where translation is required. This programme also considers Professional Practices in ninth semester and the Social Service Department will settle down agreements with international companies.

Recommendations

The programme should consider moving contents such as pronunciation, psycholinguistics and literature to an earlier stage in the curriculum. Research related courses could be offered at a later stage in turn.

The expert team strongly recommends adding a course on translation technologies and tools to the curriculum to keep up with current developments of the discipline and the profession. The programme could seek contact with software manufacturers in order to support the university in training the teaching staff and equipping the language lab with relevant software and technologies.

Reply

From sixth semester students will have access to translation technological tools such as wordfast, trados, aegisuv, sony-studio pro, etc. The programme will seek software manufacturers to update the teaching staff of translation, as a consequence the students will receive the knowledge acquired by the teachers.

3.4 Student assessment

Recommendations

The expert team recommends harmonising the grading system for more transparency.

Reply

According to the grading system harmonisation, the University Educational Model establishes that every programme must be based on the competency development of students. As a result through the competency development, the grading system becomes friendlier and teachers make it more explicit to students. In this new programme, the traditional exam evaluation is not as relevant as it used to be.

The programme will organise academic meetings at the beginning of the semester in order to harmonise the grading system based on competencies.

Recommendations

The experts encourage the programme to increase their efforts to motivate and support students to write a thesis. Especially students interested in research and those who want to continue with a master degree should be encouraged to write a thesis.

Reply

From 2011, 14 theses have been registered at the Academy Department of the school. It is important to mention that the making of a thesis is no a requirement

to obtain the bachelor degree. The programme will continue promoting and supporting the writing of theses by means of the Colloquium of Research which is held yearly in March or April. There is a quite important scholarship provided by The Humanistic Studies Centre, which main purpose is to encourage students to do research and obtain the bachelor degree by means of writing a thesis.

3.5 Quality assurance

Recommendations

The expert team recommends to closely monitor the performance of the newly developed programme. Therefore, the programme should set clear and observable objectives. These should be in line with the objectives of the redesign of the programme in order to find out whether the new programme design meets its expectation or whether adjustments might be advisable. This could be done within the current quality assurance of the programme taking into account the issues mentioned by the expert team in the previous chapters.

Reply

The newly developed programme, which is now in fourth semester, is being monitored through academic meetings to observe how functional the programme is. In January 2015, through the academic meeting, which is held at the beginning of every semester, the outcomes of the implementation of the new programme will be discussed in detail in order to take notes and actions on the weaknesses and to keep on promoting the strengths and improving them.

Recommendations

The programme may consider using more systematic quantitative information on the programme performance in order to detect emerging problems more easily and find possible solutions. For large programmes as the Language Science programme, quantitative information may provide a highly valuable addition to qualitative information and direct feedback of students.

Reply

The School Management Department will carry on a statistical analysis to keep a record on the ongoing process of the newly developed programme and observe how effectively this is working on the reasons for dropping out and failing grades. The Tutoring Department will analyse the academic situation of the students who show a low academic performance providing them with tutors and academic support.

3.6 Resources

Funding

Recommendations

The expert team recommends strengthening the academic profile of the programme's teaching staff by increasing the number of teachers with PhD. Therefore, it should put more effort into staff development, for example by reducing teaching hours for teachers who are doing a PhD.

Reply

From the 28 full-time teachers, the programme has six teachers with PhD and sixteen more doing a PhD, so by the first semester of 2018, the programme will have 22 teachers with PhD. The number of teachers with PhD will increase up to 78.58%.

Recommendations

The programme should increase its efforts of hiring academic staff in the field of translation sciences. This field is only short staffed to cover the current fields in translation studies, especially experts in translation tools and software are missing. Apart from hiring new staff, the programme could as well consider retraining its current staff. The School could seek support in offering those trainings with translation software manufacturers. With better staffing the translation specialisation of the programme could greatly benefit as it would cover the complete width of the discipline and provide students the latest knowledge in the field. Furthermore a larger faculty could reach a critical mass and increase its research output in the field.

Reply

In the August-December 2014 semester, the programme hired one more translation teacher and in the January-June semester, one more translation teacher will be hired. As it was mentioned before, the programme will seek software manufacturers to update the teaching staff of translation, as a consequence the students will receive the knowledge acquired by the teachers.

