

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



18th Meeting on June 5, 2025

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Project Number:	23/004 Cluster 1
Higher Education Institution:	Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies
Location:	Doha, Qatar
Study programmes:	Master of Arts in Defence and Security Studies Master of Arts in Military and Security Studies Master of Science in Cyber Defence (Arabic track) Master of Science in Cyber Defence (English track)
Type of accreditation:	initial accreditation

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 9 (1) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes from January 1, 2021, the study programmes

- Master of Arts in Defence and Security Studies
- Master of Science in Cyber Defence (Arabic track)
- Master of Science in Cyber Defence (English track)

are accredited.

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 9 (1) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes from January 1, 2021, the study programme **Master of Arts in Military and Security Studies** is accredited with one condition.

Condition (see chapter 3.2 of the report): JBJ Academy provides all courses of the curriculum with an adequate number of credit hours / ECTS credits corresponding to the real workload.

Proof of meeting this condition is to be supplied by March 4, 2026.

Period of Accreditation for all programmes: June 5, 2025 until June 4, 2030.

The FIBAA Quality Seals are awarded.

Assessment Report

Higher Education Institution:

Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies,
Doha, Qatar

Master programmes:

Master of Arts in Defence and Security Studies
Master of Arts in Military and Security Studies
Master of Science in Cyber Defence (Arabic track)
Master of Science in Cyber Defence (English track)

Qualification awarded on completion:

Master of Arts (M.A.)
Master of Arts (M.A.)
Master of Science (M.Sc.)
Master of Science (M.Sc.)

General information on the study programme

Brief description of the study programme:

M.A. in Defence and Security Studies

This Master programme requires three semesters (one year) with a student workload of 36 credit hours / 72 ECTS credits for graduation. It stands alone in Qatar in its dedication to developing future government leaders in defence and security, emphasising modern defence tactics, international security, and peace studies. The curriculum's international orientation is tailored to the demands of professionals aiming to operate at various levels of the defence sector. The Academy is the only institute in Qatar offering a tailored curriculum in this field. The teaching language is Arabic. Graduates achieve the degree Master of Arts.

Master of Arts in Military and Security Studies

This Master programme as well requires three semesters (one year) with a student workload of 36 credit hours / 72 ECTS credits for graduation. It provides a comprehensive understanding of military operations, defence policies, and strategic studies and equips learners with the skills necessary for various roles within the military and security sectors. It is tailored to address the specific needs of both Qatari and international military professionals. The teaching language is Arabic. Graduates achieve the degree Master of Arts.

Master of Science in Cyber Defence (Arabic track) and Master of Science in Cyber Defence (English track)

The Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies offers the Master programme Cyber Defence in two tracks: (1) The track with the teaching language Arabic comprises a workload of 36 credit hours / 72 ECTS credits with a duration of six semesters (two years). (2) The track taught in English has a workload of 33 credit hours / 66 ECTS credits within four semesters (1,5 years). With an increasing demand for cyber security skills in every sector, the Cyber Defence programme prepares students for advanced roles in managing and mitigating cyber threats. It is particularly beneficial for IT professionals serving in various organisations and particularly for individuals working on critical systems in the country, as it aims to enhance their skills in detecting and neutralising cyber threats. This may also position them for advancements within their current roles or potential transitions into specialised cybersecurity units. Graduates achieve the degree Master of Science.

Type of study programme:

Master programmes

Projected study time and number of ECTS credits / national credits assigned to the study programme:

M.A. in Defence and Security Studies: 1 year

M.A. in Military and Security Studies: 1 year

MSc in Cyber Defence (Arabic track): 2 years

MSc in Cyber Defence (English track): 1 year

Mode of study for all four study programmes:

Full-time

Didactic approach:

Study programmes with obligatory class attendance

Double/Joint Degree programme:

No

Scope (planned number of parallel classes) and enrolment capacity:

M.A. in Defence and Security Studies: 50

M.A. in Military and Security Studies: 200

MSc in Cyber Defence: Arabic Track: 12

MSc in Cyber Defence: English Track: 12

Programme cycle starts in:

Fall semester

Initial start of the programme:

M.A. in Defence and Security Studies: 2019

M.A. in Military and Security Studies: 2014

M.Sc. in Cyber Defence (Arabic track): 2021

M.Sc. in Cyber Defence (English track): 2023

Type of accreditation:

Initial accreditation for the four programmes

Procedure

A contract for the accreditation of the Master programmes Master of Arts in Defence and Security Studies (Master of Arts), Master of Arts in Military and Security Studies (Master of Arts), Master of Science in Cyber Defence – Arabic track - (Master of Science) and Master of Science - English track – (Master of Science) was concluded between FIBAA and Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies, Qatar, on January 18/28, 2023. On September 15, 2024, the HEI submitted a self-evaluation report, which included a detailed description of the programmes and further documents in order to prove that the criteria for programme accreditation are met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel¹. The HEI has agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Dr. Mazhar Al-Zoubi

Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

(International Relations of MENA, Gulf Studies, Security Studies)

Christopher Bohlens

Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany

Student: Politics, Public Economics and Law (M.A.)

Completed: Business Development (M.A.), Economics / Political science (B.Sc.)

Prof. Dr. Zoltán Jobbágy

Ludovika University of Public Science, Budapest, Hungary

Head of Military Strategy Department

(Military Studies, Theories of International Relations, Joint and Multidomain Operations)

Dr. Mark Andrew Laffey

SOAS University of London, London, United Kingdom

Senior Lecturer in International Relations

(International Security, Hierarchy and Violence, Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action, International Studies)

Dr. Matthias Meyer Schwarzenberger

Bündnis Ökonomische Bildung Deutschland e.V., Düsseldorf, Germany

Board of Directors

(International Relations with specialisation in Conflict and Security Studies, Political Science, Social Sciences)

Prof. Dr. Vladimir Stantchev

SRH Berlin University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany

Professor for Information Systems, Managing Director of the Institute of Information Systems (Cyber Security, Computer Science, Informatics, Information Systems)

FIBAA project manager:

Dr. Birger Hendriks

¹ The panel is presented in alphabetical order.

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, as requested by the panel, and an online conference. The online conference took place on January 14 to 16, 2025 via the video conferencing tool *Zoom*. The same cluster included an appraisal of the programme PhD in Defence and Security Studies, (PhD). At the end of the online conference, the panel has given brief feedback on its first impressions to representatives of the HEI.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comment on May 5, 2025. The statement on the report was submitted on May 13, 2025. It has been taken into account in the report at hand.

Summary

The study programmes M.A. Defence and Security Studies, M.A. Military and Security Studies, M.Sc. Cyber Defence (Arabic track) and M.Sc. Cyber Defence (English track), offered by Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies in Doha, Qatar, fulfil with one exception the FIBAA quality requirements for master programmes and can be accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for five years starting on June 5, 2025, and finishing on June 4, 2030, under one condition for the M.A. in Military and Security Studies study programme. The programmes are in accordance with the national and the European Qualification Frameworks and the European Standards and Guidelines in their applicable version valid as of the time of the opening of the procedure, and with the Bologna Declaration.

For the **M.A. in Military and Security Studies** programme, the panel members identified need for improvement regarding the following aspects²: (Modular structure of the study programme). All courses must be calculated with ECTS credits / credit hours according to their workload. The panel members recommend the accreditation of the **M.A. in Military and Security Studies** programme on condition of meeting the following requirements:

- **Condition** (see chapter 3.2): JBJ Academy provides all courses of the curriculum with an adequate number of credit hours / ECTS credits corresponding to the real workload.

Proof of meeting this condition is to be submitted by March 4, 2026.

Furthermore, the quality requirement that has not been fulfilled by **all programmes** – External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties (chapter 5.2) – is not an asterisk criterion and therefore does not lead to a condition. The measures the HEI takes to solve the identified problem are to be considered during the re-accreditation.

The panel members also identified areas where the programmes could be further developed and **recommend**:

- Explicitly including the ethical aspects in the syllabi of relevant programme courses (see chapter 3.1);
- Providing more practising scientific methodology (see chapter 3.1);
- Including the students in the decision-making processes (see chapter 4.2);
- Improving the Academy's facilities for disabled students in terms of barrier-free access as far as necessary (see chapter 4.4);
- Including the alumni, employers and third-party people in the feedback process (see chapter 5.2);
- Providing information to students about evaluation results and quality improvements on a regular basis (see chapter 5.2).

The measures that the HEI takes in order to implement the panel members' recommendations will have to be considered during the re-accreditation.

² These aspects are asterisk criteria which means that they are essential for the study programme.

There are many criteria in which **the four Master programmes** exceed the quality requirements:

- International orientation of the study programme (see chapter 1.2);
- Positioning the study programme in the educational market (see chapter 1.3);
- Positioning the study programme on the job market for graduates ("Employability") (see chapter 1.3);
- Integration of theory and practice (see chapter 3.1);
- Guest lecturers (see chapter 3.3);
- Student support by faculty (see chapter 4.1);
- Access to literature (see chapter 4.4).

In addition,

1. the **Military and Security Studies** programme exceeds the quality requirements with the criterion:
 - Internationality of the student body (see chapter 3.4);
2. the **Cyber Defence programmes (Arabic and English tracks)** exceed the quality requirements with the criterion:
 - Internationality of faculty (see chapter 3.4);
3. the **Cyber Defence programme (English track)** exceeds the quality requirements with the criterion:
 - Foreign language contents (see chapter 3.4).

For the overall assessment of the programme, please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

Information

Information on the Institution

Established in 2013 as the Joint Command and Staff College, the institution was later renamed to "Joaan bin Jassim Joint Command and Staff College". The early years saw collaboration with entities like the Serco Group, British Ministry of Defence, Newman Spar Company, and King's College, London. Agreements signed with Qatar University and King's College further diversified the educational offerings. By 2019, a National Defence Course programme was introduced and saw its first graduates, with additional collaborations with Georgetown University starting in 2021. In 2022, the institution was transformed into the Joaan bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies (JBJ Academy), located in Doha (Qatar) and operating under the Ministry of Defence of the State of Qatar.

JBJ Academy meanwhile encompasses various institutions, such as (1) the National Defence College, (2) the Joint Command and Staff College, and (3) the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. Each of these institutions reports to the Academy's president and follows the Academy's vision and commitment to advancing defence education and research.

- (1) The National Defence College offers the **M.A. Defence and Security Studies** programme, aiming at educating future leaders in the Defence and Security sectors and licensed since September 2022 by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- (2) The Joint Command and Staff College extends its educational offerings with the **M.A. Military and Security Studies**. This College provides professional military education to selected mid-career officers of the three services and security agencies and prepares them for the assumption of higher responsibilities both in Command and Staff appointments. It offers a Joint Command and Staff course, with graduates earning a Master in military and security studies and the title of 'staff'. But this course is not part of the accreditation procedure.
- (3) The Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research provides a range of Master programmes such as the M.A. Economics of Defence, M.A. Defence Diplomacy, and M.A. Intelligence Studies. Additionally, they have introduced the **M.Sc. Cyber Defence** and a doctoral programme, offering a (Ph.D.) Degree in Defence and Security Studies.

The National Defence College, the Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research are not legally independent entities. Rather, they all function as integral parts of the Academy. In other words, these institutions operate under the Academy's authority and share common resources, staff, and facilities.

By design, the Academy provides strategic oversight and governance to all three colleges, ensuring consistent policies, unified standards of quality assurance, and a cohesive institutional vision. This structure aims at eliminating administrative redundancy and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration.

Key responsibilities are divided between the Academy and the Colleges or the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, each overseeing distinct but interrelated functions. For instance, when specialised expertise or lecturers are needed, the Academy can seamlessly reassign personnel among the different Colleges and the Deanship, thereby maximising the collective benefits of a larger pool of qualified faculty and directing staff. Quality

Assurance (QA) is centralised at the Academy level, with the Director of Quality Assurance who reports directly to the President working on consistent standards across all constituent Colleges through internal audits, syllabus reviews, and accreditation efforts.

Each College and the Deanship develop and deliver their own academic programmes in line with the Academy's strategic goals. The Colleges typically offer one specialised programme focusing on core mandates while the Deanship oversees four Master programmes and one Ph.D. programme, emphasising research and advanced scholarly engagement. Although these units manage their daily operations independently such as faculty assignments, student assessments, and curriculum updates, they remain under the overarching governance and quality standards established by the Academy.

The Academy's morning-track Master students (M.A. in Defence and Security Studies, the M.A. in Military and Security Studies, and the English-track M.Sc. in Cyber Defence) receive a full release from their military or security posts for the duration of their studies, all while retaining their salary and associated benefits. This arrangement allows them to focus exclusively on their academic commitments and complete the programme more rapidly (typically within one year).

By contrast, students in the Arabic-track M.Sc. in Cyber Defence and PhD students remain partly engaged in their professional roles. They attend classes in the evening and carry a lighter course load each semester, resulting in a longer study cycle. This structure is specifically designed to accommodate officers and personnel who cannot be fully relieved from their duties due to ongoing security and defence responsibilities. According to the Academy, it also aligns with global practices in other military education systems, where certain cohorts undertake part-time or flexible study paths so they can continue to fulfil critical operational tasks.³

Taken together, these two approaches allow the Academy to cater to diverse student needs, balancing professional obligations with the rigor of postgraduate study. Officers who require full-time study are granted the necessary leave, while those who must remain on duty benefit from a schedule aligned with their existing commitments.

Statistical data

M.A. Defence and Security Studies

		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
Study Places offered by HEI		32	32	32	32	32
Applicants	Σ	32	32	32	32	32
	f	0	0	0	0	0
	m	32	32	32	32	32
Application rate		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
First-Year Students (accepted applicants)	Σ	31	32	32	30	29
	f	0	0	5	4	3
	m	31	32	27	26	26
Share of female students		0	0	15.63 %	13.33 %	10.34 %

³ Information given in addition to the SER.

Foreign Students	Σ	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of occupied study places		96.88%	100.00%	100.00%	93.75%	90.63%
Graduates	Σ	31	31	31	29	0
	f	0		4	4	
	m	31	31	27	25	
Success rate (students who finished their studies)		100.00%	96.88%	96.88%	96.67%	Pending
Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies)		0,00%	3,12%	3,12%	3,33%	Pending
Average duration of study (years)		1	1	1	1	Pending
Average grade of final degree		91.34% - Excellent	91.72% - Excellent	90.74% - Excellent	91.15% - Excellent	Pending

M.A. Military and Security Studies

		Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9	Cohort 10
Study Places offered by HEI		69	93	117	105	167
Applicants	Σ	69	93	117	105	167
	f	0	0	0	0	0
	m	69	93	117	105	167
Application rate		100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100 %
First-Year Students (accepted applicants)	Σ	69	93	117	105	167
	f	0	0	0	0	0
	m	69	93	117	105	167
Foreign Students	Σ	21	10	22	40	58
	f	0	0	0	0	0
	m	21	10	22	40	58
Share of foreign students		30.43 %	10.75 %	18.80 %	38.09 %	34,73 %
Percentage of occupied study places		100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100 %
# Graduates	Σ	69	93	117	105	167
Success rate (students who finished their studies)		100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100 %
Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies)		0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0,00 %
Average duration of study		1	1	1	1	1

Average grade of final degree	88.17 % - Very Good	90.26 % - Excellent	88.32 % - Very Good	87.03 % - Very Good	88,65 % - Very Good
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M.Sc. in Cyber Defence (English Track)

Two cohorts only		Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Study Places offered by HEI		8	8
Applicants	Σ	0	0
First-Year Students (<i>accepted applicants</i>)	Σ	8	8
	f	1	1
	m	7	7
Rate of female students		0,125	0,125
# Foreign Students	Σ	0	0
Percentage of occupied study places		100.00 %	100.00 %
# Graduates	Σ	8	0
	f	1	
	m	7	
Success rate (<i>students who finished their studies</i>)		100,00%	0,00%
Dropout rate (<i>students who dropped their studies</i>)		0,00%	0,00%

M.Sc. in Cyber Defence (Arabic Track)

		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4
Study Places offered by HEI		4	9	7	10
Applicants	Σ	0	0	0	0
Application rate		0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
First-Year Students (<i>accepted applicants</i>)	Σ	4	9	7	10
	f	0	5	5	2
	m	4	4	2	8
Share of female students		0	55.55 %	71.42 %	20.00 %
Foreign Students	Σ	0	0	0	0
Percentage of occupied study places		100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
Graduates	Σ	4	9	0	0
	f	0	5		
	m	4	4		
Success rate (<i>students who finished their studies</i>)		100.00 %	100.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %

Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies)		0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Average duration of study		1	1		

Appraisal:

The Master programmes are relatively new and therefore only allow experiences of brief periods. The Defence and Security Studies programme as well as the Military and Security Studies programme show stable results, based on numbers of reasonable study places. Especially the Military and Security Studies programme includes a remarkably high percentage of foreign students. Also, the Cyber Defence programmes (English and Arabic tracks) have altogether reasonable numbers of students although both tracks are separate because of language and duration of studies.

