



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب  
Education & Training Quality Authority  
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

# Directorate of Higher Education Reviews Programme Review Report

**Royal University for Women  
College of Art & Design  
Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Site Visit Date: 13 – 15 February 2023**

HA086-C3-R086

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## Acronyms

ASIC	Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CAC	College Advisory Committee
CAD	College of Art and Design
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DCR	Document Control Register
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GA	Graduate Attribute
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
IT	Information Technology
MDP	Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PD	Professional Development
PGSC	Post Graduate Studies Committee
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA&E	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
QAAU	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit
RUW	Royal University for Women
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
UoB	University of Bahrain
WVU	University of West Virginia

## I. Introduction

In keeping with its mandate, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), through the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR), carries out two types of reviews that are complementary. These are: Institutional Reviews, where the whole institution is assessed; and the Academic Programme Reviews (APRs), where the quality of teaching, learning and academic standards are assessed in academic programmes within various colleges according to specific standards and indicators as reflected in its Framework.

Following the revision of the APR Framework at the end of Cycle 1 in accordance with the BQA procedure, the revised APR Framework (Cycle 2) was endorsed as per the Council of Ministers' Resolution No.17 of 2019. Thereof, in the academic year (2019-2020), the DHR commenced its second cycle of programme reviews.

The Cycle 2 APR Review Framework is based on four main Standards and 21 Indicators, which forms the basis of the APR Reports of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The **four** standards that are used to determine whether or not a programme meets international standards are as follows:

*Standard 1: The Learning Programme*

*Standard 2: Efficiency of the Programme*

*Standard 3: Academic Standards of Students and Graduates*

*Standard 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance*

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') decides whether each indicator, within a standard, is 'addressed', 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed'. From these judgements on the indicators, the Panel additionally determines whether each of the four standards is 'Satisfied' or 'Not Satisfied', thus leading to the Programme's overall judgement, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
All four Standards are satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Standards are satisfied, including Standard 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Standard is satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where <b>Standard 1</b> is not satisfied	

The APR Review Report begins with providing the profile of the Programme under review, followed by a brief outline of the judgement received for each indicator, standard, and the overall judgement.

The main section of the report is an analysis of the status of the programme, at the time of its actual review, in relation to the review standards, indicators and their underlying expectations.

The report ends with a Conclusion and a list of Appreciations and Recommendations.

## II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	Royal University for Women
College/ Department*	College of Art and Design
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting
Qualification Approval Number	Approval of Qualification: HEC letters number 230-MTA/2012 on 20 June 2012 and no. 434 MTA/2013 on March 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
NQF Level	9
Validity Period on NQF	Date of Validation Report 31 December 2019
Number of Units*	15
NQF Credit	165
Programme Aims*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge the gap between the domestic and regional art and the global art, as this degree provide the student with great opportunity to learn, know and communicate with the global culture and art.</li> <li>• Provide professional qualification by equipping students with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to practice at an advanced level, foster creativity, enhance employment opportunities and high-level approach to learning.</li> <li>• Empower students to develop original individual creative practice and place it within the wider professional context of fine art.</li> <li>• Become a centre for strategic studies of art in the region, filling the current shortage in the qualified staff locally, regionally and globally.</li> <li>• Build an art specialized base to create high public taste, as a result in increasing a number of specialists.</li> <li>• Develop the spirit of reading, researching and exploring which in turn helps to understand the different cultures and civilizations, to set the correct base for developing community.</li> <li>• Train and preserve the talents of artists, providing them with the chance to improve their knowledge, skills, reflective practice,</li> </ul>

	<p>effective communication, team working ability and foster critical thinking,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis and creative synthesis throughout the programme.</li> <li>• Build strong relations and connections with other universities, institutions, artistic and cultural centres to enhance the relationship between university and community.</li> </ul>
<p>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*</p>	<p><b>A. Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p><b>A1.</b> Show a confident and articulate ability to understand, evaluate, record and analyse individual creative practice in context.</p> <p><b>A2.</b> Develop expertise incorporating research methodologies to inform and gain appreciation of the aesthetic value and historical importance of an art work, style or period.</p> <p><b>A3.</b> Demonstrate a broad knowledge and critical understanding of contemporary and historical fine art practice and develop innovative ideas.</p> <p><b>A4.</b> Demonstrate knowledge and creativity of the practical contexts and consideration for their display.</p> <p><b>A5.</b> Demonstrate ability to execute the idea behind the work and awareness of the creative process.</p> <p><b>B. Subject-Specific Skills</b></p> <p><b>B1.</b> Develop creativity in building form, techniques style and content which will enhance visualization of their ideas.</p> <p><b>B2.</b> Develop historical critical and theoretical discourses in conceptual ideas.</p> <p><b>B3.</b> Develop knowledge, reflective practice and skills to engage in their “own voice” to create individual aesthetic dialogue which supports their selection choices.</p> <p><b>B4.</b> Demonstrate ability to define a research problem, give significant proposal to granting for an ongoing research in their areas of interest.</p> <p><b>B5.</b> Develop a research idea into a thesis and complete it successfully.</p> <p><b>C. Critical Thinking Skills</b></p> <p><b>C1.</b> Ability to discuss the themes and context of the chosen topic in relation to context of historical and cultural events.</p> <p><b>C2.</b> Demonstrate investigation, conceptual experimentation and development of originality in how to see materials possibilities and realise the potential of ideas to develop a body of work and inform contemporary art and challenge the boundaries of practice.</p> <p><b>C3.</b> Develop a critical thinking, analysis, creative synthesis and effective communication throughout the programme.</p>

	<p><b>C4.</b> Appraise strengths and weakness of work by critiques, analysis, and presentations (self-reflection, and self-assessment) in order to improve work.</p> <p><b>D. General and Transferable Skills (other skills relevant to employability and personal development)</b></p> <p><b>D1.</b> Ability to demonstrate an understanding of how to employ and develop concepts and thoughts to explore a subject or idea, undertake research and reflective practice and apply these in the context of contemporary art practice within visual culture.</p> <p><b>D2.</b> Extend the ability in creating a competent presentation as a communication skill for a stated task.</p> <p><b>D3.</b> Assess the ability to incorporate in drawings the use of visual language using symboliSMand visual metaphor.</p> <p><b>D4.</b> Apply and integrate their knowledge and skills towards providing effective solutions and presenting their work professionally in the employment sector.</p>
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### III. Judgement Summary

**The Programme's Judgement:  
No Confidence**

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
<b>Standard 1</b>	<b>The Learning Programme</b>	<b>Not Satisfied</b>
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Not Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
<b>Standard 2</b>	<b>Efficiency of the Programme</b>	<b>Not Satisfied</b>
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
<b>Standard 3</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance</b>	<b>Not Satisfied</b>
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Not Applicable