Dec 16, 2014

4. Decision of the Accreditation Commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the study programme Licenciatura en Ciencias del Lenguaje of Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León and awarded the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation. The accreditation is valid from 28 February 2015 until 28 February 2020.

To further improve the programme the accreditation commission affirms the recommendations given by the expert team.

5. Annex

Annex 1: evalag Programme Accreditation Criteria

1. Programme profile

Profile and objectives of the programme

The expert team checks,

- whether the objectives of the programme are in line with the profile of the institution
- whether the intended learning outcomes of the programme are well defined, clear and publicly accessible
- whether the intended learning outcomes correspond to type and level of qualification provided by the programme
- whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market and contribute to the employability of the graduates
- whether the (academic) study programme is related to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research based teaching)
- whether the profile and objectives of the programme comply with internationally accepted standards
- the international dimension of the programme
- whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate with regard to profile and objectives goals of the programme

2. Curriculum

Curriculum and teaching and learning methods

The expert team checks,

- whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methods of the relevant discipline(s)
- how the learning experience is organised and whether appropriate teaching and learning methods are employed

3. Organisation of the study programme

Implementation of the programme

The expert team checks

- the appropriateness of entry qualifications
- the regulations for recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention)

- whether the organisation of the study process ensures an adequate procurement of the programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes
- how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities)
- whether the workload of the programme is adequate to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame
- how the student life cycle is organised (i. e. all (organisational) relations between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation)
- whether resource deployment is adequate
- whether the care services and student advisory services are adequate
- in case of an cooperation with internal and external partners how the cooperation is organised

4. Student assessment

Organisation of student assessments

The expert team checks

- how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised
- whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate with regard to the intended learning outcomes
- whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree
- whether assessment criteria are transparent and used consistently
- whether the staff undertaking assessments is adequately qualified
- whether examination regulations exist and
- whether they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions

5. Quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance of the programme

The expert team checks

- how study programmes are developed and how their improvement is organised
- whether a quality assurance concept of the programme is available and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution
- what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments for programmes are implemented
- whether quality assurance is regularly, systematically and effectively used for quality enhancement and
- whether quality feedback loops are closed

- how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers) are involved in quality assurance)
- in case of cooperation with internal and external partners how the institution assures the quality of the part of the programme provided by a partner institution

6. Resources

Resources (finances, personnel, facilities) deployment to sustain HEI programmes

The expert team checks

- the sustainability of funding and financial management
- whether the number and qualification of academic staff (full-time and part-time) is adequate to ensure intended learning outcomes
- which strategies and processes for staff recruiting and staff development are used
- whether amount and quality of facilities and equipment guarantee the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment)
- whether resource deployment is adequate to reach the objectives of the programme

Assessment levels of programme accreditation

Passed

The programme fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the programme and provided at a high academic level.

Passed subject to conditions

The programme does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within nine months after the assessment.

Suspension of the accreditation procedure

The programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that the institution will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure.

Failed

The programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, and the institution is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

Annex 2: Site visit schedule

Thu., 09.10.14		
9.00 – 12.00	internal meeting of expert team	internal preparatory meeting of the expert team
12.00 – 12.45	meeting with university/faculty leadership	meeting with dean and academic secretary to discuss the strategic position of the study programme
12.45 – 14.00	lunch	
14.00 – 15.00	meeting with programme management	meeting with academic and administrative staff responsible for the study programme (programme management) to discuss the details of the study programme
15.15 – 15.45	review of exams and theses	review of selected exams and final theses to give the experts an idea of the type of exams and academic level of the programme
16.00 – 17.00	tour of campus and facilities	short visits of the most relevant room and equipment (i.e. language learning lab, etc.) and the library
17.00 – 18.00	internal meeting	
Fri., 10.10.14		
9.00 – 9.15	internal meeting	
9.15 – 10.15	meeting with students	meeting with a selection of students of the programme (different years, different programme branches)
10.30 – 12.00	meeting with teaching staff	meeting with full-time and part-time teachers of the programme to discuss programme and teaching and learning methods
12.00 – 12.45	additional meeting on request	space for an additional meeting on request of the team
12.45 – 14.00	lunch	
14.00 – 16.00	internal meeting	
16.00 – 16.30	feedback to programme management	short feedback of the expert team to the programme management
16.30 – 17.30	Closing reception	opportunity for all programme members (academics/students) to freely discuss with experts