Programme Description and Appraisal in Detail

1. Objectives

1.1 Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)

The objectives of Master programmes were developed in line with Academy's vision and mission. Furthermore, the programmes align with national qualifications framework (NQF)⁴, thereby enhancing employability and supporting personal development. The Qatari NQF as a mandatory reference tool comprises ten levels out of which level nine defines the requirements for Master programmes (Master of Arts and Master of Science).

The Academy's **vision and mission** are defined as follows⁵:

- Vision: "To become an outstanding pioneer institute in the field of postgraduate defence studies at the regional and international levels."
- Mission: "Preparing talented individuals from military and civilian leaders and qualifying them with capabilities that enable them to monitor and understand security threats, analyse them, assess the risks, and develop policies, strategies and plans that contribute to protecting the homeland and maintaining its security."

For each of the programmes and its comprehensive understanding, a Programme Description provides detailed information encompassing the educational objectives, learning outcomes, methods of teaching and learning, and program implementation specifics. This document also outlines how the programme is structured to meet the demands of the education and training.

The primary qualification objectives of the **M.A. in Defence and Security Studies (DSS)** programme are threefold:

- to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary defence and security landscape,
- to develop proficiency in analysing and implementing strategic defence policies, and
- to enhance individual analytical and decision-making abilities within this complex framework.

This study programme aims to cater to the diverse needs of its target group, including senior officers in the armed forces, defence professionals, policy analysts, and individuals aspiring to positions in governmental organisations dealing with international security. The qualification objectives are comprehensively documented in the Programme Descriptions. They are defined as follows:

1. To prepare and qualify senior officers in the armed forces and senior civilian government officials to occupy high-level government posts.
2. To develop leaders' abilities in the fields of defence and security policy for national strategies and strategic decisions.
3. To enhance leaders' capacities in assessing current and future challenges and proactive thinking.
4. To create integrated thinking among military and civilian leaders in relation to the effective and efficient use of resources on the national level.

⁴ See <https://www.edu.gov.qa> (last seen February 3, 2025).

⁵ See Academy Tasks: <https://jbj.edu.qa/en/academy-tasks/> (last seen on February 3, 2025).

5. To develop leaders' ability to search, analyse, draw conclusions, and enhance their dialogue and negotiation skills within an interactive educational environment.

To achieve these objectives, the programme trains both subject-specific and extracurricular qualifications, providing learners with an understanding of strategic security challenges, conflict resolution, and peace studies. Graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate and address the complexities of modern security environments. The programme aims to foster critical thinking, leadership, and negotiation skills. The following intended learning outcomes can be derived from this.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to analyse the strategic environment and assess threats and challenges and their implications for national security.
2. A sound understanding of the national system of strategic planning and the relevant mechanisms of strategic decision-making.
3. A solid grasp of how to make optimal use of state resources and employ it to protect its interests.
4. Thorough familiarity with the basics of international relations, international law, and the impact of geopolitics on strategy.
5. Full possession of the skills needed to conduct academic research and strategic studies on the national level.

The **M.A. programme in Military and Security Studies (MSS)** is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of military operations, defence policies, and strategic studies. It equips learners with the skills necessary for various roles within the military and security sectors. These programme's qualification objectives are tailored to address the specific needs of both Qatari and international military professionals, ensuring their preparation is current and relevant through regular updates and revisions.

Qualification Objectives:

1. Enhance knowledge of the theoretical and practical dimensions of the work of the armed forces' staff and leadership procedures.
2. Enhance and develop student officers' knowledge of the organisation, roles, and foundations of the use of the armed forces in times of peace and war, and their ability to make use of all resources available to them.
3. Increase student officers' efficiency in planning and executing operations, analysing the operational environment at the tactical and operational levels, and addressing the strategic level overall.
4. Prepare officers capable of joint planning and multinational operations and develop their ability to deal with the concepts and terminology used in this type of operation.
5. Develop student officers' communication skills via practical tasks and applications and place their academic level on a par with their military qualifications.

The curriculum offers a mix of subject-specific knowledge and a broad array of critical skills including leadership, strategic decision-making, negotiation, and teamwork. These skills are essential in the dynamic environment of the military sector. The programme aims to enhance the students' employability/career evolution and to foster personal growth.

The **intended learning outcomes** of the programme are defined as follows:

1. Qualified to work as commanders or staff officers in the Qatari Armed Forces.
2. Well-versed in academic knowledge connected with military strategy and the use of armed forces and weapons.
3. Able to make evidence-based recommendations and offer appropriate solutions to leadership, operational and administrative problems that may face the armed forces' units and formations.
4. Knowledgeable of the importance of intelligence systems and military codes and symbols.
5. Proficient in military planning, joint operations, and the game of warfare.

The M.Sc. in Cyber Defence (CD) programme in both tracks primarily caters to employed Qatari professionals in senior military and government roles, focusing on upskilling them rather than addressing traditional employability challenges. The core objective is to enhance their expertise in cyber defence, preparing them for leadership and strategic decision-making roles in the rapidly evolving cyberspace.

The programme is designed to advance knowledge in cyber security, enhance practical skills for the detection and mitigation of cyber threats in the Ministry of Defence and other government entities. It aims to equip students with a thorough understanding of cyber defence strategies and techniques. It balances academic rigor with practical application, fostering both comprehensive employability and personal development among participants. This also includes the programme objectives as well as its intended learning outcomes.

Qualification Objectives:

1. To identify the ways in which cyber security protects systems, networks, applications, data, and the environment supporting the information security system.
2. To understand the world of hacking via wired and wireless networks, smartphone applications, hackers' methods and methodologies, methods of encryption, and risk management.
3. To study policies, legal frameworks, and ethics applicable to cyber security.
4. To address the applications, limits, and ambitions of artificial intelligence in the fields of information security and intelligence in order to help students better recognise these systems, as well as the possibilities and limits of their technical, legal, and military uses.
5. To address the issue of societal and institutional awareness and encourage students to think about innovative, unconventional ways to increase such awareness.
6. To assess and discover weaknesses in information systems and test out breaches in order to enhance their protection.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

1. An understanding of the theoretical and practical foundations of cyber security.
2. The ability to make evidence-based recommendations to solve cyber security-related problems.
3. The ability to analyse and evaluate best practices of relevance to issues of information security.
4. An understanding of the legal and ethical dimensions of cyber security.
5. The ability to conduct relevant academic research and make ongoing contributions to knowledge and practice in the field of cyber security.

Appraisal:

The panel notes that the qualification objectives of the Master programmes are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group, targeted professional field and societal context of the discipline. They embrace academic proficiency, specific employability mainly for the military and governmental organisations, as well as the development of the individual student's personality.

The subject-specific and extra-curricular qualification objectives and skills to be acquired correspond with the aspired level at graduation. They take into account the requirements of the national qualification framework.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.1* Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

1.2 International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)

The Master programmes are tailored to the military and strategic needs of the Qatari military and government in terms of further education of staff. They convey military strategies and operations that are per se internationally oriented and derived from international cooperation and policies.

DSS programme

The DSS programme is strategically designed with a global perspective, essential for addressing the complexities of modern defence and security challenges. The curriculum covers international defence policies, geopolitical issues, worldwide security threats, and peace studies, providing students with a comprehensive understanding that extends beyond national frontiers.

Faculty and directing staff comprise international experts⁶. This group includes seasoned scholars and military professionals with global experience. Furthermore, the programme actively incorporates practical international exposure. Organised study visits to prominent global defence and security institutions in the USA and other countries enable direct engagement with key international entities. These experiences not only broaden the students' professional horizons but also prepare them to take on advanced strategic roles.

MSS programme

The MSS programme inter alia deals with international military operations, defence policies, and strategic alliances. Included are an in-depth exploration of international humanitarian law and the complexities of military operations in an international context. The curriculum reflects

⁶ See also below chapter 3.4.

a commitment to an international approach, aiming to provide students with an understanding of worldwide military strategies.

Several faculty and staff members provide international experience, having served in diverse professional and academic roles across the world. Their international backgrounds help bring the curriculum to life, offering students a vivid and practical understanding of global military operations. The student body shows diverse nationalities and backgrounds, which includes individuals from the GCC⁷, Europe, Africa, Russia, and Turkey.

CD programmes (both tracks)

The curriculum addresses the global dynamics of cybersecurity, encompassing international policies and defence strategies, which is critical given that cyber defence transcends geographical limitations. This approach is vital for understanding and responding to the nuanced complexities of cybersecurity in an interconnected world. The academic team includes members with academic experience and international professional experience in cyber defence.

As mentioned above, the programme is offered in two tracks, one in Arabic and the other one in English language.

Appraisal:

The panel welcomes that programmes' design appropriately takes into account international perspectives and contents, oriented at the military and governmental needs.

Owing to the emphasis of the programme design on internationality in teaching and study (course contents, international background of academic staff and practical experience abroad), the programmes, by imparting knowledge with that goal in mind and developing the concomitant skills, enable graduates to competently handle international tasks.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

1.3 Positioning of the study programme

As to the **positioning of the four Master programmes in the educational market**, their specific orientation at military and governmental duties and tasks limits the competitive comparison with other universities.

DSS programme

The programme is uniquely positioned in the educational market, addressing a critical need for advanced studies that bridge theoretical insights and practical applications in defence and

⁷ Gulf Cooperation Council.

security. The analysis of the educational market, especially in Qatar, identified a significant demand for specialised education that meets the Ministry of Defence's precise requirements. The programme aims to fill this gap, offering a curriculum that blends academic demands with practical skills, valuable both domestically and internationally.

This programme stands alone in Qatar in its dedication to developing future government leaders in defence and security, emphasising modern defence tactics, international security, and peace studies. The curriculum's international orientation is tailored to the demands of professionals aiming to operate at various levels of the defence sector. The Academy is the only institute in Qatar offering a tailored curriculum in this field.

MSS programme

The MSS programme uniquely caters to the specialised needs of the defence sector in Qatar by providing an in-depth exploration of defence policy, strategic studies, and the dynamics of military operations within a joint operational framework. Recognised by the Ministry of Defence as filling a critical educational gap, this programme is the first of its kind in Qatar, strategically developed to offer a training that bridges traditional military expertise with modern security challenges. The curriculum is distinguished by integrating time-honoured military principles with contemporary security issues to reflect the evolving landscape of global defence challenges. This balance sets the programme apart on regional and international levels and also responds to the unmet educational needs in Qatar⁸.

As the sole institution in the State of Qatar offering a tailored curriculum in military and security studies, the Academy is positioned as a pivotal educational pillar, essential for professionals aiming to excel in government departments of defence and security. Students who complete this programme gain insights into the intricacies of military joint operations, coming from diverse backgrounds such as land, air, and sea, which equips them with a holistic view of the modern battlefield and strategic defence scenarios.

CD programme (both tracks)

Cyber threats have emerged as challenges to both national and international security. The Ministry of Defence has recognised the critical need for highly skilled professionals capable of countering these threats, and the CD programme directly addresses this requirement. The curriculum offers an international perspective and focuses intensively on developing practical skills essential for combating cyber risks.

As to the **positioning of the study programmes on the job market for graduates**, the qualification objectives of these programmes were tailored to empower students with the necessary skills and knowledge to advance in their careers. Through a comprehensive understanding of the job market, these programmes have been designed to foster advancement and open new opportunities for the students within their respective units and fields.

DSS programme

The qualification objectives of this programme are oriented towards enhancing the capabilities of defence professionals and preparing them for advanced roles within their respective units. The curriculum is designed to nurture their understanding of modern defence strategies,

⁸ See SER p. 16.

international security, and peace studies. These skills are instrumental for roles that require strategic decision-making, policy planning, and leadership in defence and security sectors. Thus, this programme not only expands the knowledge base of the learners but also empowers them to aspire to more advanced roles within their units and to lead with confidence and competence.

MSS programme

The MSS programme focuses on broadening the understanding of defence policy, strategic studies, and military operations which is essential for those serving in military units and others interested in policy-making roles within this field. By equipping learners with both theoretical and practical insights, the programme enables them to assume higher levels of responsibilities, perform more complex tasks, take on leadership roles, and influence strategic decisions within their units. The holistic understanding and expertise gained from this programme could lead to opportunities for advancement within the military structure, furthering their career progression.

CD programme (both tracks)

With an increasing demand for cyber security skills in every sector, the CD programme prepares students for advanced roles in managing and mitigating cyber threats. It is particularly beneficial for IT professionals serving in various organisations and particularly for individuals working on critical systems in the country, as it aims to enhance their skills in detecting and neutralising cyber threats. This may also position them for advancements within their current roles or potential transitions into specialised cybersecurity units.

Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept

The Academy is strategically committed to providing advanced and specialised programmes that equip students with skills and knowledge to excel in the fields of defence and security. This includes the Academy's mission of enhancing knowledge and understanding of military operations and strategies.

DSS programme

This programme aims to foster a nuanced understanding of contemporary defence and security landscapes. It aligns with the objective of contributing to global peace and security through advanced education. The programme's qualification goals underline the Academy's commitment to cultivating analytical, strategic, and leadership skills among defence professionals.

MSS programme

The programme aims to convey knowledge and understanding of military operations and strategies. Its qualification goals are consistent with the Academy's strategy of grooming professionals capable of leading and making impactful contributions in the military and security sectors. By focusing on the blend of traditional military knowledge and emerging security challenges, the programme plays an important role in the Academy's strategic orientation.

CD programme (both tracks)

This programme aligns with the strategic plan to address the cyber dimension of defence. According to the SER⁹, it is central to the Academy's strategy to foster professionals' ability of combatting cyber threats and securing digital assets. The qualification goals of this

⁹ See p. 19.

programme form the core of the Academy's strategic vision, responding to the evolving needs of the defence sector. They are sustainably implemented, with regular updates to ensure their relevance and alignment with industry trends and changes.

Appraisal:

The reasons given for the positioning in the educational market of this study programme are plausible. The Academy has thoroughly examined the educational market and used the results in establishing its own unique and competitive profile.

The arguments in support of improving the graduates' professional abilities and positions on the basis of the stated qualification objectives are convincingly presented. The future fields of the graduates' prospects for improving their career of are plausibly set forth. The Academy has thoroughly analysed the employers' needs for graduates and has comprehensively incorporated the results in the study programmes.

The study programmes are convincingly integrated into the Academy's overall strategic concept. The study programmes' qualification goals are in line with the Academy's mission and strategic planning.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market		X			
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates ("Employability")		X			
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		

2. Admission

The admission requirements for the Master programmes are stated on the Academy's official website¹⁰, as well as in the application materials. Applicants to these curricula must have a relevant undergraduate degree with commendable academic achievement, demonstrating their potential to flourish at an advanced level of study. The term “relevant” in this context refers to undergraduate degrees that provide foundational knowledge or skills directly applicable to the specialised field of study. This criterion shall ensure that candidates possess the requisite academic background and technical expertise to succeed in their chosen programme. However, the definition of “relevant” is flexible and programme-specific, evaluated on a case-by-case basis during the admission process.

Furthermore, the Academy (including Colleges and Deanship) recognises that many applicants are seasoned professionals in defence, security, or government roles. Their professional experience often compensates for potential gaps in specific academic areas, allowing to evaluate “relevance” not only through educational qualifications but also through practical expertise. By doing so, the Academy ensures that its student body is both academically and professionally prepared to meet the demands of advanced study in defence and security fields.