Indicator 3.5	Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.6	Achievements of the Graduates	Partially Addressed
<b>Standard 4</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance</b>	<b>Not Satisfied</b>
Indicator 4.1	Quality Assurance Management	Addressed
Indicator 4.2	Programme Management and Leadership	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.3	Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme	Not Addressed
Indicator 4.4	Benchmarking and Surveys	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.5	Relevance to Labour market and Societal Needs	Partially Addressed

## IV. Standards and Indicators

### Standard 1

#### The Learning Programme

*The programme demonstrates fitness for purpose in terms of mission, relevance, curriculum, pedagogy, intended learning outcomes and assessment.*

#### Indicator 1.1: The Academic Planning Framework

*There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, reflected in clear aims which relate to the mission and strategic goals of the institution and the college.*

##### **Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

- The Royal University for Women (RUW) has clear stated mission and vision statements that are available online to all students and staff and in the university's catalogue. Moreover, the College of Art and Design (CAD) has also its own vision and mission that are aligned with RUW's vision and mission. The Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting (MDP) programme is aligned with RUW's aim to educate women for professional careers and to equip them with critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will enhance their abilities to undertake roles in a range of arts-related spheres. The MDP programme has an academic framework to guide the programme aims and objectives. The aims and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are defined and indicate the inclusion of the college's vision and mission into the programme and its delivery.
- The introduction of new programmes is regulated through the Programme Approval and Modification Policy which is based on the Higher Education Council (HEC) requirements. A Curriculum Review Process is also part of the planning scheme of RUW. The MDP programme was first offered in 2012-2013 and was externally reviewed by the University of West Virginia (WVU) in 2012-2013.
- As clarified in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and confirmed in interviews with senior academic and administrative management, a Risk Management Register for RUW is in place in order to respond to various risks for the university's functions. The CAD submitted the draft of a Risk Management Plan (2021-2026) which states the impact of various incidences and connects them with mitigation actions and responsibilities. Risks are divided into student attraction and retention, human resources, physical resources and

political, health and natural occurrences. Since 2018, there is a university-wide Disaster Recovery Policy in effect which deals with physical incidents that can possibly disrupt Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and data security.

- The programme is placed at Level 9 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). As per the SER, the College Council is the appointed mapping panel, and the University Senate is the entity to approve the proposed NQF level and NQF credits. The qualification title 'Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting' is concise and clearly indicates the programme's type and level. However, the programme's name indicates a more studio-based qualification than what is actually on offer (see recommendations under Indicator 1.3). The title is correctly documented as shown on the degree certificate and the RUW Website. However, in some other documents such as the Strategic Plan the programme is referred to as 'Master in Drawing and Painting'. The Panel advises the CAD to harmonize the programme English title in all documents and ensure that the English and Arabic titles of the programme are consistent.
- The programme aims are defined and reflect RUW and CAD mission and goals. However, there is no evidence of any revision of the programme aims since its inception in 2013. The Panel is of the view that the aims of the programme ought to reflect a stronger sense of its focus and ethos. It should clarify what is special about the study of contemporary painting and drawing – rather than fine art – and what it sees as its expertise and outlook. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise and develop the programme aims in a way to effectively reflect its authentic focus which is on contemporary painting and drawing. In addition – and in line with one of the MDP programme external reviewer's views – a greater sense as to whether the programme is professionally, research or advanced study orientated (or any combination of the three) might be helpful in articulating the programme's intended focus and direction.

## **Indicator 1.2: Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes**

*Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of intended learning outcomes for the programme and for each course and these are appropriate for the level of the degree and meet the NQF requirements.*

### **Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

- RUW describes its generic Graduate Attributes (GAs) as an essential part of its Employability Strategy. The Panel is satisfied that the programme's PILOs are aligned with the GAs. The Employability Strategy and Student Experience Strategy show the connection between GAs and the curriculum. Additionally, GAs, intended learning outcomes and courses are listed in the MDP Handbook. The Panel acknowledges the clear formulation of GAs and the alignment of intended learning outcomes.

- PILOs are clearly documented in the Programme Specifications, and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) in the respective Course Specifications; the NQF level 9 is mentioned in these documents. Learning outcomes are aligned with the university's strategic orientation, they are regularly monitored and updated in case of necessity, as clarified from interviews with faculty and senior management.
- The Panel notes that all PILOs, subsumed in (1) knowledge and understanding, (2) subject-specific skills, (3) critical thinking skills and (4) general and transferable skills, are linked to the programme aims as shown in the MDP Programme Specifications. The CAD also provided the Panel with a template that connects programme aims and PILOs.
- The PILOs have been drafted in a manner that can be measured and assessed, as documented in the Programme Specification. The CILOs are mapped to the PILOs, however, the Panel is of the view that the CILOs and the alignment of the CILOs to the PILOs and GAs need to be revised to ensure that work submitted by the MDP students reflects the PILOs and GAs. For example, the Panel notes that the samples of students work of the 'Advanced Composition' (MDP510) course do not evidence independent thinking. The Panel also notes that briefs for studio courses, modes of teaching delivery and feedback are unclear and need to be amended. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the CILOs and their alignment with the PILOs and GAs as well as the course contents and assessments.

### **Indicator 1.3: The Curriculum Content**

*The curriculum is organised to provide academic progression of learning complexity guided by the NQF levels and credits, and it illustrates a balance between knowledge and skills, as well as theory and practice, and meets the norms and standards of the particular academic discipline.*

#### **Judgement: Not Addressed**

- The provided study plan in the SER shows course-on-course and semester-on-semester progression. However, the Panel notes that there is a disconnect between the type of practical instruction on offer and the professional sphere, which means that students are not completely prepared for progression within the programme courses and post-graduation. For example, the 'Advanced Composition' (MDP510) course does not prepare students for the later courses of 'Drawing and Painting I' (MDP 511) and 'Drawing and Painting II' (MDP 512). Furthermore, the Panel is of the view that the curriculum needs a comprehensive revision in order to be updated so that students can model the artistic and intellectual independence that should be demonstrated at a master's level and clarify the way early core courses prepare students for their progress through the programme. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the progression, prerequisites, and contents of the courses, to ensure proper progression of students

towards graduation and to promote independent learning that is befitting of a master's degree programme.

