

University gains accreditation from European research agency

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BEIRUT: A prestigious European academic body has granted accreditation to Beirut's Saint-Joseph University (USJ).

Professor Jean Francois Dhainaut of the European Evaluation and Research Agency for Higher Education (AERES) told the press Friday that the accolade "[confirmed] the quality of the education that is being provided and the research that is being carried out [by USJ]."

"USJ has fulfilled the criteria of accreditation and is in line with European guidelines," he added.

A team of AERES experts visited the university between December 15 and 19 2008 to evaluate the institution.

"This evaluation was aimed at directing general advice at the university's request, regarding the quality of teaching and certificates that it provides," Dhainaut said.

USJ was commended for the wide variety of honors it offered, which catered for students' various socio-economic needs. The university was also praised for its language education facilities.

A statement released by AERES praised USJ's "effectiveness in achieving its educational mission by accompanying students from their first day of college to the day they start their careers."

"The accreditation is a clear sign of successful progress and is an encouraging sign for USJ's future," the report stated, adding that the university was doing its best to increase its potential in the field of research despite the difficulty of financing educational research within Lebanon.

The agency also gave several recommendations for improvement, such as including research time within professors' working hours and managing financial resources better by more active participation within local socio-economic circles.