To ensure equitable and rigorous evaluation, the Academy’s admissions committees assess the academic and professional backgrounds of each applicant. If candidates’ undergraduate degrees are not immediately aligned with their desired programme but demonstrate potential for a cross-disciplinary application, the committee may recommend enrolment in a more suitable programme. In such cases, academic advisors provide tailored recommendations to maximise the applicant’s compatibility with the curriculum.

DSS programme

This programme can accept candidates who are pre-selected by governmental or military institutions, from fields like Political Science, International Relations, or Defence Studies, provided their prior academic work aligns with the programme's focus. In addition, they must have relevant job experience in defence, security, or similar industries. The admission requirements aim to meet the strategic goals of the DSS programme. However, participants who are suitable for the programme are chosen / nominated by their respective ministries / departments in accordance with departmental procedures. Afterwards, the Academy’s admission procedure follows with a selection process.

As this programme has a pivotal role in preparing future leaders in defence and security, the admission process is highly selective and competitive. JBJ Academy prioritises applicants who are high-ranking civilian or military staff members working within government entities, given their strategic positions and their potential to significantly influence national security policies. This focus ensures that the cohorts consist of professionals who are not just competent to engage with the complexities of defence and security studies but are also primed to take on leadership roles within their respective entities.

¹⁰ <https://bj.ed.qa/en> (last seen on February 6, 2025).

MSS programme

For the admission to the MSS programme requires prospective students must possess a relevant undergraduate degree, along with a solid academic performance to substantiate their capability for advanced study. Practical experience in a related military or security field is also an essential requirement. The admission process is intentionally competitive, appealing to the most committed Qatari and international officers. Those candidates are prioritised who have demonstrated their potential for leadership and have a strong ambition to advance in joint command roles.

CD programme (both tracks)

Prospective applicants must have a relevant Bachelor degree with a strong academic record, demonstrating the foundational knowledge necessary to succeed in this advanced programme. As this programme is designed to address national and international cybersecurity threats, applicants are expected to have practical experience in a relevant field such as IT, computer science, or Defence. Applicants with degrees in Electrical Engineering, Telecommunications, or even Mathematics may also qualify due to the interdisciplinary nature of cybersecurity. Proficiency in English, as the medium of instruction, is also mandatory to ensure learners can engage effectively with the curriculum.

The Academy has implemented admission criteria that align directly with the strategic goals of the MSc in Cyber Defence programme. Also, this admission process is highly competitive, designed to admit a select cohort of the most capable and committed applicants. Applicants are given special consideration if they are high-ranking civilian or military staff members working within government entities, acknowledging the critical role they play in national security and the unique insights they can bring to the programme. By doing so, the Academy wants to ensure that their students are not only equipped to meet the challenges of Cyber Defence but are also poised to take on leadership roles in this rapidly evolving field.

As far as the **counselling** for prospective students is concerned, for the two Master programmes DSS and MSS at the Defence College and Command and Staff College, a pre-selection of local and international participants is conducted by their organisations based on defined criteria communicated by the academy. Selection is also influenced by available positions, which are coordinated with local government units and through diplomatic channels in accordance with agreements between the Ministry of Defence of Qatar and respective foreign defence ministries. This specialised approach aims to ensure that all selected participants are aligned with the strategic needs and security objectives of their respective countries, fostering an environment that is both exclusive and tailored to the requirements of defence education.

For the **CD programme (both tracks)**, the Deanship of Graduate Studies offers a counselling service to all applicants. As a part of this service, prospective learners have access to a personal dialogue with the Associate Dean for Learner Affairs for clarification of specific questions, to assess personal aptitude, and to discuss career perspectives. This interaction is facilitated through defined office hours, via telephone, and through email.

The Associate Dean for Learner Affairs provides one-to-one counselling to all applicants, offering a comprehensive guide through the application process, and aligning each candidate's skills and abilities with the programme requirements. Additionally, the Associate Dean may suggest alternative programmes within the Academy or even elsewhere in the country if they better suit the applicant's career aspirations and capabilities. This commitment to the applicants extends beyond just securing an admission.

As to the **selection procedure**, the Master Colleges and the Deanship conduct diverse procedures:

DSS programme

The selection process comprises two stages: pre-selection and interviews, each tailored to meet the programme's objectives. During pre-selection, candidates are evaluated based on their professional achievements, leadership potential, current roles, and alignment with the program's goals, with assessments primarily conducted by their respective institutions. The interview phase further explores each candidate's personal vision, strategic thinking abilities, and potential contributions to the defence and security sectors.

MSS programme

This programme is designed for military officers, focusing on advanced leadership, strategic thinking, and operational planning. Therefore, officers eligible for the programme must typically hold the rank of Major or its equivalent. The selection process considers the officer's career progression, performance evaluations, and leadership potential.

The selection process for the programme is twofold:

- **Preselection:** Candidates are evaluated based on their professional achievements, leadership potential, and alignment with the programme's objectives.
- **Suitability Interview:** Shortlisted candidates undergo a suitability interview, where their leadership potential, decision-making abilities, communication skills, and readiness for the responsibilities of the MA in Military and Security Studies are assessed. This interview is typically conducted by a panel of senior officers with relevant experience in command and staff roles.

The assessment of candidates during the selection process focuses on several key areas:

- **Leadership Potential:** Evaluates the candidate's capacity to lead at higher command levels, including decision-making under pressure and resource management.
- **Communication Skills:** Assesses the candidate's effectiveness in conveying ideas and instructions, both in written and oral forms.
- **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:** Reviews the candidate's analytical thinking, strategic planning abilities, and approach to complex military scenarios.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Examines the candidate's ability to work collaboratively within a team, including interaction with peers, subordinates, and superiors.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Considers the candidate's ability to handle stress and adapt to changing situations, which are crucial in military operations.

The final selection is based on a holistic evaluation combining insights from the preselection process and the suitability interview.

CD programme (both tracks)

The Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research implements a uniform selection procedure across all the programmes, including the CD programme. The admissions committee, comprising faculty members from various programmes within the Deanship, conducts a thorough evaluation of each candidate's application. This process includes a detailed review of academic records, recommendation letters, and personal statements, aiming to identify candidates who demonstrate a strong academic foundation and a genuine passion for the field.

The selection criteria extend beyond academic excellence; the committee seeks individuals who display a unique combination of enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment qualities that are essential for success in the highly specialised and evolving field of cyber defence. Candidates are expected to demonstrate not only critical and creative thinking abilities but also problem-solving skills and the potential to contribute meaningfully to the cybersecurity landscape.

The selection process comprises two phases: a pre-selection phase where candidates are shortlisted based on their qualifications and alignment with the programme's goals, and an interview phase that probes deeper into the candidates' personal and professional aspirations, strategic thinking capabilities, and their potential impact on the field of defence and security.

Furthermore, the selection procedure involves a consultative approach during the interview phase, advising candidates on the best fit for their skills and career goals, possibly redirecting them to other programs within the Deanship if more suitable.

Professional experience is required for the Master programmes DSS and MSS.

DSS programme

The National Defence College mandates a substantial level of professional experience for admission to the DSS programme. This requirement aligns with the qualification profile of candidates and the programme's objectives. The programme primarily targets high-ranking officers and civilian personnel who are actively engaged with government institutions.

Candidates must demonstrate their professional experience through certified documentation of their military or security rank (at least at the level of colonel or brigadier general) or equivalent civilian positions (such as department managers or higher). The depth and relevance of this experience are evaluated to ensure they meet the programme's strategic objectives. Admission to the programme is thus reserved for those who have not only achieved significant professional milestones but who can also contribute meaningfully to the strategic discourse within the programme.

MSS programme

The Joint Command and Staff College places a strong emphasis on professional experience for admission to this Master programme. Applicants are required to demonstrate their professional experience through certified proof of military or security rank, at a minimum level of Major or Lieutenant Colonel. Civilian applications are not accepted due to the programme's specialised military focus.

The systematic inclusion of significant professional experience as a selection criterion is essential for ensuring that the programme attracts candidates who can not only benefit from but also contribute meaningfully to the advanced academic environment, thereby supporting the development of future military leaders.

As to **ensuring foreign language proficiency** the four Master programmes are predominantly taught in Arabic, given the Academy's commitment to serve and enrich the local Qatari and Arab-speaking community. The comprehension of Arabic language is a mandatory requirement for international learners. Programme materials are designed, developed, and delivered primarily in Arabic, ensuring the students can access, understand, and learn in their most comfortable language medium. On the other hand, qualified and proficient translators carry out live translation of lectures delivered in English by foreign experts and visiting dignitaries. For this purpose, experienced translators have been permanently employed in the academy.

On the other hand, recognising the global nature of cyber defence and the wide use of English in this field, the CD programme is offered in two language tracks: Arabic and English. This allows learners to choose the language track that best suits their background and preferences, thus fostering a learning environment that is conducive and adaptable to their specific needs. For those learners who opt for the English track, the admission requirements include a proven level of English proficiency.

Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision

The Academy's admission procedures are communicated using the official channels (Formal Military Communications), ensuring they reach the maximum number of potential applicants. This is achieved through the distribution of admission guides, sharing the Student Catalog, and publishing details on the official website.

Admission decisions are based on predetermined criteria which are communicated to applicants in writing. Applicants are informed about the decision on their application via official communication. The communication includes detailed information on the results of the admission procedure. The objective is not just to convey the decision, but also to provide constructive feedback that can aid in personal and professional development. Individual results are not disclosed on the Academy's official website or any public platform.

Appraisal:

The panel notes that for the Master programmes DSS and MSS on a first level the military or governmental institutions pre-select the applicants and candidates based on pre-defined criteria. On a second level JBJ Academy conducts a selection process with these pre-selected applicants and candidates. Therefore, the panel only assesses the second level, conducted at the Academy. With this in mind, the admission requirements are defined and comprehensible. The national requirements are presented and taken into account.

As for the CD programme, the admission requirements are defined and comprehensible. The national requirements are presented and taken into account. As the programme filters and selects applicants based on their scores and results of the interview, this is in line with and oriented at the strategic goals of the study programme to gain excellent students.

Applicants can directly turn to a student counselling service, or to whatever other helpdesk at the university, for clarification of specific questions, of personal aptitude, of career perspectives etc. Personal dialogue between applicants and the HEI is provided by defined office hours, by telephone and via e-mail.

The selection procedures are transparent and ensure that qualified students are admitted.

As far as professional experience is required (for the two Master programmes DSS and MSS), this corresponds to the defined qualification profile of entrants and the study programmes' objectives. Certified proof of this experience must be shown at the time of the admission.

The admission requirements for Arabic and English ensure that students are able to successfully complete the study programme (courses, additional literature, utilisation of counselling services and extracurricular activities).

The admission procedure is described, documented, and accessible on the Academy's website for interested parties. The admission decision is based on transparent criteria and is communicated in writing.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.2	Counselling for prospective students			X		
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)			X		
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)			X ¹¹		X ¹²
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

¹¹ For the two Master programmes DSS and MSS.

¹² For the CD programmes

3. Contents, structure and didactical concept of the programme

3.1 Contents

DSS programme

According to JBJ Academy¹³, this programme is based on the contemporary pillars of national power: diplomacy, information, military, and economy (DIME), guiding state decision-makers to appreciate that national security involves more than military strength. It also includes diplomatic capabilities, information access, and economic stability. The curriculum has been designed to achieve the qualification objectives of the programme. It is comprehensive and was developed following a detailed review of curricula from various regional and international defence colleges.

In addition to the core curriculum, the programme includes a variety of practical experiences and learning opportunities aimed at reinforcing theoretical knowledge through real-world applications. Learners engage in scenario analysis, crisis management simulations, and strategic policy formulation exercises that reflect contemporary security challenges. Guest lectures from industry experts, ministers, ambassadors, and high-ranking officials provide invaluable insights into real-world applications of course concepts.

The programme includes 36 credit hours / 72 ECTS credits for courses and thesis, plus 5 ECTS credits in the context of the final examination. This is subdivided into 26 credit hours /52 ECTS credits for compulsory courses. In addition, students have to take four credit hours /8 ECTS credits out of 14 credit hours / 28 ECTS credits for elective courses. The thesis has an additional workload of 6 credit hours / 12 ECTS credits.

Curriculum Overview							
Master in Defence and Security Studies Programme, 3 Semesters							
1 st Semester: Fall							
Modul No.	Title of Course Units	ECTS credits per Semester			Workload		Method of Teaching i.e. lecture course, seminar
		1.	2.	3.	Hours in Class	Hours Self-Study	
M1	Diplomacy (D)	8			216	140	
M 1.1	Course Unit 1 Advanced Studies in International Relations	4			108 30	70 30	L/T case study
M 1.2	Course Unit 2 Comparative Political Systems (elective)	4			108	70	L/S
M2	Information (I)	4			108	70	
M 2.1	Course Unit 1 Artificial Intelligence (elective)	4			108	70	L/S
M3	Military Strength (M)	8			216	140	
M 3.1	Course Unit 1 Defence Policy	4			108	70	L/S
M 3.2	Course Unit 2 Military History (elective)	4			108	70	L/S
M4	National Economy €	4			108	70	

¹³ See SER p. 30.

M 4.1	Course Unit 1 National Economy	4			108	70	L/S
M5	National Security (NS)	18			462	317	
M 5.1	Course Unit 1 National Security	6			150	106	L/S/T Exercise+ Paper
M 5.2	Course Unit 2 National Strategy	6			150	106	L/S/T Exercise
M 5.3	Course Unit3 Visits and Exercises	2			54	35	L/T/Field Study
M 5.4	Course Unit4 Geopolitics (elective)	4			108	70	L/S

2 nd Semester: Spring							
M7	Diplomacy (D)		12		324	210	
M 5.1	Course Unit 1 Contemporary Qatari Diplomacy		4		108	70	L/S/Paper
M 5.2	Course Unit 2 Civil-Military Relations (elective)		4		108	70	L/S
M 5.3	Course Unit 3 International Humanitarian Law (elective)		4		108	70	L/S
M8	Information (I)		8		216	140	
M 6.1	Course Unit 1 Cybersecurity and Hybrid Warfare		4		108	70	L/S
M 6.2	Course Unit 2 Media and Communication		4		108	70	L/S
M 9	Military Strength (M)	...	4	...	108	70	...
M 9.1	Course Unit 1 Defence Resource Management		4		108	70	L/S/Paper
M 10	National Economy €		4		108	70	L/S
M 10.1	Course Unit 1 Defence Economics (Elective)		4		108	70	
M 11	National Security (NS)		14		366	246	
M 11.1	Course Unit 1 Strategic Management and Leadership		6		150	106	L/S/T Exercise
M 11.2	Course Unit 2 National Identity		2		54	35	L/S
M 11.3	Course Unit 3 Crisis Management and Negotiation (elective)		4		108	70	L/S/T Case study
M 11.4	Course Unit 4 Visits and Exercises		2		54	35	L/T/Field Study

3 rd Semester: Summer							
M12	Research Methodology (prerequisite to the Thesis)	2			54	35	L/T
	Visits and Exercises			2	54	35	L/T/Field Study
M13	Colloquium/ Strategic Negotiation Course		1		27	17	L/T
M14	Master-Thesis			12	324	420	
Total		32	31	14	1.773	1.700	

L: Lecture

S: Seminar

T: Tutorial

EX Exercise

Paper Group Paper or Project Essay

MSS programme

This programme is designed to holistically develop student officers' skills by blending academic, military, and technical dimensions. It is offered in association with Qatar University, King's College London, and other distinguished universities. The curriculum reflects the learning outcomes. These universities contribute lectures to programme courses.

The programme provides an in-depth understanding of military plans, strategic studies, and the mechanics of military operations to meet the increasing need for military professionals. Recognising the importance of professional experience, the curriculum incorporates the prior experiences of the learner officers. It aims to enhance their abilities in performing staff duties and command procedures, thus preparing them for roles as command and staff officers in the armed forces. The programme is geared towards enhancing research, analytical, and creative thinking skills in both military and civilian contexts. Furthermore, it enriches the learner officers' understanding of the organisation, roles, and fundamentals of using armed forces in peace and war, thereby preparing them to provide innovative solutions to leadership, operational, and administrative challenges.