- The Panel notes that the curriculum does not put enough emphasis on the studio time and resources needed for the acquisition of practical skills. Composition, brushwork and rhythmic structure are overly prescriptive in the courses. This remark is also echoed in one of the external reviewer's reports that were provided to the Panel. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the curriculum content and its delivery with the aim of ensuring balance between theory and practice. The Panel also advises CAD to encourage students to acquire the practical skills that are in line with their own individual interests by working in the studios, as well as by their exposure to the work of professional artists.
- The Panel notes that some courses do not prescribe which media students use, size of work use or how research is undertaken. For example, initial sketches are required in the 'Contemporary Artistic Experiments' (MDP511) course, however, it is unclear how this is done. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should ensure that all relevant basic MDP courses prescribe which media students use, the size of work students use and how research is undertaken.
- The Panel notes that the practical courses lack the development of a more critical content in relation to the processes of painting. Currently, courses such as 'Advanced Composition' (MDP510), 'Drawing and Painting I' (MDP511), 'Drawing and Painting II' (MDP512), 'Rhythmic Structure in Drawing' (MDP513) and 'Brushwork' (MDP515) do not evidence a link between the ways in which artwork is made and the ideas or propositions of that artwork. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the MDP practical courses to reflect the development of a more critical content in relation to the processes of painting. Furthermore, there are some courses such as 'Drawing and Painting II' (MDP512), 'Rhythmic Structure in Drawing' (MDP513) and 'Brushwork' (MDP515) that also need to be revised to include examples of art writing and criticism so as to align the tasks required of students with real world critical writing on contemporary art. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise some of the MDP courses to include art writing and criticism in order to be suitable for a master's degree level.
- The programme's name is rooted in practice, but the final thesis – the largest credit of the course – is a written work. This is unusual for a master's in Painting/Drawing/Fine Art programme in the United Kingdom, Europe or the United States of America where mostly the bulk of the final submission is an exhibition. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should reconsider the weighting amongst practical aspects, written elements of the programme as well as the exhibition, which presents great professional practice to students.

- The Panel notes that many of the text's bibliographies used in courses such as 'Drawing and Painting II' (MDP512), as an example, are outdated and not suited for a master's level. In some courses, many 'how to' books are cited as well as non-specialist books. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should update its major references and select books from University Presses or Academic publishers. Furthermore, the Panel urges the CAD to ensure that the bibliography list is correct and accurate in all the MDP courses.

### **Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning**

*The principles and methods used for teaching in the programme support the attainment of programme aims and intended learning outcomes.*

#### **Judgement: Partially Addressed**

- The Panel notes that the programme team work hard to ensure a sense of community and enquiry amongst student in their learning encounters, as outlined in the programme objectives, thus embedding a positive approach to life-long learning. The Panel also notes that there is an institutional teaching and learning policy but it does not provide a typology of a range of concrete and appropriate teaching methods for the MDP programme. Furthermore, the Panel is of the view that the 'Research Methods' (DMT501) course, which is a shared course that supports the thesis, ought to be developed further and differently for fine art practitioners. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should introduce teaching and research methods that suit the nature of the programme.
- The learning environment is set up more for formal teaching encounters than informal and non-formal. The Panel is of the view that dedicated studio provision, rather than shared and temporary classroom space, would enhance the programme's capacity for peer-to-peer learning, as well as less formal teaching encounters (see recommendations under Indicator 2.3).
- The Panel notes with appreciation that the E-Learning Policy provides plans and directions not only on e-learning but also on the pedagogical value of the linkage of face-to-face instruction and virtual methods, to support the attainment of intended learning outcomes. The SER reflects upon online and hybrid delivery. The Panel suggests that the programme team consider the use of strategic hybrid elements; as, international artists' talks, accessed in this way could be a helpful curriculum enhancement.

### **Indicator 1.5: Assessment Arrangements**

*Suitable assessment arrangements, which include policies and procedures for assessing students' achievements, are in place and are known to all relevant stakeholders.*

### **Judgement: Addressed**

- The Panel acknowledges that the students are fully briefed on their assessments and that the mechanisms for grading students' achievements are known and fair. Academic assessment, according to the Guidelines for Governance and Quality, is subject to annual internal reviews. The Assessment Policy is connected to a number of annexures including generic grading rubrics, the CILO Achievement Matrix, and Examination Information and Regulations.
- For all academic staff, the Assessment Policy and related policies and procedures are accessible through the Document Management System and the Student Information System (SIS). Students use Moodle to get relevant information on course specifications, assessment tasks, assessment criteria, submission deadlines and projected grades.
- Both formative and summative assessments are given to CAD students. Formative and summative assessments are used in almost all courses. Subsequent to grading, feedback on students' achievements and shortcomings is provided individually by the instructor or through Moodle. However, the Panel notes that feedback given on students' practice-based assessment is of a generic remark (good, poor etc.), differs from instructor to another and was extremely brief rather than offering critical feedback on the work's ideas and context. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should ensure that students are provided with specific detailed feedback on their assessed work, as this provides a learning opportunity for students to improve their work.
- Comprehensive principles of research activities are listed particularly in the RUW Research Strategic Plan, the Research Ethos and in the document named Definition of Research, Scholarship & Scholarly Activities. Research misconduct in terms fabrication, falsification and plagiarism in academic research is addressed in the Research Policy. Rules and guidelines for the thesis are outlined in the Post Graduate Study Regulations, and students' progress in and/or challenges with the thesis are discussed with the academic supervisor and/or co-supervisor and in the Post Graduate Studies Committee (PGSC).
- The grading of assessments is either based on rubrics or model answers. Aside from generic marking criteria, the rubrics which the SER refers to, are used for grading essays, report writing, presentations, participation and engagement. Assessments are documented in the respective course folders and are used for internal and external audit at the end of each semester to obtain feedback on course content and assessment rigor, as shown in the provided evidence. Grades are moderated and approved by the College Council, subsequently sent to the Deans' Council and then to the Registrar who announces the grades to students. Information on assessment and grading is also provided in the Student Handbook.

- Students are informed of academic misconduct in the Student Handbook including admissions offences, plagiarism, cheating, misuse of confidential material, misrepresentation of facts, and misuse of computer software licenses. To prevent deliberate or inadvertent plagiarism, RUW drafted the Plagiarism Policy and a Plagiarism Awareness Handbook. The Policy is discussed with students during the orientation day and is uploaded on each course homepage in the Moodle platform. In order to detect plagiarism in written reports, RUW uses the Turnitin software. Students are eligible to apply for grade appeal toward any course as documented in the Student Handbook. Detailed subject related information is given in the Student Grade Appeals Policy. Following a written appeal, a Grade Appeal Committee is formed by the Dean who decides on the appeal and passes the outcome to the Registrar. All grade appeals are discussed in the College Council.