The curriculum's strategic orientation is evident in its emphasis on a joint environment across the three services: the Army, Navy, Air Forces, and Air Defence. It focuses on developing the officers' capabilities in planning and executing operations, understanding tactical, operational, and strategic levels of operation, and preparing them for joint planning and multinational operations. The programme also seeks to improve the communication skills of the learners and raise their academic level alongside military training. Since learners in this programme are already serving in government departments related to military and security, they do not require an internship platform.

The programme includes 36 credits hours / 72 ECTS credits in total. Students normally complete a maximum of 15 credit hours / 30 ECTS credits per semester. This is subdivided into 27 credit hours / 54 ECTS credits for compulsory courses. Moreover, students have to take three elective courses with a workload of six credit hours / 12 ECTS credits. The graduation project has an additional workload of 3 credit hours / 6 ECTS credits.

Curriculum Overview							
M.A. Military and Security Studies Programme, 3 Semesters							
1 st Semester: Fall							
Modul No.	Title of Courses	ECTS Credits per Semester			Workload		Method of Teaching
		1.	2.	3.	Hours in Class	Hours Self-Study	i.e. lecture course, seminar
MAMS 600	Course Name: Research Methods (Compulsory)	0			10	80	L/T
MAMS 601	Course Name: Principals on the Use of Forces and Weapons (Compulsory)	6			40	70	L/T/Field Study
MAMS 602	Course Name: Organisation Of Qatari's Armed Forces	0			45	70	L/T/Field Study
MAMS 603	Course Name: Course on Staff Duties (Compulsory)	2			40	70	L/S/T Exercise

MAMS 605	Course Name: Intelligence and the Art of Leadership (Compulsory)	4			34	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 606	Course Name: Military Training & Military Symbols (Compulsory)	4			30	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 608	Course Name: Military Exercise and Planning (Compulsory)	0			71	70	L/S/T Exercise
M 5.2	Course Name: Civil-Military Relations (elective)	4			20	70	L/S/Paper
M 10.1	Course Name: Defense Economics (Elective)	4			20	70	L/S/Paper
		24					

2nd Semester: Spring							
MAMS 600	Course Name: Research Methods (Compulsory)		0		10	80	L/T
MAMS 606	Course Name: Military Training & Military Symbols (Compulsory)		4		10	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 607	Course Name: Army, Navy and Air Military Operations (Compulsory)		6		186	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 608	Course Name: Military Exercise and Planning (Compulsory)		10		134	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 612	Course Name: External Visits		0		30	70	L/T/Field Study
ACDF 634	Course Name: Regional And International Security (Elective)		4		20	70	L/S/Paper
			24				

3rd Semester: Summer							
MAMS 600	Course Name: Research Methods (Compulsory)			0	10	80	L/T
MAMS 609	Course Name: Military Decision - Making and Joint Military Operations (Compulsory)			10	300	70	L/S/T Exercise
MAMS 610	Course Name: War Game Seminar (Compulsory)			8	150	70	Seminar
MAMS 700	Course Name: Thesis (Compulsory)			6	26	420	Paper
total		24	24	24	1186	1710	

L: Lecture

S: Seminar

T: Tutorial

EX Exercise

Paper Group Paper or Project Essay

MSc in Cyber Defence programme

The curriculum of the CD programme has been designed taking into consideration its qualification objectives. The structure comprises compulsory courses, elective courses, and a thesis component. The elective courses with a workload of 9 credit hours (18 ECTS) aim to broaden the competences and skills of learners, allowing them to delve into areas that support their career development and personal interests. A practical insight and real-world exposure through external lecturers build upon the learners' preexisting experience, especially those from the Armed Forces and security services, shall bridge the gap between academic learning and its practical applications. The CD programme's ambition is to serve as a pioneering programme

at the national level and to become a distinguished postgraduate programme in the Gulf and Arab region.

Moreover, the programme aims to develop learners who are not only academically proficient but also competent decision-makers with a strong sense of professional ethics. Students of this programme are serving military officers; therefore, they do not need to undergo an internship platform.

For this programme, the Academy offers a one-year English track (starting in fall and finishing in fall of the following year) and a restructured two-year Arabic track. The difference between the two is that in the English track 10 courses are concentrated in one year, while in the Arabic track the same number of courses extends over two years.

In the English track the curriculum offers 10 courses including the thesis with 33 credits hours / 66 ECTS credits in total. The programme includes 18 credit hours / 36 ECTS credits for compulsory courses. Students have to take three courses with a workload of nine credit hours / 18 ECTS credits as elective courses. The thesis has an additional workload of 6 credit hours / 12 ECTS credits.

The Arabic track has based on the curriculum a total workload of 36 credit hours / 72 ECTS credits.

Cyber Defence: Master's Programme, 4 Semesters (English Track)

1st Semester: Fall

Title of Module / Course Unit + Compulsory or elective?	ECTS Credit Points per Semester				Workload		Method of Teaching	Form and Duration of Examinations	weight of exam related to final grade
	1.	2.	3.	4.	Hours in Class	Hours Self-Study	i.e. lecture course, seminar		
Fundamentals of Cyber Security + Compulsory	6				45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignments, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <
Cyber Security Risk and Crisis Management + Compulsory	6				45	45	lecture course		35% <
Cyber Crime Investigation & Digital Evidence + Compulsory	6				45	45	lecture course		35% <
Network and cloud security + Elective	6				45	45	lecture course		35% <
Cryptography + Elective	6				45	45	lecture course		35% <
Research Methods + Compulsory	6				45	45	lecture course		35% <

2nd Semester: Spring

Penetration Testing		6			45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignment, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <
Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security + Compulsory		6			45	45	lecture course		35% <
Communication and Digital Media + Elective		6			45	45	lecture course		35% <
Special Topics + Elective		6			45	45	lecture course		35% <
Wireless systems security + Elective		6			45	45	lecture course		35% <

3rd Semester: Summer

Master-Thesis			6		0	250	Thesis Supervision	Thesis Defence: 60 Minutes	100%
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4th Semester: Fall

Master-Thesis				6	0	250	Thesis Supervision	Thesis Defence: 60 Minutes	100%
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Master-Thesis

total	30	24	6	6	405	905			
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L: Lecture
S: Seminar
T: Tutorial

Cyber Defence: Master's Programme, 6 Semesters (Arabic Track)

1st Semester: Fall

Title of Module / Course Unit + Compulsory or elective?	Credit Points per Semester						Workload		Method of Teaching	Form and Duration of Examinations	weight of exam related to final grade
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	Hours in Classes	Hours Self-Study			
Fundamentals of Cyber Security + Compulsory	6						45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignment, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <
Cyber Security Risk and Crisis Management + Compulsory	6						45	45	lecture course		35% <
Cyber Security Policies and Culture + Elective	6						45	45	lecture course		35% <
Network and cloud security + Elective	6						45	45	lecture course		35% <

2nd Semester: Spring

Penetration Testing		6					45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignment	35% <
Cryptography + Elective		6					45	45	lecture course		35% <

Special Topics + Elective		6				45	45	lecture course	t, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <
Cyber Crime Investigation & Digital Evidence + Cumpolsory		6				45	45	lecture course		35% <

3rd Semester: Summer

Communication and Digital Media + Elective		6				45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignmen	35% <
Wireless systems security + Elective		6				45	45	lecture course	t, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <

4th Semester: Fall

Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security + Cumpolsory			6			45	45	lecture course	Midterm exam:90 Minutes, Assignmen	35% <
Research Methods + Cumpolsory			6			45	45	lecture course	t, research, Practical Projects, Final Exam: 90 Minutes	35% <
Network and cloud security + Elective			6			45	45	lecture course		35% <
Communication and Digital Media + Elective			6			45	45	lecture course		35% <

5th Semester: Spring

Thesis				6		0	250	Thesis Supervisio	n Thesis Defense : 60 Minutes	100%
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6th Semester: Summer

Thesis					6	0	250	Thesis Supervisio	n Thesis Defense : 60 Minutes	100%
total	18	18	6	18	6	6	405	905		

L: Lecture

S: Seminar

T: Tutorial

Rationale for degree and programme name

According to the Academy¹⁴, the name of the study programme, "**MA in Defence and Security Studies**," is deliberate and thoughtfully chosen to align with the programme mission, objectives, and content. The rationale behind this choice is embedded in the programme with the intent to equip senior officials and officers from various ministries, state institutions, and security agencies, with the academic qualifications necessary for assuming leadership positions within the context of defence and security. The name succinctly reflects the comprehensive nature of the programme focus, which is to provide advanced, specialised

¹⁴ See SER p. 32 et sq.

knowledge in both defence and security sectors, considering regional and international experiences as well as the unique specificities of Qatar.

The name of the study programme "**MA in Military and Security Studies**" serves as a succinct representation of the curriculum's comprehensive content and ambitions. This title embodies the curriculum's comprehensive scope, which is rooted in the practical application of joint operations across various branches of the armed forces. The programme aims to provide an in-depth understanding of both military and security concepts. The programme name conforms with the programme's primary objectives, improving military officers' knowledge and skills. It testifies to the learner's advanced understanding and competency in the interconnected fields of military and security.

According to JBJ Academy¹⁵, the name "**Master of Science in Cyber Defence**" was selected to reflect the critical focus of the programme, which lies at the intersection of cybersecurity and national defence strategies. This name is based on a comprehensive analysis of global and regional needs, national requirements, and the evolving defence landscape. "Cyber Defence" accurately represents the core emphasis of the curriculum, which addresses the urgent need to secure national digital infrastructure against the rising flood of cyber threats.

The choice of this name ensures alignment with globally recognised programmes and best practices, as it has been benchmarked against regional and international standards. This alignment aims to ensure that the programme meets the high expectations of the Ministry of Defence, which requires highly skilled professionals to protect Qatar's digital frontier.

The designation "Master of Science" signifies a strong emphasis on the technical and scientific aspects of cybersecurity, offering in-depth knowledge and substantial research opportunities.

Integration of theory and practice

The four study programmes emphasise the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical applications. This educational approach not only facilitates the understanding of complex theoretical aspects but also aims to enable students to apply these understandings to real-world scenarios. Field training, a pivotal part of the programme, equips learners with opportunities to bring theoretical knowledge to life, strengthening their comprehension and analytical capabilities.

In the **DSS programme**, theoretical foundations in defence and security studies are complemented by their practical applications. The programme also goes beyond the traditional classroom structure by inviting external guests, including ministers, ambassadors, and other influential figures, to deliver insightful lectures. These guest lectures can provide students with perspectives into real-world situations, helping to bridge the gap between academic theory and practical application. These interactions aim to train the students' strategic decision-making skills, policy formulation, resource management, and leadership skills.

In the **MSS programme**, theoretical concepts are consistently illustrated through practical examples, combined with diverse learning styles and aiming at a comprehensive understanding of complex military and security concepts. The exercises offer firsthand exposure to the practicalities of military operations, enhancing learners' ability to contextualise and utilise their theoretical knowledge. This systematic integration of theory and practice

¹⁵ See SER p. 33.

throughout the curriculum complements academic learning and shall enhance the qualification profile of the learners, aligning their educational outcomes with the demands of their future roles.

An essential part of the learning experience is the "game of war" training, conducted in a special facility provided by the Ministry of Defence. This training simulates a joint command scenario, allowing learners to apply their knowledge and skills in a controlled, realistic environment. During the online conference it became clear that this game of war is used in universities of other countries also.

In both tracks of the **CD programme**, all courses are conducted in a cybersecurity lab which allows learners to apply theoretical concepts in real-time, thereby enhancing their understanding and offering a practical perspective on cybersecurity issues. Implied are field visits to various partner organisations such as the Forensic Lab under the Ministry of Interior, Al Jazeera Cybersecurity facilities, and Qatar University cyber range facilities. These visits are an integral part of the curriculum, providing learners with in-depth exposure to state-of-the-art forensic technologies, real-world cyber threat scenarios, and the strategies adopted by cybersecurity professionals to mitigate these threats. Furthermore, all courses include assignments where students must implement their knowledge in practical contexts.

Interdisciplinary thinking

JBJ Academy underlines¹⁶ that the four Master programmes have been designed to provide students with comprehensive interdisciplinary understanding, skillset, and mindset. The Academy's lecturers from a wide range of fields including international relations, political science, military strategy, cybersecurity, and public policy contribute to train the students to gain holistic insights into the interconnected nature of modern security challenges.

The **DSS programme** integrates aspects of academic fields such as history, economics, and sociology as well as practical perspectives. The educational model promotes dialogues among military and civilian leaders, teaching students how to integrate insights from different disciplines efficiently. This preparation shall enable them to take on senior strategic planning positions, where they can formulate national policies and strategies, manage resources, and anticipate future challenges from a comprehensive perspective.

Guest lecturers from various professional backgrounds further contribute to the development of interdisciplinary thinking among learners by offering practical insights. The aim is to shape well-rounded leaders capable of navigating different sectors and disciplines with ease, thus contributing to a more integrated approach to defence and security. The subjects delivered by the guest lecturers are classified, and learners are not allowed to take any electronic devices inside the classroom.

The **MSS programme** provides an integrative educational platform that aims to enhance military officers' leadership skills, staff duties, human resource management, and military mission planning. The curriculum combines key concepts from various branches of the armed forces, fostering a comprehensive understanding of joint operations. Practical exercises, scientific research methods, and opportunities for dialogue and communication are integrated into the course, contributing to the development of a multifaceted analytical and problem-

¹⁶ See SER p. 36.

solving perspective. Furthermore, the course aligns with the curricula of Command and Staff Colleges in the GCC¹⁷ countries and globally, ensuring the students are versed in internationally recognised interdisciplinary standards and practices.

The **CD programme (both tracks)** integrates diverse disciplines, including technology, security, law, ethics, and artificial intelligence. Students gain knowledge in cybersecurity methods, hacking techniques, and encryption methods, while also exploring legal frameworks, ethical considerations, and the application of artificial intelligence in cybersecurity contexts. The programme focuses on fostering innovative and non-traditional thinking. For example, learners analyse recent disasters to assess the potential for cyberattacks as underlying causes. This approach aims to encourage students to think creatively and critically evaluate best practices, considering technical, legal, ethical, and societal dimensions. Students are asked to develop holistic solutions to intricate problems, thereby enhancing the protection of information systems.

Students are required to consider not only the technical details of cyber sabotage but also the geopolitical, cultural, and economic impacts of disruptions to critical infrastructure. Graduates are equipped with the skills to analyse and evaluate information security issues, conduct relevant research, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and practice in the field.

Ethical aspects

According to the Academy, the four Master programmes communicate ethical aspects throughout their curricula, directly addressing in classroom discussions, simulations across multiple courses the intertwined themes of leadership, decision-making, and effective and efficient resource management.

For example, the Crisis Management and Research Methods courses incorporate scenarios where students must evaluate moral responsibilities alongside operational requirements such as mitigating harm to civilians during conflict or upholding academic integrity in research. Similarly, in the Military and Security Studies curriculum, case studies often address dilemmas involving the use of force, strategic deception, and the broader societal implications of security policies. Likewise, the Cyber Security syllabus (e.g., in the “Penetration Testing” module) underscores the importance of adhering to legal and ethical guidelines when testing system vulnerabilities, emphasising how legitimate defensive actions differ from malicious cyber activities.

In the **DSS programme** ethical implications are woven into the core of the programme, with a focus on training students to occupy the highest leadership positions, not just in military contexts, but also in a wider national framework. Emphasising ethical leadership, the programme fosters the development of leaders who are adept at formulating national policies and strategies, while also promoting fair and mindful resource use at a national level. In addition, JBJ Academy underlined that in several courses such as “Defence Resources Management”, “Civil-Military Relations”, “Military History”, “Strategic Management and Leadership” and “National Strategy” ethical aspects are specifically addressed.

The foundational philosophy behind the **MSS programme** is to prepare military officers who can assume dependable roles in staff and leadership positions with a well-rounded education,

¹⁷ Abbreviation for: Gulf Cooperation Council.

not just in military tactics and strategy but also in the broader geopolitical, historical, cultural, and ethical context in which they operate. The curriculum's inclusion of courses such as International Humanitarian Law, Law of Armed Conflict, Vienna Accord, Geneva / Hague Conventions, aims to train officers relating to ethical and legal boundaries within which military operations are conducted. Furthermore, elective courses like "Skills in Communication and Negotiation" stress the importance of ethical interactions, understanding different perspectives, and navigating complex socio-political landscapes.

The **CD programme** is designed to provide students with both technical skills and ethical principles necessary for safeguarding information systems and cyber-physical infrastructures. Key courses include "Cyber Crime Investigation & Digital Evidence", which explores the legal and ethical frameworks governing cybercrime investigations and the handling of digital evidence. This course provides insights into the ethical implications of accessing, analysing, and utilising digital evidence. Additionally, the "Cyber Security Policies and Culture in Organisation" course examines the ethical aspects of organisational and national cyber security policies and their influence on decision-making within cybersecurity culture. These courses as well as others¹⁸ encourage students to identify and reflect on ethical issues they may encounter in their professional practices.

Methods and scientific practice

At the Master level, students gain exposure to essential research concepts and methodologies through various courses, such as Research Methods and related seminars that teach them how to formulate research questions, conduct literature reviews, and apply analytical frameworks.

The **DSS programme** trains students in developing methodological competencies and scientific research skills essential for strategic leadership. The curriculum emphasises research, analysis, and critical thinking. Students engage in interactive learning environments that encourage dynamic methodological competencies. By synthesising knowledge from various disciplines, including law, history, economics, and sociology, the programme promotes comprehensive interdisciplinary research skills. Preparing research papers and a graduation thesis is an important requirement for students, demonstrating their capability to conduct in-depth research.

The **MSS programme** integrates academic studies with practical applications, ensuring that learners become both theoretically informed and operationally proficient. The curriculum includes a course on "Research Methods", which grounds all learners in the fundamentals of academic research. This course equips them with the tools to critically assess, analyse, and contribute to contemporary military and security discourses.

The programme comprises both compulsory and elective courses, allowing learners to explore specific areas of interest such as International Humanitarian Law, Law of Armed Conflict, Rules of Engagement, and Contemporary Security Issues. This balance between theory (e.g., principles on the use of force and weapons) and practical application (e.g., military exercises and planning) aims to ensure that learners can apply their knowledge in real-world situations. The requirement for a graduation project further underscores the programme's commitment to scientific practice.

¹⁸ See also the courses: Penetration Testing, Wireless Systems Security.

In the **CD programme (both tracks)**, the compulsory courses include topics such as Fundamentals of Cyber Security, Cyber Security Risk and Crisis Management, Cyber Crime Investigation & Digital Evidence, Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security, and Penetration Testing. These courses cover key aspects of cyber security, from understanding the basic concepts to advanced topics in AI and penetration testing. In addition to compulsory courses, learners have the option to choose from a wide array of elective and challenging courses, such as Technological Superiority in Modern Wars, Wireless Systems Security, Network and Cloud Security, and Cryptography. These courses allow learners to specialise in specific areas of cyber security that align with their career goals and interests.

In the research thesis, students are required to prepare a dissertation of no less than 15,000 words on contemporary issues in cybersecurity. This requirement ensures that learners can conduct original research and apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme to real-world problems. As part of the Research Methods course learners are equipped with the necessary skills for research-oriented work.

Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)

The process of conducting assessments of students is regulated by the Study Systems Regulation and in the Policy on Supervision of Graduation Research Projects.

The examination process must align with the intended learning outcomes and desired qualification level. It can be evaluative exercises, military exercises and practical tests during the course. According to the syllabi, the final course exams at the end of a course are conducted mainly in written form and as open book exams. The syllabi reflect the assessment criteria and include information on the midterm and final exams.

Every student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 throughout his/her academic course to receive the degree. Students with a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 are not permitted to defend their Master thesis or apply for the degree¹⁹.

At the end of each programme, students must submit a final thesis, structured and supervised by one of the lecturers. Students must successfully defend their thesis during their final semester. Anyone who is unable to complete the thesis defence requirement will be given a second opportunity to defend it, and students who fail the thesis defence for the second time will be dropped from the programme. A Thesis Committee, responsible for mentoring learners, facilitates research completion and ensures alignment with the programme's qualification objectives. Students are provided detailed feedback by the evaluators. The thesis evaluation is based on criteria ensuring transparency and uniformity in assessment. The evaluation methods address the student's reflections on scientific problems and application of scientific methods.

The Thesis Committee provides ongoing feedback until an official end-of-supervision notice is issued. Learners consistently receive feedback and advice on the learning process, supporting both immediate academic success and long-term growth as scholars and professionals in cyber defence.

¹⁹ JBJ Policy on Graduation Requirements, as of 2023.

The Academy describes in its “Study System Regulation” the literal grades that are awarded:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Points earned	Classification
90 -100	A	4.0	Excellent
85 to less than 90	B+	3.5	Very Good high
80 to less than 85	B	3.0	Very Good: “Pass” grade for students in Master and PhD programmes
75 to less than 80	C+	2.5	Good high: “Pass” grade for students in the Staff Course, the Defence Course, and the Joint Operation Course
70 to less than 75	C	2.0	Good
65 to less than 70	D+	1.5	Acceptable high
60 to less than 65	D	1.0	Acceptable
Below 60	F	0	Failed

The average grade percentage is converted into a cumulative GPA using the following equation: Cumulative GPA = Percentage / 20 -1.²⁰

For the **DSS programme**, diverse test formats, combined with the inclusion of reflective scientific problems and constructive feedback, are used. The final course examination encompasses various formats, including research papers, scenario analysis, crisis management simulations, and strategic policy formulation tasks. In their final theses, students must apply strategic thinking, research, analysis, and decision-making skills to complex defence and security problems, synthesising inter-disciplinary knowledge to formulate strategic solutions.

In the **MSS programme** each course incorporates a minimum of three and up to five varied assessment methods, including a mandatory final exam. This approach allows students to demonstrate their understanding through multiple formats, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills. Key evaluation methods include class participation, weekly reading assignments, individual and group research papers, article or book reviews, discussion management, group assessments, and simulations.

The final thesis must be rooted in one of the essential fields of study (political, economic, social, administrative, military, scientific, or media). Learners propose research areas, with the final decision made by the College management to ensure relevance and significance. Once a topic is approved, the mentor oversees the research progress, providing continuous feedback.

The **CD programme** emphasises ongoing and varied assessment methods, ensuring each course employs 3 to 5 different assessment techniques, including final exams, research papers, oral presentations, and simulation exercises. The use of varied test formats not only confirms alignment with the desired qualification level but also allows learners to demonstrate their ability to reflect deeply on scientific problems and apply scientific methods.

Upon approval by the programme coordinator, the research plan is further reviewed by the Associate Dean for Research Affairs. The thesis defence involves both internal and external referees, providing diverse perspectives and evaluations.

²⁰ See The Study System Regulation, Article (13), clauses 1,2 and 3.

Appraisal:

The curricula of the four Master programmes adequately reflect their qualification objectives. The contents of the courses are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. Optional electives enable students to acquire additional competences and skills. As far as the Master programmes DSS and MSS are concerned, their contents take into account the students' prior professional experience and refer to it.

The degree and programme names of the four Master programmes correspond to the contents of the curriculum and the programme objectives. As to the CD programme, the panel considers the awarding of the Master of Science degree for justified because of the informatics content.

Theoretical questions are, where possible, explained by means of practical examples. The panel particularly welcomes that theory and practice are systematically interrelated throughout the curricula. Theoretical discourse and practical application complement each other in developing the students' qualification profiles.

There is evidence that the programme qualifies for interdisciplinary thinking.

Ethical implications are appropriately communicated in the four Master programmes. However, the panel **recommends** explicitly including the ethical aspects in the syllabi of relevant programme courses.

Students acquire methodological competences and are enabled to do scientific work on the required level. However, in particular in the DSS and MSS programmes, the panel takes the view that several theses which have been presented as part of the SER are methodologically not sufficiently developed. For this reason, the panel **recommends** providing more practising scientific methodology.

All exams, as they are defined for the courses, are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level. The exams are characterised by a variety of test formats.

The final theses are evaluated based on previously published and coherently applied criteria, rules, and procedures. The students prove, especially in their thesis, their ability to do scientific work and the achievement of the study programme's qualification objectives.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.1 Contents					
3.1.1* Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2* Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3* Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
3.1.4 Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5 Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6* Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7* Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.2 Structure

The Academy operates on a year-based structure with four semesters (Fall, Spring, Summer) and uses the US-American system of credit hours. They are in a ratio to ECTS credits of about 1:2. Full-time students, typically dedicate their main time to coursework and spend the other time focused on completing their thesis under the supervision of the thesis supervisor. The tables below present the breakdown of each programme according to the classification of the courses.

The programmes have a syllabus for every course which serves as information for students as well as for faculty. It provides all necessary information and detailed descriptions such as the course title, credit hours, course description, information about the instructor, assessment description, semester schedule/plan, the prerequisites for the course, intended learning outcomes, methods of assessments, recommended course readings, teaching and learning methods. The syllabus template is used by all instructors. The Academy seeks to ensure that all instructors appropriately develop their syllabi and include all necessary information.

The structural design of the Master programmes is as follows:

MA in Defence and Security Studies

Projected study time	1 year / 43 weeks (full-time) or 2 years 86 weeks (part-time)
Number of Credit Points (CP)	36 Credit hours / 72 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	29 hours
Number of courses	15 (13 compulsory, 2 elective) plus thesis
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	2 months
Number of contact hours	2.100

The programme includes distinct courses, each carrying assigned credits proportional to the learner's workload. The primary aim is to enhance the learners' abilities in research, analysis, strategic assessment, decision-making, and efficient resource management. The coursework is incorporating elements of law, history, economics, and sociology in addition to military strategy. Every course is designed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of

state power, considering the four pillars of national power - diplomacy, information, military, and economy (DIME).

The students represent a variety of backgrounds, including the Qatari Armed Forces, security agencies, and various ministries and state institutions, which means from both military and civilian sectors. In the eyes of the Academy, this is fostering a fertile basis for integrating thoughts of military and civilian leaders for the benefit of national defence and security²¹.

MA in Military and Security Studies

Projected study time	1 year (43 weeks)
Number of Credit Points (CP)	36 Credit hours / 72 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	16 hours
Number of courses	15 (11 compulsory, 3 electives plus thesis)
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	2 months
Number of contact hours	1.186

Every course in the compulsory segment is methodically crafted to provide in-depth insight into the various dimensions of military operations, strategies, and leadership roles. On the other hand, the elective courses offer a wider horizon of knowledge in areas like 'Contemporary Security Issues', 'International Humanitarian Law', and 'Skills in Communication and Negotiation'. This balanced approach of core and elective subjects aims to ensure that the students not only get a strong grounding in the fundamentals but also have the freedom to explore specialised areas of interest. Furthermore, the graduation project, or the 'Capstone', provides students with practical experience to practically apply the theories learned.

MSc in Cyber Defence

Projected study time	2 years (Arabic track) or 1 year (English track)
Number of Credit Points (CP)	36 Credit hours / 72 ECTS credits (Arabic track) 33 Credit hours / 66 ECTS credits (English track)
Workload per CP	20 hours
Number of courses	Arabic track: 10 courses (6 compulsory, 3 electives plus thesis) English track: 9 courses (6 compulsory, 2 electives plus thesis)
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	6 months
Number of contact hours	Arabic track: 405 English track 450

The curriculum of this programme comprises a total of 33 credit hours / 66 ECTS credits, divided into six compulsory courses, elective courses, and a thesis project. The programme has been designed to be completed in one year full-time or two years part-time, according to the policies of the academy and its academic regulations.

²¹ See SER p. 45.

From Fall 2023 this programme is offered in two tracks. The first track is a one-year programme offered in English. The second track is a two-year track offered in Arabic. For the English track the learners should complete 15 credit hours / 30 ECTS credits during the Fall semester, 12 credit hours / 24 ECTS credits during the Spring, and 6 / 12 ECTS credits during the Summer. For the Arabic track, the learners should complete 9 credit hours / 18 ECTS credits in each one of the three first semesters followed by a thesis during the last Spring.

As far as the recognition of study degrees and / or periods of study is concerned the Academy refers to the official Qatari and its own regulation. As far as DSS and MSS are concerned, there is no option for students to undertake periods of study at other Higher Education Institutions. Their time is fully occupied with gaining essential knowledge and honing practical skills, ensuring that they are aptly prepared for leadership roles within the armed forces and related security agencies.

As to the CD programme, any courses pursued outside of the Academy will not be considered into learners' GPA calculations, ensuring that the unique pedagogical standards of the Academy are upheld. However, exceptions can be made in cases where a formal agreement has been established with the external institution offering the course.

There are legally binding regulations for assessments and examinations, grading, resits, academic standing, credit transfer, and the theses. As already mentioned above²² the Academy issued regulations on the assessments. They are referred to and summarised in course syllabi and in the Learners' Catalog enabling the students to be well acquainted with the requisites and benchmarks set for academic and professional progression.

The "Grading Policy" outlines each of the Academy's grading categories — from A to F — and includes a description of what characterises each grade level.

Feasibility of study workload

The Academy's approach to feasibility includes considering learner feedback and the programme success rate for continuous improvement. The Academy has designed a survey to be implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year to assess the workload associated with each course. Support services, including academic and general learner counselling, further assist learners in managing their time and workload.

During the online conference students confirmed the feasibility of their study workload and the supportive activities of faculty members. Students have the opportunity to utter concerns about the workload of the programme in questionnaires, but also to their advisors.

The **DSS and MSS programmes** ensure the feasibility of the workload by aligning their curricula with the diverse needs of its learners, including senior officials from various ministries, state institutions, and officers from the Qatar Armed Forces. The curricula are designed considering the experience and seniority of these participants, drawing on insights from regional and international defence colleges to balance academic rigor with practical flexibility. Assessment schedules are planned to ensure the projected study time is achievable.

²² See chapter 3.1.

Participation from senior officials of various ministries and state institutions has steadily increased, demonstrating the programme's ability to accommodate professionals with high work demands. This trend attests to the programmes' feasibility.

Ensuring the feasibility of the study workload for the **CD programme in both tracks**, has also been a priority for the Academy's management. Starting in the 2023-2024 academic year, the programme duration was redesigned based on feedback from the first two learner cohorts and a thorough evaluation of the programme's success rate. The Academy now offers a one-year English track and a restructured two-year Arabic track, accommodating learners' various commitments and ensuring the programme can be feasibly completed within the projected timeframe.

The Academy offers extensive support services such as library access, specialised journals, and electronic resources. Additionally, academic and general learner counselling are available to assist learners in managing their study workload effectively.

Regular review mechanisms are in place to continuously assess and ensure the feasibility of the programme's workload. Evaluation findings, including learner feedback, are integral to this process, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and manageable. This approach equips graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful careers in cyber defence, particularly within the Qatari Armed Forces.

Equality in opportunity

All academic programmes of JBJ Academy, including the four Master programmes, adhere to Article 35 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar on Equality of Opportunity. This article states, that "All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of gender, race, language, or religion."

JBJ Academy upholds gender equality, ensuring that both male and female learners have equal access to opportunities. The Academy considers student applications without regard to race, gender, nationality, religion and most other demographic characteristics. Its admission standards, based on clear metrics such as rank, age, academic qualifications, and leadership potential, reflect the dedication to fairness. The diverse backgrounds of students, coming from various ministries, state institutions, and security services, demonstrate commitment to non-discrimination. Students are allowed to report any discrimination they experience due to origin, gender, or any other reason.

Beyond admissions, JBJ Academy ensures equal access to resources, learning platforms, and opportunities in policy formation, strategic decision-making, and research for all learners, regardless of nationality or gender. The curricula emphasise the importance of diverse viewpoints. They are regularly evaluated and adapted to foster a more inclusive academic environment.

Appraisal:

The programme structures support the smooth implementation of the curricula and help students to reach the defined learning outcomes. The programmes consist of courses and assign credit-hours per course based of the necessary student workload. Practical components are designed and integrated in such a way that credit hours can be acquired. The

course syllabi provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes, and the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide.