## Standard 2

### Efficiency of the Programme

*The programme is efficient in terms of the admitted students, the use of available resources - staffing, infrastructure and student support.*

#### Indicator 2.1: Admitted Students

*There are clear admission requirements, which are appropriate for the level and type of the programme, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders, and the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims and available resources.*

#### Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- RUW has Admission Procedures that are applied to all its postgraduate programmes. Student admission to the MDP programme is clearly stated in the Post Graduate Studies Regulations, RUW Brochure, RUW Website, and MDP Programme Handbook. The Admission Policy also provides details for accepting students transferred from other programmes. Any transferred applicant must be holding a recognized bachelor's degree either from the design discipline or from any non-design related field. The Panel is satisfied that the information concerning credit transfer is sufficiently described in the university's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy and MDP Programme Handbook.
- Students holding a non-design undergraduate degree must complete two foundation courses 'History and Theory of Art and Design' (PMAD 501) and 'Drawing and Painting: Material and Techniques' (PMAD 503). The Panel suggests that the CAD observes the output of the overall performance of students who take the two foundation courses compared to those who don't in order to identify any improvements that could be made to these two courses. Furthermore, while the programme seeks to recruit students from a range of different disciplines, the responses from several interview sessions affirmed that the programme lacks robust marketing and promotion. The Panel is of the view that this may be directly impacting student numbers and, by implication, the size of each cohort, which in turn limits the networking opportunity that all graduate degrees are designed to provide, and the quality of students that the programme attracts. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should develop mechanisms to better market the programme, to attract more students.
- From interviews the Panel learned that since the inception of the programme in 2012-2013, the admission policy was not revised. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the admission requirements regularly in light of student performance and

feedback from relevant stakeholders, in addition to national and international benchmarks.

## **Indicator 2.2: Academic Staff**

*There are clear procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, promotion, and professional development of academic staff, which ensure that staff members are fit-for-purpose and that help in staff retention.*

### **Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

- The Panel confirms that there are clear procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, and promotion of academic staff as per the provided documents. Training needs of staff and the professional development required are noted; and each academic year starts with a staff orientation programme. Furthermore, training in hybrid teaching was provided for all teaching staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. The online training was from WVU on Hybrid Teaching and edX Harvard Leaders of Learning. In addition, a workshop with CLICKS covered the topic of Quality Assurance of Online Teaching in Higher Education.
- The Panel notes that all staff members show a strong interest in developing their research which is also a key component of any promotion application. The Panel was informed about all the support available to help staff develop their research. However, it is advised that RUW could do more in enhancing collaborative research amongst its faculties with the support of RUW's Scientific Research & Post Graduate Studies Council.
- The Panel notes that the staff's individual research allocation time has been less than 15% of the workload as indicated in course files (2 hours a week for full-time faculty) and confirmed in interviews with faculty and SER. In the Panel's view, this is lower than the percentage allocated for research in many universities worldwide. It was reported verbally that post Covid-19 staffs' research allocation time completely diminished. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the RUW should ensure that research hours be communicated to faculty and implemented as per the existing research time allocation university policy. The Panel also advises CAD to encourage its staff to conduct interdisciplinary research that is related to their specialization and the courses they teach.
- Despite the above mentioned, the Panel is satisfied that the academic staff workload is in line with the HEC regulations in terms of teaching and project supervision load apart from the time allocation of research as mentioned earlier. The SER demonstrates that the staff retention data for CAD in the last five years (2016-2021) decreased from 86.6% to 80%, and no clear information was provided regarding this decrease apart from personal reasons.

Consequently, the Panel advises RUW to investigate the reasons of staff turnover and introduce incentives to retain its highly qualified academic staff members.

- The Panel was informed that a total of 14 full time instructors and 7 part time instructors contribute to teaching in the CAD. As per the SER there is one full time Professor, four full time Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor and one part timer who are teaching in the MDP programme and were also responsible for teaching courses that belong to other programmes. Although, the provided evidence indicates that the staff to student ratio is 1:11, the Panel is of the view that the programme needs more fine art staff. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should hire fine art staff with relevant expertise to support the delivery of the programme.
- The Panel notes that the Professional Development (PD) process at RUW is outlined in the Professional Development Policy for Academic Staff, which states that RUW is committed to allocate a minimum of 2% of the total revenue for staff PD, according to HEC regulations. Moreover, the CAD Professional Development Plan 2022-2023 documents all the PD activities along with peer mentoring forms. Furthermore, staff are encouraged to attend the Advanced Higher Education Academic SheLeads+ Women Academic Leaders Programme and running an in-house female leadership programme. The SER clarifies that at the end of each semester a consolidated report is produced to document the research activities along with the PD activities and the effectiveness of the PD is discussed by the College Council. Despite the above-mentioned, the Panel recommends that the CAD should introduce a survey to evaluate staff's satisfaction towards the PD activities. Furthermore, the Panel suggests that the Research Forum ought to focus on supporting and sharing individual staff research projects and practices, to help foster a creative research community, rather than focusing predominantly on pedagogical or teaching & learning issues as noticed in the provided document. The Panel learned from interviews that thesis supervisors are not provided with any professional training on thesis supervision. Therefore, the Panel recommends also that the CAD should introduce a PD activity to train its staff on the thesis supervision techniques and skills.

### **Indicator 2.3: Physical and Material Resources**

*Physical and material resources are adequate in number, space, style and equipment; these include classrooms, teaching halls, laboratories and other study spaces; Information Technology facilities, library and learning resources.*

#### **Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

- Classes and laboratories are adequate in terms of number and size for the current number of students on the programme. However, the Panel notes the lack of messy maker spaces, wet rooms and areas designated for large canvas works. This is because students within

this programme are assigned a desk in a classroom and not a studio space where they can set up painting easels etc. Furthermore, the Panel learned during the virtual interviews that the desk assigned to the MDP student is not a designated desk for her exclusive use. It was also observed that the studios for MDP students are shared with other departments and students must move their artwork from one place to another. This needs to be addressed as a priority. Furthermore, from the physical and video tour, the Panel observed that the exhibition area allocated solely for the MDP students is small and students' artwork is displayed in the corridors of the CAD. Additionally, interviewed students and alumnae raised concerns about the resources available and within the alumnae interview in particular, felt that they had graduated from the programme with the same practical skills that they had when they joined. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should urgently review its dedicated studio space and workshop and maker-space, to ensure that these facilities are in line with regional and international standards. The Panel also recommends that RUW should dedicate more space to exhibit student's artwork in one large room.

- The available e-learning and e-resources support access to online learning environment and platforms. The programme has adequate software and equipment for the teaching of the programme. The library's resources/provisions are detailed and meet the minimum requirements of the HEC regulations; and both students and faculty members have a role to play in proposing new books, as was clarified in interviews. However, the contents of the fine art materials are in need of improvement in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise and increase the programme-specific bibliographies.
- The Panel is satisfied that the library environment supports individual, focused and group space to study and work with AV hardware and with good wi-fi access and provides welcoming training opportunities for students during the Open Day. The Panel also confirms that arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of students and staff on campus are adequate, as captured in the provided evidence and students are also kept informed of these arrangements by means of their handbook.

## **Indicator 2.4: Management Information Systems**

*There are functioning management information and tracking systems that support the decision-making processes and evaluate the utilisation of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, along with policies and procedures that ensure security of learners' records and accuracy of results.*

### **Judgement: Addressed**

- RUW is utilising SIS to inform decision-making at various levels, including student advising, giving feedback on attendance and identifying students at-risk of academic

failure. Since the academic year 2019-2020, Moodle has been added to support the SIS and help academic staff to upload course specifications, teaching materials, assessment documents and any online delivery of classes. The utilization of resources including laboratories and e-learning is also tracked and used to inform decision-making.