However, the MSS programme includes six compulsory courses that are calculated with zero credit hours / ECTS credits although their workload on terms of "Hours in class" and "Hours (for) self-study" is counted. The panel estimates that these courses have a substantial workload in terms of credits hours / ECTS credits. It takes the view that these six courses must be calculated with credit hours /ECTS credits in the curriculum. Therefore, for the **MA in Military and Security Studies programme** the panel members recommend the following condition:

- JBJ Academy provides all courses of the curriculum with an adequate number of credit hours / ECTS credits corresponding to the real workload.

There are legally binding study and exam regulations which contain all necessary rules and procedures and take into account, where applicable, national requirements. The study programme is designed so that students can study for a certain time at other HEIs or do internships without any extension of their overall study time. The recognition of degrees and periods of study at other HEIs is regulated in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention; the recognition of periods of practical work – insofar intended – is also clearly defined. The final grade is supplied with either a relative grade or an ECTS grading table.

Also based on confirmations from students, the panel is convinced that the study programme's workload is not easy but feasible. This feasibility is ensured by a suitable curriculum design, by a plausible calculation of workload, by an adequate number and frequency of examinations, by appropriate support services as well as academic and general student counselling.

When reviewing the workload, the HEI also takes into account evaluation findings, including student feedback and the programme's success rate.

The HEI ensures gender equality and non-discrimination. Students with disabilities are provided with affirmative actions concerning time and formal standards/requirements throughout the programme and examinations. Students in special circumstances, such as single parents, foreign students, students with a migration background and/or from so-called non-academic backgrounds, are particularly assisted.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2 Structure					
3.2.1* Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X ²³	Condition ²⁴	
3.2.2* Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3* Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4 Equality of opportunity			X		

²³ MA in Defence and Security Studies and MSc in Cyber Defence.

²⁴ MA in Military and Security Studies.

3.3 Didactical concept

The programmes' didactical concepts are based on achieving a productive balance between knowledge and skills acquisition, on the one hand, and the student's central role in the learning process on the other hand. The interconnectedness between these two poles is crucial to achieving the learning outcomes of the programme. In practice, various teaching methods are used to communicate knowledge and skills so that students can engage with them reflectively and critically. To fulfil its aims, the programmes employ a variety of teaching methods to convey the students the academic, professional, and personal skills required. These include lectures - also by invited experts -, case studies, group discussions, presentations, practical projects and others.

The didactical methods are systematically derived from the programme objectives and are geared towards achieving the intended learning outcomes of each course. Innovative teaching methods are incorporated and can be delivered via distance learning in exceptional circumstances.

DSS programme

The programme emphasises active learning, engaging learners through interactive assignments that foster critical thinking and allow practical application of theoretical knowledge. The study and research components, which include writing research papers and a thesis, enhance analytical skills and enable learners to develop logical conclusions and recommendations.

The programme also employs a blended-learning format, integrating various teaching materials such as printed texts, digital media, and textbooks, all aligned with course objectives. The curriculum draws ideas from regional and international defence colleges, addressing the need for a comprehensive understanding of state power elements and national security. The interdisciplinary approach combines elements from military strategy, law, history, economics, and sociology, ensuring the content is engaging and relevant to the diverse cohort of participants.

This structure ensures that the didactical concept is not only logical and plausible but also dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of the learners and the strategic requirement of the Qatari Armed Forces.

MSS programme

From a didactic perspective, a multidimensional teaching technique is employed. Traditional lectures remain the backbone of knowledge transfer. However, to ensure holistic learning, group learning methodologies, role-playing, simulations, external visits, guest lectures from state officials and academic experts, and research initiatives are interwoven into the curriculum. The diverse teaching techniques, combined with an array of learning resources like course books, electronic offers, specialised journals, and library services, cater to various learning preferences. Furthermore, the programme's alignment with the directives of the General Headquarters, and the vision of the college, aim to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with both national and international standards.

Distance learning modules and tools are tailored to support comprehensive understanding and application. Independent work with course materials, enriched lectures, business games, and case studies are systematically integrated into the course structure.

CD programme (both tracks)

Although lecture-based teaching is the primary method, the programme also incorporates group learning, role-playing, field visits, expert interactions, and research activities to ensure a holistic educational experience.

Research methods, fieldwork, and simulations provide practical skills, while case studies enhance problem-solving abilities. The capstone thesis emphasises independent investigative work, encouraging learners to delve into pressing cybersecurity issues and produce insightful research.

Course materials

The course materials of all four Master programmes are designed to meet the expected qualification levels and are regularly updated to reflect recent advancements in the field. They present diverse problem-solving approaches, drawing from various scientific perspectives, and encourage learners to develop theory-based problem-solving strategies. The materials undergo continuous refinement based on feedback from learners, educators, and industry experts, ensuring they remain current and effective.

The Academy has a formal process for evaluating course syllabi, which each faculty member must submit at the start of the semester. In this context, the quality of teaching materials is informally assessed during the faculty appraisal phase, where the instructors are required to present one of the courses they teach. At the Defence College and Staff College, course materials are typically developed in a collaborative manner.

The Academy's didactical concepts are strengthened by the classified nature of the course materials, ensuring the security and confidentiality of the content. Students are prohibited from sharing any materials which are designed to promote independent study and a thorough understanding of the subjects. The materials are provided in a secure manner, and learners are briefed on the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

In response to unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the Academy adapted the traditionally face-to-face teaching methods to include blended and distance learning. This swift transition ensured uninterrupted, high-quality education. The course materials were adjusted to meet the specific didactical requirements of blended learning, demonstrating the programmes' resilience and adaptability while maintaining the in-person teaching approach.

The **DSS programme's** course materials introduce varied problem-solving methodologies from multiple scientific perspectives, equipping learners with tools to craft unique strategies. This aligns with the programme objectives to enhance capabilities in formulating national policies, making strategic decisions, and managing crises. The materials address the diverse needs of the participants, including senior officials from various ministries and officers from security services, integrating military and civilian perspectives.

The course materials for the **MSS programme** integrate both academic and practical content relevant to the military and security fields. Each course is supported by comprehensive readings, resources, and interactive materials, tailored to meet the expected qualification levels and regularly updated to reflect the latest advancements in the field.

The programme emphasises the development of theory-based problem-solving strategies. Course materials introduce various problem-solving methodologies from multiple scientific perspectives, encouraging critical thinking and analytical skills. Students engage interactively with the materials, using them to formulate and refine their own strategies. This approach aims to ensure that graduates are well-prepared to address complex challenges and make strategic decisions within the military and security sectors. Continuous feedback from learners and inputs from the academic and military community help keep the materials current and aligned with contemporary teaching methodologies.

The **CD programmes** are dedicated to delivering learning experiences. The course materials are to align with the programmes' mission and learning outcomes. Given that all lectures are conducted in person, the materials are designed to maximise the benefits of classroom-based learning. The course materials present diverse problem-solving approaches, drawing from various scientific perspectives, and encourage learners to develop theory-based problem-solving strategies.

Guest lecturers

Guest lecturers are selected based on their ability to contribute to the students' professional development, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the field. This approach may enrich their educational experience and also enhance their future employment opportunities. Guest lecture hours are limited to 30% of the total course time, preserving the core content's focus.

The **DSS programme** employs a multifaceted educational approach, emphasising the inclusion of guest lecturers to enhance the learning experience. These guest lecturers, both national and international, bring professional and scientific expertise in defence, security, culture, and politics. Their contributions provide students with insights and diverse perspectives, crucial for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary issues.

Moreover, the guest lecturers guide students through the academic research process, offering expert insights into practical applications of research methodologies. This interaction aims to foster an interactive learning environment where learners are encouraged to discuss, debate, and reflect on complex issues, contributing significantly to the attainment of the program's educational objectives.

To maintain the confidentiality of sensitive content, high-security measures are applied during guest lectures, including building restrictions and a ban on electronic devices.

The inclusion of guest lecturers in the **MSS programme** is an important element of didactics. Guest lecturers, with significant practical experience in Military and Security Studies, bring in real-world insights that complement the academic framework of the programme as the programme focuses on developing skills in staff work, leadership, planning, operations, and the theoretical foundations of military strategies.

While guest lecturers are important to the Military and Security Studies programme, their role is more limited compared to the DSS programme. This distinction is due to the specific design and objectives of each programme. The MSS programme is tailored to provide officers with the knowledge and tools needed for military command and joint operations.

Over the past two years and in both tracks, the **CD programme** has maintained a strong emphasis on guest lecturers, integrating them into key courses such as Fundamentals of Cyber Security, Cyber-Crime Investigations and Digital Evidence, Penetration Testing, Digital Media and Communication, and Cyber Security Culture in Organisations. Notable institutions, including Al Jazeera and the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Investigation Lab, have contributed to lectures conducted both within the academy and at external venues like the National Cyber Security Agency. Additionally, some guest lectures organised field visits to cyber environments. These experiences included sessions at the Ministry of Interior's Forensic Laboratory, cybersecurity training at Al Jazeera's facilities, and practical training at the Thales Cyber Range at Qatar University's KINDI Centre for Computing Research.

Appraisal:

The didactical concept of the study programme is described, plausible, and oriented towards the programme objectives. It allows for the application of different teaching and learning methods, such as, for instance, case studies or practical projects. Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.

The accompanying course materials, which were in some parts available in Arabic only, are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are up to date and digitally accessible for the students. They are user-friendly and encourage students to engage in further independent studies.

Guest lecturers are regularly invited and contribute to the students' qualification process with their special experience, either from professional practice or scientific work, but also, for example, from culture and politics. Their contributions form an integral part of the study programmes' didactical concepts. They come from a variety of occupations, which enhances students' chances of employment thanks to the profound insights they gain.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.3 Didactical concept					
3.3.1* Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2* Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3 Guest lecturers		X			
3.3.4 Lecturing tutors					X

3.4 International outlook

As mentioned above²⁵, the Master programmes have an international orientation by their objectives, design and contents.

The **DSS and the MSS programmes** cater to the requisites of the Ministry of Defence and other Qatari governmental entities, while also setting standards in line with international programmes in Defence and Security Studies.

²⁵ See chapter 1.2.

Emphasising an international perspective, these Master programmes have been designed to equip students with the intricacies they will encounter in international working spheres. By integrating an inter-disciplinary methodology, the curricula touch upon the four pivotal pillars of national power: Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy (DIME). This includes an international perspective, which is mirrored in the curricula and partly in the numbers of foreign students²⁶.

Practical exemplars, case studies, and extensive research projects are integrated to empower learners to formulate strategic decisions within multicultural settings. This aims to enhance their competencies in research, comprehensive analysis, and inference drawing. Furthermore, these programmes embrace collaborations with leading international universities, strategic study hubs, and esteemed research bodies.

Contrastingly, the **CD programme** in both tracks is inherently international by its design. Given the borderless nature of cyber threats and the global framework of digital infrastructure, this Master programme is conceptualised to address the interconnected challenges and opportunities of the digital realm.

Internationality of the student body

The **DSS** and **CD programmes** are designed with a primary focus on serving the needs of Qatari nationals, especially those engaged with governmental entities. Both programmes aim to train leaders who are committed to fortifying Qatar's national security. Consequently, the student body for these programmes predominantly comprises Qatari senior officers from the Armed Forces, officials from various security divisions, and distinguished civil servants from diverse state institutions. The admission criteria for these programmes are oriented exclusively on Qatari nationals, whether they are high-ranking members of the Armed Forces or other affiliated security agencies. This goes along with the programmes' design, which aims to elevate the capabilities of Qatari individuals to address both present and prospective challenges related to national security.

However, the international dimension of these programmes is not gauged by the cultural or linguistic diversity of its students. Instead, it is assessed by how these students are exposed to experiences from defence institutions both regionally and internationally.

In contrast, the **MSS programme** has a broad blend of international students, making it a melting pot of diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. While it retains its core focus on strategic and defence studies pertinent to Qatar, it also embraces international perspectives, fostering a richer, more comprehensive learning environment for all participants.

Internationality of faculty

The Academy has made concerted efforts to enhance the international composition of its faculty. The educational staff includes a mix of faculty members and directing staff, featuring experts from various countries and diverse professional backgrounds.

For the **DSS** the **MSS programmes**, courses are exclusively delivered in Arabic. There are few faculty members who were trained in other countries, for example in Jordan and France or have foreign nationality.

²⁶ See above "Statistics".

The **CD programmes** in contrast, offered in the two tracks Arabic and English, aims to foster an international outlook. The faculty members stem from different countries or were trained there: Algeria, France, Japan, Tunisia, Turkey, and Sudan.

Foreign language contents

The **DSS programme** prioritises Arabic as the primary language of instruction, reflecting the needs and context of the Qatari students. This decision aligns with the programme's objectives, which emphasise national security requirements and the development of local expertise. To ensure students are engaged in international defence and security dialogues, the Academy hosts international guest speakers who deliver lectures in English, with real-time Arabic translation provided.

The **MSS programme** primarily conducts courses in Arabic, catering to the predominantly native Arabic-speaking students. However, the diverse faculty ensures that course materials include insights from various global military paradigms, with selected readings, case studies, and resources available in both Arabic and English. This approach exposes learners to international military doctrines, strategies, and operations from multiple sources, enriching their educational experience.

To support international learners who may struggle with Arabic, the Academy provides dedicated translation services, ensuring they can fully access and benefit from the course content.

The inclusion of international guest speakers who lecture in English, combined with real-time translation, can further enhance the students' exposure to diverse perspectives. Moreover, opportunities for internships abroad, particularly in the United States, funded by the Ministry of Defense, allow learners to gain practical experience in foreign language environments, broadening their horizons and contributing to their overall growth as future leaders.

As to the **CD programmes**, from the 2023-2024 academic year, the Academy has implemented a dual track system, offering courses in both Arabic and English. This strategic decision is not only in line with the global nature of cyber security but also considers the necessity of English as the predominant language for academic references, scientific research, and technological advancements in this field.

Despite the course being taught primarily in Arabic, the curriculum has been structured in such a way that even learners in the Arabic track interact with English content. This is due to the subject's nature, where most academic references, research articles, project materials, and advanced literature are published in English. This aims to ensure that students are not only proficient in the technical aspects of cyber security, but they can also deal with global content and perspectives. All courses extensively utilise international resources, many of which are available only in English.

Appraisal:

The panel welcomes the international orientation of the JBJ Academy as well as of the four Master programmes. International contents are an integral part of the curricula. Particularly the CD programme is international by its nature and content. Students are thus prepared for the challenges in an international working environment. Through practical examples and lecturers, students are being prepared also for an intercultural environment.

By now, the programmes DSS and CD do not have foreign students, as they are focussed on Qatari nationals.

Contrary to this, the MSS programme's international composition of the student body corresponds to the programme concept. A significant proportion of the students come from various language areas and cultural backgrounds. Thus, discussions in the classroom and group work constantly reflect international aspects. The measures taken to ensure an international composition of the student body show a clear and sustainable effect.

The international composition of the faculty (teachers from different countries, teachers with international academic and professional experience) promotes the acquisition of international competences and skills. The measures taken are goal oriented.

As to the Cyber Defence programmes (Arabic and English track), the panel takes the view that the international composition of the faculty is a fundamental element shaping the profile of the study programme and is promoted by the HEI.

The proportion of foreign language courses and required foreign language materials corresponds with the qualification objectives of the study programme.

In the Cyber Defence programme, lectures and course materials English predominate. Internationality is clearly a key element of the study programme's profile.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.4 Internationality					
3.4.1* International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2 Internationality of the student body		X ²⁷	X ²⁸		
3.4.3 Internationality of faculty		X ²⁹	X ³⁰		
3.4.4 Foreign language contents		X ³¹	X ³²		

3.5 Multidisciplinary competences and skills

Multidisciplinary draws on knowledge from different disciplines and involves studying certain topics in not just one but in several disciplines at the same time, in this context focussing on

²⁷ MSS programme.

²⁸ DSS and CD programmes.

²⁹ CD programmes (Arabic and English track).

³⁰ DSS and MSS programmes.

³¹ CD programmes.

³² DSS and MSS programmes.

achieving communication and public-speaking skills as well as cooperation and conflict handling skills.

The Academy underlines that communication, public speaking, cooperation, and conflict handling skills are fundamental to the Master programmes. These competences are nurtured through diverse instructional methods, including interactive lectures, case studies, group projects, and individual research assignments.

The **DSS programme** involves learners working in diverse groups, thus enhancing their cooperation and conflict management skills. In addition, the study programme trains to prepare research papers and a graduation thesis, providing an opportunity for learners to enhance their analytical, critical thinking, and communication skills. Participants are encouraged to present their work in front of their peers and faculty members. Further, as part of their academic journey, students participate in mock negotiations and crisis simulations, providing them with practical opportunities to apply and strengthen their communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills.

The programme also ensures the development of other multidisciplinary competencies such as leadership skills and broad contextual knowledge. This is achieved through dealing with military strategy, law, history, economics, and sociology. The participants are actively engaged in formulating national policies and strategies, making strategic decisions, and managing crises in areas of defence and security.

In the **MSS programme** the course on “Skills in Communication and Negotiation” is designed to hone the students' abilities in effective dialogue, presentation, and conveyance of ideas, crucial for military leadership roles. The method of role-playing or simulation methodology allows learners to simulate real-world scenarios, offering ample opportunities to practice public speaking in varied contexts. Students collaborate in small teams, sharing knowledge, resolving disputes, and synergising their efforts to achieve collective objectives. The coursework, especially “Military Decision-Making and Joint Military Operation” and “Seminar War Game” offers collaborative decision-making scenarios where students must navigate challenges and disputes. The course “Military Training & the Art of Leadership” provides an in-depth study of leadership, covering team leadership, crisis management, and conflict resolution.

The **CD programmes** integrate comprehensive theoretical knowledge with practical real-world scenarios. This combination aims to enable students to anticipate, counter, and manage cybersecurity threats effectively. The courses deal with different subjects such as informatics, artificial intelligence, politics, military and civil institutions, which means that students must dig into different disciplines.

Appraisal:

The four Master programmes train students to acquire communication and public-speaking skills as well as cooperation and conflict handling skills in accordance with the course descriptions. This approach nurtures teamwork and equips learners with tools to manage and mediate conflicts and is supported by means of suitable didactical and methodological measures.

Also, the acquisition of further multidisciplinary competences, such as leadership skills and broad contextual knowledge, is ensured.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.5*	Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.6 Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)

The primary focus of the **DSS** and **MSS programmes** to enhance the students' potential and advance their career within their current structure, rather than providing employability. The students are Qatari citizens and serving in high-ranking positions in the government, military, or other security areas. In this sense, the programmes work towards equipping learners with the essential skills required for elevating their capabilities in formulating national policies and strategies. Students are also trained in making strategic decisions related to defence and security or in achieving higher leadership and strategic positions within their respective military organisations.

The **CD programme** in both tracks also primarily trains employed Qatari professionals in senior military and government roles, focusing on upskilling them rather than addressing traditional employability challenges. The core objective is to enhance their expertise in cyber defence, preparing them for leadership and strategic decision-making roles.

The curriculum is continuously refined to keep pace with job demands. Elective courses on specific topics in cybersecurity and network and cloud security address the latest challenges in the field. This approach aims to ensure that graduates are future-ready and align with the national cybersecurity strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030.

Appraisal:

As almost all students studying in one of the Master programmes are employed in government, military or public institutions, the promotion of employability is replaced by the goal to improve the students' career – by means of promoting multidisciplinary competences and skills. The panel welcomes that this runs as a common thread of the study programme through all its modules/courses.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.6*	Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4. Academic environment and framework conditions

4.1 Faculty

All academic and administrative personnel serving in the Academy across the National Defence College, the Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research are officially employed by the Qatari Ministry of Defence. The Ministry oversees the entire system of recruitment, remuneration, and professional terms for defence-related institutions to ensure a cohesive and well-organised workforce.

Once employed, staff are formally assigned to the Academy, which then distributes these personnel to one of the colleges or the Deanship, depending on operational requirements, academic credentials, and areas of expertise. If the need arises, the Academy can also request the Ministry of Defence to reassign employees to other defence-related units under its responsibility. According to the Academy³³, this flexible staffing model helps maintain high academic standards by placing faculty and administrative staff where they can be most effective but also enables rapid and efficient realignment of personnel in response to evolving security and educational needs within Qatar's defence ecosystem.

Faculty members are generally hired based on a three-year, renewable contract. These contracts are renewed based on the needs of the relevant department and the merit of the faculty member in question³⁴. The prolongation will be recommended by a Retention Committee to the Commander /Dean. The final decision will be made by the President of the Academy³⁵.

Detailed tables summarising the faculty members involved in the programme, including their specific contributions, have been presented to the panel³⁶. These tables also show that the respective teaching capacity covers all programme courses.

DSS programme

The academic team consists of seven full-time faculty members, all of whom hold Ph.D. degrees in a range of diverse and relevant specialisations, and twelve seasoned directing staff. 14 of them (out of 19) are staff³⁷ members. Each faculty member and directing staff is engaged in their respective fields, providing insights that span from international security and development economics to Mediterranean and European security, and beyond. With varied military ranks and specialisations, these 14 directing staff members offer strategic perspectives that bridge academic theories with real-world military scenarios. The Academy explained in detail that these lecturers cover the programme courses. During the last academic year, the student-to-advisor ratio was 2.7:1.

In the **MSS programme**, no traditional faculty members dedicated to this programme; however, faculty members from the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research

³³ This was given as additional information.

³⁴ See JBJ "Retention Policy", as of May 2023.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ See SER p. 78 ff.

³⁷ Directing staff are the military personnel who comprise the instructional staff at the military training institution.

provide courses or contribute to existing courses. This model aims to ensure that students receive an education deeply rooted in practical military experience while still benefiting from academic rigour.

18 directing staff members are instructors for the **MSS programme**, covering all programme courses. During the last academic year, the ratio students to directing staff was 4.3:1. This capacity aims to ensure that both academic standards and the specific requirements of the professional military and security fields are consistently met. For any components of the programme that might require personal attendance or involve blended learning, the Academy ensures that enough directing staff members are available to facilitate proper teaching and learning processes.

CD programme (both tracks)

The faculty of this programme comprises both four full-time and two part-time members. During the first academic year, the programme achieved a learner-to-faculty ratio of 1:1. This ratio adjusted to 3.6:1 in the second academic year. All faculty members are professors (one Full Professor, two Associate Professors and three Assistant Professors). The inclusion of full-time and part-time faculty aims to ensure that academic standards are upheld while meeting professional requirements.

Academic qualification of faculty

As to their academic qualifications all members of the teaching staff hold Ph.D. or Master degrees in specialisations relevant to the study programme. Moreover, they are established experts in their respective areas who have published on their subjects.

The faculty members' specialisations for teaching in the **DSS programme**, encompass fields such as NATO and defence policy, civil-military relations, international relations, development economics, and global trade which is combined with practical experience. They are also active in scientific research and publications.

Faculty members of the **MSS programme** are focused on conveying practical military expertise rather than academic and research orientation. The main part of faculty (16 members) consists of retired high-ranking officers and commanders. Two other members are active officers. All of them are experienced in teaching.

For the two tracks of the **CD programme**, the Academy recruits lecturers through announcements on platforms such as LinkedIn and ResearchGate based on a competitive procedure. The announcement stage is led by the head of the quality assurance department. During the pre-selection phase, a specialised administrative team evaluates applications, focusing on candidates' academic qualifications and professional achievements.

A recruitment committee, composed of seasoned professionals, selects candidates whose academic credentials match the programme's objectives. The Recruitment Directorate of the Ministry of Defence verifies all submitted documents with national and international entities and decides upon the appointment.

Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty

As is noted above, all candidates for positions of lecturers in the Master programmes are required to have pedagogical experience and evidence of research productivity. Moreover, a

faculty development programme aims to ensure continuous improvement of faculty expertise which includes content, didactics and assessment. Also, the Academy supports faculty participation in international training sessions, conferences, and symposiums, recognising the importance of international exposure and intellectual exchange. This programme also includes pedagogical and didactical training.

The Academy is going to implement a verification process for the qualifications of faculty members and directing staff, overseen by a dedicated unit reporting to the Ministry of Defence.

Practical business experience

According to JBJ Academy³⁸, faculty and directing staff of the **DSS and the MSS programmes** have practical business experience, complementing their academic qualifications. Many of them have served in senior military roles, acquiring first-hand experience in strategic decision-making, crisis management, and leadership in defence and security. This practical experience is integrated into the curriculum through case studies and examples, particularly in areas such as NATO strategies and war science theory. Their diverse backgrounds span inter alia military strategy. Faculty members with economic expertise collaborate with directing staff experienced in defence strategy, offering a comprehensive understanding of resource management.

The **CD programmes** benefit faculty members with practical field experience and research backgrounds. They worked in companies and institutions e.g. as system and data security engineers, as software developers or as senior development engineers. Their dual expertise offers a synthesis of innovative research and practical implications to the classroom.

Internal cooperation

Faculty members of each respective programme have at least six formal meetings per semester, for consistent coordination of teaching and research activities. These meetings usually bring together Program Directors, faculty (including visiting lecturers), and representatives from administrative departments to discuss curriculum updates, quality assurance measures, student progress, and upcoming institutional events. Agendas are circulated in advance to allow participants to propose additional discussion points; minutes record all decisions, assigned responsibilities, and follow-up tasks. Plans are underway to provide English translations of these minutes for future accreditation procedures.

Moreover, faculty members from the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research frequently deliver courses and lectures for both the **DSS and the MSS programmes**. This interdisciplinary collaboration aims to support the broader goal of preparing leaders for the Qatar Armed Forces and other state institutions. Faculty from the **CD programme** collaborate with the National Defence College and Command and Staff College, teaching the courses on cybersecurity, technological warfare, and Open-Source Intelligence. Beyond classroom activities, faculty collaboration is important for research initiatives and practical exercises.

Students support by faculty

At the beginning of each academic year, the Colleges and the Deanship hold introductory seminars for students to make them acquainted with available support programmes and

³⁸ See SER p.82.

communication channels. Students are allocated one hour per week to communicate with the support programme officer.³⁹

The academic staff's commitment to student support extends beyond the evening course hours. Faculty members are available for further discussions and guidance, fostering an environment that surpasses quality requirements. Each faculty member shares with the students' weekly time slots dedicated to support and consultation. These time slots are defined in the course syllabus. Learners are encouraged to consult the faculty members during their research paper and thesis preparation.

In the **DSS and MSS programmes**, the educational staff, composed of both faculty members and directing staff, are readily available to students at the Academy all day, Sunday through Thursday, ensuring that students receive immediate assistance and guidance with their inquiries.

The academic staff arrange field visits to active institutions in the Qatari security sector and government institutions and facilitate cooperation with experts in the field. By doing so, the staff members provide students with opportunities to explore practical applications of their studies and network with industry professionals. Moreover, in the process of preparing a thesis, students receive academic supervision.

In both tracks of the **CD programme**, the academic staff members are available from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Sunday through Thursday. During the thesis preparation process, students receive close supervision, bolstering their research skills and facilitating deeper exploration of their specific areas of interest within cyber defence.

During the online conference the participating students confirmed that most students would be fully content with the support that they received in particular from lecturers and academic advisors.

Appraisal:

The panel is convinced that even if their teaching assignments in other study programmes are taken into account, the structure and number of the faculty correspond to the requirements of each programme and ensure that the students reach the intended qualification objectives. The faculties' compositions, consisting of full-time and part-time lecturers, guarantees that both the academic standards and the requirements of professional practice are fully satisfied.

The academic qualification of the faculty including the directing staff members corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programmes. Together with the Recruitment Directorate of the Ministry of Defence, the Academy verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. Specific measures for the further qualification of the faculty members are implemented.

The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty correspond to the requirements and objectives of the study programmes. The Academy verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. The HEI ensures that assessors are familiar

³⁹ See JBJ "Student Support Policy", as of May 2023.

with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field. Specific measures for the further qualification of the faculty members are implemented.

The practical experience of the faculty in business or in relevant military affairs corresponds to the requirement of the programmes to integrate theory and practice.

The academic staff members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the courses towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of all those teaching in the programme take place regularly.

Student support is an integral part of the services provided by the faculty. It is offered on a regular basis and serves to help students study successfully. The faculty members are available for the students outside the specified office hours as well. The students are “fully content” with the support they receive.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.1 Faculty					
4.1.1* Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2* Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3* Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4 Practical business experience of faculty			X		
4.1.5* Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6* Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.7(*) Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended learning/distance learning programmes)					X

4.2 Programme management

The Academy serves as the overarching administrative and strategic authority for its constituent Colleges and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research.

While each College or the Deanship has its own leadership team and handles day-to-day academic matters such as course scheduling, faculty coordination, and student advising, they operate under the direct supervision of the Academy. Specifically, each College is headed by a commander who reports to the President of the Academy, ensuring that institutional goals, quality standards, and administrative policies are consistently implemented.

Each study programme has a programme director whose responsibilities include coordinating the activities of faculty, learners, and administrative staff, and overseeing both curricular and extracurricular activities. Beyond management, the director plays an initiative-taking role in enhancing the programme's quality, emphasising strategic planning, leadership, and effective

resource management. These principles are embedded in the curriculum, aligning with the Academy's mission to underscore the importance of national security for nation-building. The programme director coordinates all aspects of the programme, including course material, faculty involvement, and learner interaction, moreover external collaboration, and ensuring a progressive, contemporary approach to the curriculum.

The programme director focuses on student progress and academic fulfillment, guiding students in research, analysis, and strategic assessment. Admissions fall under his purview, ensuring stringent criteria are met by enrollers who can significantly contribute to defence and security fields. The programme director is also tasked with the strategic placement and judicious selection of part-time faculty members, ensuring the incorporation of contemporary practices and insights into the curriculum.

Several core functions, such as budgeting and financial management, quality assurance, and centralised policy formulation, are coordinated through the Academy to streamline decision-making and eliminate redundant administrative layers. By pooling resources at the Academy level, the Colleges and Deanship gain access to unified support services without bearing the overhead of running multiple standalone offices for payroll, accounting, and compliance. In practical terms, the Academy's administrative support is organised around specialised departments such as finance, and quality control that collaborate closely with corresponding officers in the Colleges and the Deanship.

As for the scale of administrative collaboration, each College and the Deanship maintains a small team of coordinators who liaise directly with the Academy's central departments. Although the exact number of staff varies according to enrolment and programme offerings, the overall goal is to maintain an optimal ratio that guarantees efficient communication, timely student services, and responsiveness to faculty needs.

Administrative support extends beyond admissions, contributing to the implementation of the curricula. This support encompasses course organisation, activity coordination, and resource availability. The administrative team ensures that both students and faculty have seamless access to information and learning materials. For students working on research papers and theses, the administrative staff provide essential support in resource allocation and scheduling. Similarly, they assist faculty members with tasks like plagiarism analysis, defense scheduling, and various administrative needs.

Appraisal:

Each programme has a programme director who coordinates the activities of everyone involved in the programme and ensures that the programme runs smoothly.

Faculty members and students are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programme. Sufficient administrative staff is available. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of work are involved. The panel **recommends** including the students in the decision-making processes.

The opportunities of electronic service-support are used and supplement personal one-to-one counselling. The HEI offers the administrative staff opportunities for continuous professional development.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.2 Programme management					
4.2.1* Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2 Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty			X		

4.3 Cooperation and partnerships

Joaan Bin Jassim Academy has partnerships, formalised through agreements which are partly documented in the SER. Key partners include the Naval Postgraduate School in the United States, Qatar University, the Arab and International Relations Forum, and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. These partnerships are actively maintained and contribute to the development and implementation of the study programmes. A cooperation-agreement with the Center for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland is under way.

The Naval Postgraduate School, for example, provides an international perspective that enriches the defence and military studies curriculum. Collaborations with Qatar University and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies aim to broaden the students' academic understanding, connecting defence and security studies with societal, economic, and political contexts. The Center for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland offers specialised insights into the defence challenges faced by small states.

The Academy is continuously pursuing new partnerships to further enrich the study programmes. A prospective agreement with the Planning and Statistics Authority aims to strengthen the students' skills in strategic planning, statistical analysis, and data-driven decision-making.