- The Panel noted that RUW has established a policy for Security of Students Records that is kept updated and the Office of the Registrar keeps student records secure. Moreover, RUW has a policy for Grade Approval. Grades are verified by the Dean and discussed and approved in the College Council, after which final grades are approved by the Deans' Council and sent to the Office of Registrar for publishing which in turn issues transcripts and certificates in a timely manner. This was confirmed during students and alumnae virtual interviews.

### **Indicator 2.5: Student Support**

*There is appropriate student support available in terms of guidance, and care for students including students with special needs, newly admitted and transferred students, and students at risk of academic failure.*

#### **Judgement: Addressed**

- The Panel notes that students at RUW have appropriate support in all areas including the library and laboratories services. All students are also assigned an Academic Advisor and are encouraged to communicate with their advisors either face-to-face or by email; non-academic concerns are handled by the clinic or a social worker.
- The Panel notes that RUW has an induction programme for its newly enrolled students, which is conducted at the beginning of each semester. The CAD also arranges specific induction for its postgraduate students to inform them about its specific requirements; the students are also introduced to the CAD's Dean, faculty members and their advisors.
- The SER outlines the detailed process of timely intervention to track students at-risk of academic failure and the Panel is satisfied with the process. However, the Panel noticed that the identified cases are related to attendance, and these are being well handled by the programme team. At-risk students are monitored by instructors, academic advisors and the College Council. There is a policy for students with special needs.
- From virtual interviews, the Panel learned that the University organizes an annual career fair to expose its students, especially those who are not working to potential employers. Interviewed alumnae and employers verified that both the university and the programme team are fully engaged in supporting students' professional careers during their studies, and postgraduation. Moreover, interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the

cooperative manner of the academic staff and their commitment to supporting students when working on their thesis, which the Panel notes with appreciation.

- With respect to supporting women's needs, the Panel notes that the 'empowerment of women' is instilled in all RUW's activities and is supported and encouraged by both staff and students. The Panel also notes that RUW depends on its Graduate Exit Survey to assess and evaluate its provided services to students. However, keeping in mind the low student response rate, it is unclear how the data has been utilized to improve the programme delivery (see Indicator 4.4).

## Standard 3

### Academic Standards of Students and Graduates

*The students and graduates of the programme meet academic standards that are compatible with equivalent programmes in Bahrain, regionally and internationally.*

#### Indicator 3.1: Efficiency of the Assessment

*The assessment is effective and aligned with learning outcomes, to ensure attainment of the graduate attributes and academic standards of the programme.*

#### **Judgement: Partially Addressed**

- Assessment methods are clearly documented in the Programme Specifications. Course specifications indicate assessment details, such as: type of assessment, weight of assessment, CILOs addressed, assignment brief, criteria of evaluation and submission date. The Head of Department (HoD) and the Dean ensure the consistency and alignment of assessments to the CILOs and the course level. The Panel notes that all assessments are mapped to intended learning outcomes. Yet, the alignment is not up to a master's level as the CILOs should be revised as stated earlier in Standard 1 (see the recommendation under Indicator 1.2).
- Assessment drafts, prepared by instructors, are reviewed for their appropriateness by the HoD and possible changes are discussed with the instructor. Final assessments are then submitted to the Dean for approval. However, the range and type of assessments do not in all cases mirror the type and the level of the MDP programme. The Panel notes that assessment questions are far below a master level as evident in the 'Research Methods' (DMT501) course and others. The Panel is also of the view that the CAD should exclude the quiz, multiple-choice and class participation assessments from the master level examinations and utilize more in-depth questions that better reflect students understanding of the field of study. Therefore, Panel recommends that the CAD should ensure that students' assessments are appropriate for the nature and level of the programme in terms of depth of assessment items, complexity, and involvement of higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking. The Panel also advises the CAD to undertake further international benchmarking to ensure students are producing work at the master's level and that student work reflects the intended learning outcomes.

- Measurement of students' achievements is done each semester with a CILO Achievement Matrix and a template for mapping CILOs. PILO assessment regarding the level of achievements is done yearly. Joint evaluation, second marking as well as internal and external moderation are implemented to ensure fair grading and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- At the college level, mechanisms for monitoring implementation and improvement of the assessment processes are documented. There are also mechanisms for receiving feedback regarding the improvement of the assessment process, from external examiners and other external advisors. The monitoring process of assessments includes a review of all grades in each semester by the College Council, and final grade summaries are approved by the Deans' Council. However, the Panel is of the view that these mechanisms are not effective and recommends that the CAD should review the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to ensure the alignment of assessments with learning outcomes and improve the assessment process at the programme level.

### **Indicator 3.2: Academic Integrity**

*Academic integrity is ensured through the consistent implementation of relevant policies and procedures that deter Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, forging of results, and commissioning others to do the work).*

#### **Judgement: Addressed**

- RUW has a number of policies and procedures referring to academic integrity, ethics, and research. The Plagiarism Policy exemplifies academic offenses, describes how to detect and prevent them, and what kind of penalties may apply for certain violations. It also refers to all connected policies and templates. More detailed information including a variety of descriptive examples and internet links is disseminated in the Plagiarism Awareness Handbook. In the academic year 2021-2022, the Teaching and Learning Committee conducted an informal benchmarking of policies against WVU. As a consequence, Plagiarism Criteria for colleges were added to the existing Plagiarism Policy. Research ethics and misconduct in research are documented in the RUW Research Policy. All relevant information on academic integrity and possible violations are also apparent in the Student Handbook. The Plagiarism Policy is uploaded to the Moodle page of each course.
- The College uses Turnitin to detect plagiarism in written documents. For the detection of visual plagiarism in contemporary art practice, the faculty uses tinEye.com and Google Image Search. However, the Panel advises CAD to use other means to detect visual plagiarism in contemporary art practice, where re-make or simulation is quite common. From interviews, the Panel was informed that the library organizes sessions on plagiarism,

and students are briefed by the Office of Registrar and the instructors, as confirmed in virtual interviews with senior management and faculty. If more than four incidents of plagiarism are detected in a submission, the case will be transferred to the Disciplinary Committee, currently a part of the Student Affairs Committee.

- Academic offenses can also be reported to the Office of the Registrar and the Disciplinary Committee through a Disciplinary Incident Report Form. The Disciplinary Committee submits an annual report which is discussed in the Senate. In interviews with senior management and faculty, the Panel was informed that, after a rise of Plagiarism incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of academic offenses significantly declined and that students are more aware of academic misconduct.