Due to regulatory restrictions and to the specificities of the programmes delivered, the Academy can only collaborate with government and semi-government entities. The Academy appreciates the significance of strategic partnerships with business enterprises in enhancing the quality and relevance of its academic programmes. In particular, the MA in Defence and Security Studies, MA in Military and Security Studies, and the MSc in Cyber Defence program.

One notable partnership that the Academy established at the academy level is with Barzan Holdings (a government sponsored company). Barzan Holdings is a leading company revolutionising Qatar's defence and security sector. This agreement influences the conception and implementation of the relevant study programmes.

Appraisal:

The scope and nature of cooperation with HEI, other academic institutions and networks relevant for the programmes are plausibly presented. The agreements forming the basis of the

cooperation are documented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the study programme. All such activities contribute to the development of the students' qualification and skills.

The scope and nature of cooperation with other institutions relevant to the programme are also plausibly presented and documented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the study programme. All such activities contribute to the development of the students' qualification and skills.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.3 Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*) Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)			X		
4.3.2(*) Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		

4.4 Facilities and equipment

As the on-site visit had to be replaced by an online conference, JBJ Academy made available to the panel numerous photos of its building, rooms, and the library as well as descriptions in the self-evaluation report thereof.

The Academy provides an academic environment with advanced technology and resources across all programmes. The National Defence College, the Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research collectively share 22 classrooms. These classrooms are specifically designed to meet the needs of each academic programme. Advanced IT infrastructure is installed. The Academy offers various workspaces equipped with technical tools to aid students in their academic pursuits. According to the Academy⁴⁰, infrastructure may need to be improved to ensure accessibility for disabled students.

For the Cyber Defence programme, the Academy offers full technical and logistical support. Each student is provided with a high-specification laptop and necessary software tools. A cybersecurity lab is equipped with high-performance desktop computers, networking equipment, dedicated servers, and a 4K 86-inch projection smart touch screen. IT support staff are available to address any issues learners and faculty may encounter during lectures and at dedicated support times.

Summary of Available Resources

Category	Detail	Statistics
Personnel and Learner Body	Total Academy Staff	209

⁴⁰ See SER PhD p. 41.

	National Defence Course Students	30
	Joint Command and Staff Course Students	169
	Graduate Studies (Deanship of Graduate studies and Scientific Research)	97
	Ph.D. Programme Learners	19
	Master Programmes Learners	78
Campus and Building Size	Academic Building Area	11,050 m ²
	Administrative Building Area	1,552 m ²
	Total Campus Area	12,602 m ²
Classrooms and Workspaces	Total Classrooms	22
	National Defence College	3
	Joint Command & Staff College, and Deanery of Postgraduate Studies	14
	Cybersecurity Lab	1
	Large Lecture Halls	3
	Auditorium	1
	Workspaces for Ph.D. Learners	Especially allocated with IT and ergonomic equipment
Additional Facilities	Cafeteria	1
	Snack Hall	1
	Swimming Pool	1
	Gym	1
	Football Field	1
	Handball Court	1
	Running Track	1
	Learner Lounges	2
	Total Recreational and Support Facilities	9

The Academy provides Wi-Fi coverage throughout its entire campus for all students, faculty, and administrative staff free of charge. The network infrastructure is managed by the Signal Corps under the Ministry of Defence, ensuring that connectivity meets the highest standards of reliability and security. In practice, the campus maintains two separate networks to accommodate both routine and defence-specific needs. The primary network is connected to the internet and is open to authorised users, including students, faculty, and guests, making it convenient for everyday academic activities such as accessing course materials, conducting online research, and communicating with peers and instructors.

The second network is reserved exclusively for Ministry of Defence operations and is subject to heightened security protocols. Only a limited number of devices, pre-approved for defence-related work, may join this network. By segmenting network access in this way, the Academy minimises potential risks associated with unauthorised intrusions, malware attacks, or data breaches. Both networks employ industry-standard encryption, continuous monitoring, and regular updates to further safeguard network integrity and protect sensitive information.

Access to literature

Students at Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies have access to both the institutional library and the Qatar National Library (QNL). QNL has an enormous collection of

books and journals and technologically advanced facilities. To ensure comprehensive access to a wide array of materials, all students are encouraged to maintain active QNL accounts.

Since its inception in 2012, QNL has served as a cultural and intellectual hub in Qatar, offering free services to all residents. In 2018, the Academy and QNL signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate the academic and research success of the Academy's students by leveraging the resources that QNL has to offer. It operates from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Sunday to Thursday, and from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays. QNL "has access to more than one million books, along with more than 500,000 eBooks, periodicals and newspapers, and special collections." QNL has also made significant strides in digitisation, providing online access to its extensive collections.

The students can remotely access critical literature thanks to this digital access, which satisfies a wide range of research needs and equips them with the necessary tools to navigate the increasingly digital terrain of academic research and collaboration. QNL provides access to a wide array of databases, such as

- JSTOR
- SpringerLink
- IEEE Xplore
- ScienceDirect
- Emerald Insight:

In addition to QNL access, each faculty provides learners with access to a course file where weekly readings and other related course resources are available.

Appraisal:

Since the online conference was conducted replacing an on-site visit, the panel did not have the opportunity to visit the Academy's buildings. Instead, JBJ Academy provided photos and descriptions of its premises and facilities. Based on the materials provided, the panel formed the view that a smooth running of the study programmes is ensured regarding the capacities for teaching, research, studies, and administration.

The quantity, quality, media and IT facilities of the teaching rooms meet the standards required for the programme, even taking into account the resource needs of other study programmes. The panel **recommends** improving the Academy's facilities for disabled students in terms of barrier-free access as far as necessary. Access to the internet through laptops via Wi-Fi is provided free of charge. A sufficient number of group rooms is available.

The panel especially welcomes that access to literature and journals as well as to digital media (e.g. electronic media, databases) is ensured. The databases give access to international scientific books. The literature expressly required for the study programme is available in the library and also kept up to date.

The opening hours of the library take students' needs sufficiently into account. The institutional library as well as the Qatar National Library are accessible during most of the day. Qualified library staff is there to advise students. Access to relevant digital media is available from the students' home.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.4 Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1* Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2* Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

4.4 Additional services

The students are typically employed. They are professionals in the field of defence and security, often serving in military, police, or related government sectors. Therefore, the conventional need for career counselling and placement services is not applicable in this context. Instead, the Academy's focus is to enhance their existing professional skills, broaden their perspectives in their respective fields, and equip them with the necessary knowledge and tools to ascend the ranks in their current employment.

However, the Academy facilitates networking opportunities and regularly organises events and lectures given by guest speakers where the students can interact with experts and leaders. This helps them build strong professional connections, gain deeper insights into their fields, and benefit from the exchange of ideas and experiences.

The Academy has a comprehensive database for the previous cohorts. This database does not merely function as a record of alumni but is also intended to be a platform for keeping the graduates engaged in the ongoing activities of the academy. The Academy is in the planning stages of establishing regular communication with its alumni, extending invitations to them for events, and seeking their valuable expertise for guest lectures and panel discussions.

For international students who graduated prior to 2022, the Academy does not have a complete database. However, recognising the importance of maintaining a connection with these past students, the Academy is initiating a process to remedy this situation by adding an alumni webpage and to build a broad and active alumni network that not only encourages connections between former learners but also allows to continually assess and enhance the study programmes, utilising their feedback and experiences.

Appraisal:

The panel can accept that for the Academy a career counselling and placement service does not make sense taking into account that almost all students are employed in the students are offered to the students and graduates to promote their employability.

An alumni organisation has been set up with the aim of developing an alumni network.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service					X
4.5.2	Alumni Activities			X		

4.6 Financing of the study programme

The financial stability of the JBJ Academy is firmly grounded, with financial support coming directly from the Ministry of Defence. As one of the Ministry's academic units, the Academy receives consistent financial backing that secures the smooth functioning and long-term sustainability of its programmes, including the programmes DSS, MSS, and CB.

This financial support from the Ministry of Defence is not contingent on learner fees, as the Academy does not impose any tuition or other charges on the students. It extends to all areas of academy operations, ensuring that every cohort of students enrolled can complete their respective study programme without financial barriers. The funding covers all aspects of academic activities, from staff salaries, administrative costs, and maintaining the learning infrastructure to providing resources for research, study materials, and other educational necessities.

Furthermore, the financial backing also includes support for internships that students undertake outside Qatar as part of their programme with full scholarship provided by the Ministry of Defence.

Appraisal:

The study programmes are funded for the entire accreditation period so that students will definitely be able to complete their studies (through respective agreements).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

5. Quality assurance and documentation

A key element of the Academy's quality assurance framework is the "Policy on Academic Program Review"⁴¹, which provides a structured mechanism for peer review to maintain academic standards.

The Academy's quality assurance processes involve regular surveys conducted by the National Defence College, Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. These surveys gather feedback from students each semester, evaluating all courses in terms of effectiveness and impact on students' skills. The feedback is analysed to identify areas for improvement, benchmarked against previous performance to track progress, and used to implement necessary corrective measures.

To support a culture of continuous improvement, the Academy maintains a work environment governed by a comprehensive set of regulations. These regulations guide faculty, staff, and students in fulfilling their responsibilities and expectations.

The Quality Assurance Office, led by a director who reports directly to the Academy's president, oversees these processes. The office is responsible for implementing, reviewing, and maintaining the quality assurance and documentation procedures. This office's role is to ensure that corrective measures are implemented, their effectiveness is monitored, and necessary modifications are made. All actions are documented for transparency and accountability.

The approach to quality assurance and development aims to clarify the procedures for reviewing academic programmes, to ensure they meet international standards and align with the Academy's mission and objectives. It also establishes a framework for peer review at internal, national, and international levels.

Evaluation by students

Regular surveys conducted by the National Defence College, Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research assess the effectiveness of courses and their impact on learners' skills. This includes, based on a detailed questionnaire, the students' workload. Comprehensive surveys capture feedback from all learners, covering every course each semester. The results, benchmarked against past performance, aim to identify areas of concern and implement necessary corrective measures. Samples of these surveys and their results have been provided to the panel.

To oversee these processes, the Quality Assurance Office is responsible for implementing, reviewing, and maintaining quality assurance and documentation procedures. The office also plays a critical role in implementing corrective measures, monitoring their effectiveness, making necessary adjustments, and ensuring proper documentation.

Evaluation by faculty

The faculty evaluation process is twofold. First, formal meetings are held at the College or Deanship level, or directly with the president of the Academy, during which faculty members

⁴¹ Policy No. 1301.

are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the contents, procedures, and organisation of the programmes. These meetings serve for open discussion, fostering an environment where ideas are shared, and constructive suggestions are welcomed.

The second method of evaluation involves distributing surveys to faculty and advisors. The Planning and Statistics Authority, established under Emiri Decree Number (70) in 2018, collaborates with the Academy to design these surveys. With a mandate to support the planning process in government agencies and establish an integrated statistical system, the Planning and Statistics Authority is well equipped to assist the Colleges and the Deanship in crafting comprehensive surveys to capture faculty input. However, these surveys are currently under review by the Planning and Statistics Authority and the Policy Committee at the Academy evaluation standards.

The results gathered from these evaluation processes are documented and instrumental in driving the quality development process. Each piece of feedback is carefully considered, and where necessary, translated into actionable measures. These measures are then implemented, reviewed, and evaluated in terms of their quality and adherence to the original objective. If required, they are modified and adapted, ensuring.

Evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties

The Academy intends to conduct surveys based on feedback from alumni, employers, and, where relevant, third parties. These surveys aim to evaluate the programme in terms of its effectiveness, its ability to equip graduates with relevant skills, and its adaptability to the evolving needs of the Defence and security sectors. However, these surveys are not yet in action. They are currently undergoing review by the Planning and Statistics Authority and the Policy Committee at the Academy.

Programme documentation

All programmes offered by the National Defence College, Joint Command and Staff College, and the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, the content, curriculum, and examination schemes are outlined in programme specifications with detailed descriptions. These specifications are accessible to students and faculty. Moreover, summarised descriptions are published on the Academy's website.

The CD programme is reviewed every three academic years by an international expert who evaluates the course against global benchmarks and evolving trends in cyber defence. This external review process aims to ensure that this programme stays at the forefront of advancements in the field and equips students with the most relevant and up-to-date knowledge.

Beyond programme specifications, the Academy maintains documentation at the course level as well. Each academic year, these course specifications are reviewed by the respective college or deanship, covering aspects like course syllabus, assessment methods, and teaching methods. This is particularly significant for the CD programme, where these details are integral parts of the faculty appraisal. All these documents, constantly updated and available in both print and digital formats, offer a view of the Academy's programmes.

The Academy's primary channel of information dissemination is its official website⁴², which is available in Arabic and English. The Academy regularly publishes current news, updates, and both quantitative and qualitative information about its study programmes. This platform provides access to information for students, faculty, alumni, and other interested parties. However, considering the sensitive nature of some programmes and the students' profile, not all information can be made publicly available on the website. For such exclusive information, the Academy is focussed on direct communication with its students. This information is shared via e-mail or other communication methods such as SMS to ensure confidentiality while keeping the students informed about key aspects of their academic journey.

Beyond these channels, the Academy actively engages in press relations and network communication. At the end of each academic year, the Academy prepares a comprehensive annual report that provides a summary of its activities throughout the year.

In addition, the Academy maintains a robust internal communication network with all other entities that report to the Ministry of Defence. This system facilitates the swift exchange of relevant information and critical announcements.

Appraisal:

A quality assurance and development procedure, which systematically and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the programme with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes, has been set up. It takes into account the evaluation results and the analysis of student workload and success rate. Faculty members and students do not participate in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures. Responsibilities for quality assurance in the Academy are clearly defined.

Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure, based on detailed questionnaires. However, during the online conference it became obvious that the outcomes are not always communicated to the students. Therefore, the panel **recommends** providing information to students about evaluation results and quality improvements on a regular basis.

Quality control by the faculty is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated and provide input for the quality development process.

An external evaluation with alumni and employers is being prepared but has not started yet. The panel **recommends**, including the alumni, employers and third-party people in the feedback process.

The study programme's content, curriculum and examination scheme have been suitably documented and published (e.g. course plan and exam regulations).

The HEI regularly publishes current news and information – both quantitative and qualitative – about the study programme.

⁴² <https://jbj.edu.qa> (last seen on March 23, 2025).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties				X	
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year			X		

Quality profile

HEI: Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies

Master programmes:

M.A. Defence and Security Studies

M.A. Military and Security Studies

M.Sc. Cyber Defence (Arabic track)

M.Sc. Cyber Defence (English track)

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1	Objectives					
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market		X			
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)		X			
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		
2	Admission					
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.2	Counselling for prospective students			X		
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)			X		
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)					X
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3	Contents, structure and didactical concept					
3.1	Contents					
3.1.1*	Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2*	Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3*	Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
3.1.4	Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5	Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6*	Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7*	Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2	Structure					
3.2.1*	Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X ⁴³	Condition ⁴⁴	
3.2.2*	Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3*	Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4	Equality of opportunity			X		
3.3	Didactical concept					
3.3.1*	Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2*	Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3	Guest lecturers		X			
3.3.4	Lecturing tutors					X
3.4	Internationality					
3.4.1*	International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2	Internationality of the student body		X ⁴⁵	X ⁴⁶		
3.4.3	Internationality of faculty		X ⁴⁷	X ⁴⁸		
3.4.4	Foreign language contents		X ⁴⁹	X ⁵⁰		
3.5*	Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.6*	Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.	Academic environment and framework conditions					
4.1	Faculty					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3*	Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4	Practical business experience of faculty			X		
4.1.5*	Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6*	Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.7(*)	Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion)					X

⁴³ DSS and Cyber Defence programmes

⁴⁴ MSS programme

⁴⁵ MSS programme.

⁴⁶ DSS and Cyber Defence programmes.

⁴⁷ Cyber Defence programmes.

⁴⁸ DSS and MSS programmes.

⁴⁹ Cyber Defence (English track) programme.

⁵⁰ Cyber Defence (Arabic track), Defence and Security Studies, Military and Security Studies programmes.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
	for blended learning/distance learning programmes)					
4.2	Programme management					
4.2.1*	Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2	Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty			X		
4.3	Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)			X		
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations			X		
4.4	Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1*	Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2*	Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service			X		
4.5.2	Alumni Activities			X		
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5	Quality assurance and documentation					
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties				X	
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year			X		