### **Indicator 3.3: Internal and External Moderation of Assessment**

*There are mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of the programme's internal and external moderation systems for setting assessment instruments and grading students' achievements.*

#### **Judgement: Partially Addressed**

- The internal moderation of assessments is outlined in the RUW Assessment Policy. It covers course specifications, course assignment briefs, rubrics, internal co-examination, second marking and course folder verification. The HoD and CAD Dean constitute a team of internal moderators for review and approval of assessments. Furthermore, the Head of Post Graduate Studies and the Programme Coordinator review the assessments before approval and any suggestions that arise are considered by the instructors.
- The Assessment Policy indicates that RUW provides external moderation along with internal moderation of assessments. The External Examining and External Verification Policy considers external moderation to be essential in its quality assurance proceedings. The document delineates the philosophy, and pertinent procedures and activities of external moderation. Reports from external moderators are discussed in the College Council and the PGSC meetings and archived for curriculum review inputs.
- RUW appoints its external moderators from their network of academic and industry partners. The Panel is of the view that the process through which the external moderators are appointed is not transparent enough, and that the selection criteria of external moderators, including their relevant specialism, are not clearly captured nor communicated. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should revise the process of selecting external moderators and ensure the recruitment of highly qualified ones who are capable of providing constructive feedback to improve the assessment tasks.
- Second marking for written examinations, internally or externally, is used on the one hand for maintaining academic standards and, on the other hand, for ensuring fair and uniform

grades. The Panel learned in interviews with faculty, that second marking is applied on 30% of all course work. If the second marking differs more than 10% from the first marking, the HoD and Dean will scrutinize the issue and a report concerning this matter will be discussed in the College Council and used for feasible improvement. The scope of current measures of assessment and review ensure fair grading in line with professional and academic standards. The Panel acknowledges that 30% of students' work is moderated and second marked; however, due to the small size of the cohorts in the programme, the Panel suggests that the work of all students be moderated or second marked.

### **Indicator 3.4: Work-based Learning**

*Where assessed work-based learning takes place, there is a policy and procedures to manage the process and its assessment, to assure that the learning experience is appropriate in terms of content and level for meeting the intended learning outcomes.*

**Judgement:** *Not Applicable*

### **Indicator 3.5: Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component**

*Where there is a capstone project or thesis/dissertation component, there are clear policies and procedures for supervision and evaluation which state the responsibilities and duties of both the supervisor and students, and there is a mechanism to monitor the related implementations and improvements.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

- Students must successfully complete 18 credits with a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.3 before they are allowed to start their thesis. The thesis should be completed within two semesters, while extensions of study time can be granted as described in the Post Graduate Studies Regulations and as confirmed during interviews with faculty. The extension is given until the quality of student submitted work is of an acceptable level as clarified in interviews. In other words, students can submit the thesis without any restriction on the maximum number of extensions. However, the Panel is of the view that this is an unusual practice. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should reconsider the duration for thesis submission.
- The Panel notes that the 'Drawing and Painting Thesis' (MDP 599) is a major course of nine credits completed during two semesters. This course requires a final thesis as a written dissertation rather than an exhibition or body of art works, plus a written component which is more usual in fine art subjects. Therefore, the Panel recommends that

the CAD should revise the 'Drawing and Painting Thesis' course to bring it into line with similar postgraduate programmes.

- It was clarified during the virtual interviews that the topics of the thesis are built upon the previously acquired knowledge in order to contribute to the achievement of the PILOs. The Panel notes that the topics of the theses play a vital role in enhancing the understanding of Bahraini visual art, both internally and externally.
- Roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors are described in the MDP Programme Specifications, the Post Graduate Studies Regulations and the MDP Programme Handbook. The Post Graduate Studies Regulations describe the roles of all instances involved in the Master Thesis: Student, Supervisor and Co-Supervisor, Dean, PGSC and Academic Vice President. However, the Panel was informed in interviews with alumnae that processes and regulations concerning the thesis were obscure for a long period of time; as, only when students register for the thesis are they being informed of the content, guidelines, process, procedures, plagiarism regulations, and evaluation and assessment related to it. The Panel recommends that the CAD should clearly communicate to students the organizational structure of the thesis and the expectations associated with it, early in the programme.
- The thesis consists of two parts. The first part requires the selection of an appropriate topic and a written proposal which will be presented to the PGSC and sent to the HEC for approval. Generally, students must choose a topic related to a local context or the Gulf region as per conducted interviews. Upon approval, students are informed about their assigned supervisor. Part two is dedicated to writing the thesis, the final presentation and the viva. The Panel suggests shortening the period during which students identify a proper thesis topic to give students more time to work on the thesis itself.
- The PSGC assigns research/thesis supervisors with the proper expertise. The supervisor should be a full professor, an associate professor or an assistant professor from RUW. It is possible to assign either an academic or a co-supervisor from the professional world with due experience. Mentors from the industry can also be part of the supervision team. In interviews with alumnae, the Panel was informed of occasional hold-ups in the assignation of supervisors. Therefore, the Panel suggests that there should be no delays in the students being appointed a supervisor to ensure that they complete their studies within the two-year timeframe.
- Students are encouraged to attend graduate research meetings and seminars with their supervisors as clarified in virtual interviews. As the Panel learned in interviews with faculty, meetings with supervisors are usually scheduled monthly. The Panel further learned in interviews with students and alumnae that research supervision is conducted in a constructive way. Supervisors are required to document all meetings with thesis students; thesis student-supervisor meeting logs are kept with the PGSC.

- When completed and approved by the PSGC, the thesis is ready for submission. The final assessment of the thesis is based on the written report, the presentation and the defense of the thesis in a viva panel. The supervisor approves the validity of the thesis for viva, submits it to the HoD, who shall then, together with the PSGC, devise a viva panel. The panel of three to four members is composed of one internal and one external examiner plus the supervisor(s). The Panel ought to be, approved by the College Council, Academic Vice President and President along with the HEC one month prior to the thesis defense date. External examiners being local or from abroad, are appointed as per their individual expertise. Viva evaluation grids and grades are eventually submitted to the Dean by the viva chairperson. The thesis is graded as per the Post Graduate Studies Regulations.
- The thesis process is monitored by the PSGC, the College Council and the HoD to ensure that RUW complies with HEC regulations. Feedback comes from supervisors and students and, equally important, from internal and external viva examiners, where all feedback is used to improve the thesis process.

### **Indicator 3.6: Achievements of the Graduates**

*The achievements of the graduates are consonant with those achieved on equivalent programmes as expressed in their assessed work, rates of progression and first destinations.*

#### **Judgement: Partially Addressed**

- The Panel was provided with course files which contain the course syllabus, the methods of assessment along with marked students' assessments which do not reflect gradual level of complexity as students' progress in most courses. As stated earlier in indicator 1.2 and Indicator 3.1, samples of students work in some courses do not evidence independent thinking and the assessments are not well-aligned with the CILOs.
- The Office of Registrar along with academic advisors monitor students' year-on-year progression. The Panel was provided with a Programme Data Set that shows enrollment and graduation rates along with a Cohort Analysis covering five years. According to the Programme Cohort Analysis, the average retention rate over the last nine years is 86%; and the average graduation rate is 69%. The withdrawal rate is 0% and it was noted that there are years with no admission to the programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Panel recommends that the CAD should investigate the reasons for the low graduation rate and develop actions to ensure more students graduate.
- Evidence of the CAD's graduates' destinations was provided to the Panel. The Panel notes that RUW provides opportunities for students to continue their education in fine art and noted the evidence provided of graduate and employer satisfaction with the graduates' profile; however, the response rates of these surveys are very low.

## Standard 4

### Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

*The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance and continuous improvement, contribute to giving confidence in the programme.*

#### Indicator 4.1: Quality Assurance Management

*There is a clear quality assurance management system, in relation to the programme that ensures the institution's policies, procedures and regulations are applied effectively and consistently.*

#### **Judgement: Addressed**

- RUW QAAU manages a Document Control Register (DCR) of all university policies, procedures, templates, guidelines, mandates, and handbooks. It has been noted that RUW has appropriate policies and regulations to govern the delivery of the programme, such as: Academic Quality Framework, the RUW Quality Policy, and the Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management. These are well-communicated to all relevant stakeholders such as faculty members and students who are introduced to RUW's policies and regulations in the induction days assigned for them. During interviews, the Panel was given an opportunity to learn more about how the Quality Assurance Framework is developed, maintained and implemented.
- The QAAU and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QA&E) Committee, a standing committee of the Senate, has the duty to implement and communicate all quality policies and thus ensure continuous improvement of policies and procedures. From interviews, the Panel noted the absence of the Quality Assurance Director and due to this vacant position, the Acting Dean was interviewed instead. Therefore, the Panel recommends that RUW should expedite the process of appointing a dedicated Quality Assurance Director; and should also strengthen the Quality Assurance Office by adding more staff to support its activities.
- Job descriptions of all staff include details on duties and responsibilities of leading positions like Deans, HoDs and managers that have quality assurance related obligations. At the beginning of each academic year, academic and administrative staff participates in an orientation programme where the Academic Quality Assurance Framework is discussed. Capacity building workshops on quality issues such as developing course specifications, higher education research, assessment design and others more complement the quality efforts. Moreover, quality issues are considered in College Council meetings.

- The QAAU has the responsibility for the implementation and enhancement of the Quality Assurance Framework of the Institution; and the QA&E Committee is committed to ensure continuous improvement, effectiveness and consistency of implementation of policies and procedures across the college. Within the documents and from the interviews, it was noticed that there is an awareness and understanding of the ongoing need to effectively monitor, evaluate and improve the quality assurance processes

## **Indicator 4.2: Programme Management and Leadership**

*The programme is managed in a way that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership and there are clear lines of accountability.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

- The Panel was provided with the organisational chart that shows a binding structure suitable for the management of the CAD's four undergraduate and two graduate programmes. The College is headed by the Dean supported by the HoDs, the Programme Coordinators and the assigned Administrative Officers. Each post in the Organisational Chart is combined with a significant job description. Accountabilities and lines of reporting are defined in the organisational chart and more explicitly in the pertinent job descriptions. All faculty members are members of the College Council which has to approve almost all academic affairs such as external linkages, community engagement, research and other issues. All academic staff members are members in different committees.
- The Dean is responsible for the College's academic and administrative condition and reports to the Senate. All relevant information is shared with faculty in the Department Council and College Council meetings. In the academic year 2021-2022, the position of Head of Programme was introduced for monitoring academic and research quality. However, currently no one has been appointed. The Panel notes that RUW has recently appointed an Acting Dean for the CAD who is also responsible for both the Design Management and the Painting and Drawing Programme in the capacity of being Head of Programme in addition to teaching in her programme. The Panel is of the view that this is too much to be handled by one person. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should appoint a dedicated academic to manage the MDP along with Master in Design Management Programme; and ensure that any extra workload/appointment is being compensated and paid to the concerned academic.

## **Indicator 4.3: Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme**

*There are arrangements for annual internal evaluation and periodic reviews of the programme that incorporate both internal and external feedback and mechanisms are in place to implement recommendations for improvement.*

**Judgement: Not Addressed**

- There is no policy at institutional level on annual review. The SER clarifies that as per RUW's processes, internal annual evaluation is carried out by using different resources such as Q&A sessions with students, the Employers Survey, faculty feedback, the Graduate Exit Survey and Alumnae Survey. The Panel was provided with a generic Improvement Plan for CAD conducted in 2022, in which all undertakings were still reported as ongoing; aside from an earlier CAD Action Plan, dated 2016, further MDP improvement plans were not provided. Consequently, the Panel recommends that RUW develop a policy on annual programme review and conduct systematic annual review of the MDP programme that result in comprehensive annual reports with recommendations and/or relevant improvement along with action plans.
- RUW has a Periodic Programme Review Policy. According to the policy each programme should be reviewed every four years. From interviews, the Panel learned that all programmes offered by the College were reviewed by WVU in 2012-2013 and since then, the programme did not undergo any periodic review apart from signing MoUs with different entities such as an MoU with Dar Al-Hekma University in Jeddah which was signed in 2017 and its duration ran out in 2021. Another MoU with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority, signed in 2019, is no longer valid since 2022. As indicated in the SER and confirmed to the Panel in interviews with senior management, one more review for the MDP programme is currently performed with the University of the Arts London and the Department of Design of Politecnico in Milan. Their recommendations have not yet found their way into the curriculum. Despite the above mentioned, when the Panel requested periodic review reports, the Panel was told that no such report is available. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should regularly and consistently implement periodic reviews of the MDP programme according to the university policy and should address any suggestions or recommendations resulting from them.

**Indicator 4.4: Benchmarking and Surveys**

*Benchmarking studies and the structured comments collected from stakeholders' surveys are analysed and the outcomes are used to inform decisions on programmes and are made available to the stakeholders.*

**Judgement: Partially Addressed**

- RUW has a Benchmarking Policy and a supplemental Benchmarking Planning Form in use. The University engages in internal and external benchmarking and has identified 15

benchmarking areas ranging from academic standards to organizational culture. All Colleges have identified suitable institutions for benchmarking. As explained to the Panel in interviews with senior management, CAD has not yet formally benchmarked its programmes. An MoU with WVU, signed in 2016 for the duration of five years, promotes programme reviews, benchmarking, staff exchange, and lectures and training. The memorandum with WVU resulted in benchmarking questionnaires on Plagiarism policies and instructors and course evaluation policies. Plans exist for the Teaching and Learning Policies and the External Examination and Verification Policies. Although CAD has asked Dar Al-Hekma University to conduct a benchmarking on performance and processes, no results have yet been observed. Although the WVU questionnaires on plagiarism and instructors and course evaluation and the statements from the University of the Art London and from Politecnico di Milano show some benchmarking responses, no pertinent improvement action plans were provided to the Panel for the master programmes of CAD including MDP. Considering all the above mentioned, the Panel recommends that the CAD should increase its efforts in benchmarking the MDP programme with local, regional and international institutions, and use the benchmarking results in the improvement of its various components.

- Surveys are used to gather feedback from internal and external stakeholders. A comprehensive list shows the following RUW surveys: Student Satisfaction Survey, Graduate Exit survey, Alumnae Survey and others more. The Panel notes that stakeholder surveys are conducted and published in an annual college report. However, the response rate to the surveys is low, the Alumnae Survey, for example, has only two participants. Furthermore, the Panel notes that the surveys are not being conducted on a regular basis, in addition to being conducted for all CAD programmes and not exclusively for MDP programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should identify a mechanism to attract and increase the surveys' response rates and ensure that the surveys are conducted on a regular basis, and that the findings are analysed for each programme separately, to inform decision making. It is worth noting that during interviews the Panel was made aware that some of the stakeholder groups were not clear on whether and how their recommendations were being implemented. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CAD should investigate appropriate ways to inform its internal and external stakeholders about any introduced changes in response to their feedback.

#### **Indicator 4.5: Relevance to Labour market and Societal Needs**

*The programme has a functioning advisory board and there is continuous scoping of the labour market and the national and societal needs, where appropriate for the programme type, to ensure the relevancy and currency of the programme.*

**Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

- RUW has a CAD Advisory Policy in place as well as mandate for the College Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC meets at least once per semester and includes the Dean, HoDs, a senior faculty member from every programme, one CAD alumna and six reputable professionals, who are experts in architecture and come from various design areas. The Panel notes that representatives from the fields of drawing, painting and design are absent in the CAC formation. The Panel recommends that the CAD should include at least one representative for the MDP programme in the CAC, to be able to inform and advise the programme about the demands of the emerging national and regional arts and design markets.
- The SER refers to the Skills Gap Research study commissioned by Tamkeen and the Employer-led skills requirements and Graduate skills analysis for the Kingdom of Bahrain, undertaken by the HEC in 2014. The latest study was conducted by KMPG in 2019-2020. It is worth noting that the study reveals that employers do not need a graduate with a master's degree of painting and drawing. Furthermore, if it were needed, they will recruit graduates from graphic design. In addition, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applied mechanisms to scope labour market and societal needs are reviewed. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the CAD should consider the results of the KMPG study for its future programme offering. The Panel also recommends that CAD should ensure that the applied mechanisms to scope labour market and societal needs are monitored and reviewed.

## V. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the virtual site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA *Academic Programme Reviews (Cycle 2) Handbook, 2020*:

**There is No Confidence in the Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting of College of Art & Design offered by the Royal University for Women.**

**In coming to its conclusion regarding the four Standards, the Panel notes, with appreciation, the following:**

1. The E-Learning Policy provides plans and directions not only on e-learning but also on the pedagogical value of the linkage of face-to-face instruction and virtual methods, to support the attainment of intended learning outcomes.
2. The students are satisfied with the cooperative manner of the academic staff and their commitment to supporting students when working on their thesis.

**In terms of improvement, the Panel recommends that the Royal University for Women and the College of Arts and Design should:**

1. Revise and develop the programme aims in a way that effectively reflect its authentic focus which is on contemporary painting and drawing.
2. Revise the course intended learning outcomes and their alignment with the programme intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes as well as the course contents and assessments.
3. Revise the progression, prerequisites, and contents of the courses, to ensure proper progression of students towards graduation and to promote independent learning that is befitting of a master's degree programme.
4. Revise the curriculum content and delivery with the aim of ensuring balance between theory and practice.
5. Ensure that all relevant basic courses of the Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting prescribe which media students use, the size of work students use and how research is undertaken.
6. Revise the practical courses of the Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting to reflect the development of a more critical content in relation to the processes of painting.

7. Revise some of the courses of the Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting to include art writing and criticism in order to be suitable for a master's degree level.
8. Reconsider the weighting amongst practical aspects, written elements of the programme as well as the exhibition, which presents great professional practice to students.
9. Update its major references and select books from University Presses or Academic publishers.
10. Introduce teaching and research methods that suit the nature of the programme.
11. Ensure that students are provided with specific detailed feedback on their assessed work, as this provides a learning opportunity for students to improve their work.
12. Develop mechanisms to better market the programme, to attract more students.
13. Revise the admission requirements regularly in light of student performance and feedback from relevant stakeholders, in addition to national and international benchmarks.
14. Ensure that research hours are communicated to faculty and implemented as per the existing research time allocation university policy.
15. Hire fine art staff with relevant expertise to support the delivery of the programme.
16. Introduce a survey to evaluate staff's satisfaction towards the professional development activities.
17. Introduce a professional development activity to train its staff on the thesis supervision techniques and skills.
18. Review its dedicated studio space and workshop and maker-space to ensure that these facilities are in line with regional and international standards.
19. Dedicate more space to exhibit student's artwork in one large room.
20. Revise and increase the programme-specific bibliographies.
21. Ensure that students' assessments are appropriate for the nature and level of the programme in terms of depth of assessment items, complexity, and involvement of higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking.
22. Review the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to ensure the alignment of assessments with learning outcomes and improve the assessment process at the programme level.
23. Revise the process of selecting external moderators and ensure the recruitment of highly qualified ones who are capable of providing constructive feedback to improve the assessment tasks.
24. Reconsider the allocated duration for thesis submission.

25. Revise the 'Drawing and Painting Thesis' course to bring it into line with similar postgraduate programmes.
26. Clearly communicate to students the organizational structure of the thesis and the expectations associated with it, early in the programme.
27. Investigate the reasons for the low graduation rate and develop actions to ensure more students graduate.
28. Expedite the process of appointing a dedicated Quality Assurance Director; and strengthen the Quality Assurance Office by adding more staff to support its activities.
29. Appoint a dedicated academic to manage the MDP along with Master in Design Management Programme; and ensure that any extra workload/appointment is being compensated and paid to the concerned academic.
30. Develop a policy on annual programme review and conduct systematic annual reviews of the MDP programme that result in comprehensive annual reports with recommendations and/or relevant improvement along with action plans.
31. Regularly and consistently implement periodic reviews of the MDP programme according to the university policy and should address any suggestions or recommendations resulting from them.
32. Increase the College's efforts in benchmarking the MDP programme with local, regional and international institutions, and use the benchmarking results in the improvement of its various components.
33. Identify a mechanism to attract and increase the surveys' response rates and ensure that the surveys are conducted on a regular basis, and that the findings are analysed for each programme separately, to inform decision making.
34. Investigate appropriate ways to inform its internal and external stakeholders about any introduced changes in response to their feedback.
35. Include at least one representative for the MDP programme in the CAC, to be able to inform and advise the programme about the demands of the emerging national and regional arts and design markets.
36. Consider the results of the KMPG study for its future programme offering.
37. Ensure that the applied mechanisms to scope labour market and societal needs are monitored and reviewed.